CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY ON HOSEA



JOHN CALVIN

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Commentary on Hosea

John Calvin

Translated from the original Latin
by the Rev. John Owen

Monergism Books

Commentary on Hosea

John Calvin

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Translator's Preface

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

Prejudice has often deprived many of advantages which they might have otherwise derived: and this has been much the case with respect to The Works of Calvin; they have been almost entirely neglected for a long time, owing to impressions unfavorable to the Author. In his own and the succeeding age, the authority of Calvin as a Divine, and especially as an Expounder of Scripture, was very high, and higher than that of any of the Reformers. Though an eminent writer of the present day, Dr. D'Aubigne, has pronounced Melancthon "the Theologian of the Reformation," yet there is sufficient reason to ascribe that distinction to Calvin; and to him, no doubt, it more justly belongs, than to any other of the many illustrious men whom God raised up during that memorable period.

It is not difficult to account for what happened to our Author. Various things combined to depreciate his repute. In this country his views on church government created in many a prejudice against him; and then the progress of a theological system, not more contrary to what he held than to what our own Reformers maintained, increased this prejudice; and where the former ground of difference and dislike did not exist, the latter prevailed: so that, generally in our Church, and among dissenting bodies, the revered name of Calvin has been regarded with no feelings of affection, or even of respect; no discrimination being exercised, and no distinction being made between his great excellencies as an Expounder of Scripture, and his peculiar views on Church discipline, and on the doctrine of Predestination.

On the Continent other things operated against his reputation. Popery owed him a deep grudge; for no one of the Reformers probed the depths of its iniquities with so much discrimination, and with such an unsparing hand as he did. His remarkably acute mind enabled him to do this most

effectually; and there is much on this subject in the present work, which renders it especially valuable at this period, when Popery makes such efforts to spread its errors and delusions. The two weapons which he commonly employed were Scripture and common sense, — weapons ever dreaded by Popery; and to blunt their edge has at all times been its attempt, the first, by vain tradition, and the other, by implicit faith, not in God, or in God's word, but in a palpably degenerated Church. But these weapons Calvin wielded with no common skill dexterity, and power, being deeply versed in Scripture, and endued with no ordinary share of sound and penetrating judgment. In addition to this, his doctrinal views were diametrically opposed to those of Popery, and especially to the papal system, as modified by and concentrated in Jesuitism, which may be considered to be the most perfect form of Popery. For these reasons, the Writings of Calvin could not have been otherwise than extremely obnoxious to the adherents of the Church of Rome: and the consequence has been, that they spared no efforts to vilify his name, and to lessen his reputation.

The first writer of eminence and acknowledged learning in this country, who has done any thing like justice to Calvin, was Bishop Horsley; and when we consider the very strong prejudice which at that time prevailed almost in all quarters against Calvin, to vindicate his character was no ordinary proof of moral courage. There were, no doubt, some points in which the two were very like. They both possessed minds of no common strength and vigor, and minds discriminating no less than vigorous. In clearness of perception, also, they had few equals; so that no one needs hardly ever read a passage in the writings of either twice over in order to understand its meaning. But probably the most striking point of likeness was their independence of mind. They thought for themselves, without being swayed by authority either ancient or modern, and acknowledged no rule and no authority in religion but that which is divine. The Bishop had more imagination, but the Pastor of Geneva had a sounder judgment. Hence the Bishop, notwithstanding his strong mind and great acuteness, was sometimes led away by what was plausible and novel; but Calvin was ever sober-minded and judicious, and whatever new view he gives to a passage, it is commonly well supported, and for the most part gains at once our approbation.

But something must be said of the present work.

It embraces the most difficult portion, in some respects, of The Old Testament, and of that portion, as acknowledged by all, the most difficult is The Book Of The Prophet Hosea. Probably no part of Scripture is commonly read with so little benefit as The Minor Prophets, owing, no doubt, to the obscurity in which some parts are involved. That there is much light thrown on many abstruse passages in this Work, and more than by any existing Comment in our language, is the full conviction of the writer. Acute, sagacious, and sometimes profound, the Author is at the same time remarkably simple, plain, and lucid, and ever practical and useful. The most learned may here

gather instruction, and the most unlearned may understand almost every thing that is said. The whole object of the Author seems to be to explain, simplify, and illustrate the text, and he never turns aside to other matters. He is throughout an Expounder, keeps strictly to his office, and gives to every part its full and legitimate meaning according to the context, to which he ever especially attends.

The style of Hosea is somewhat peculiar. Jerome has long ago characterized it as being *commatic,* sententious; and those links, the connective particles, by which different parts are joined together, are sometimes omitted. This is, indeed, in a measure the character of the style of all the Prophets, but more so with respect to Hosea than any other. What at the same time creates the greatest difficulty is the rapidity of his transitions, and the change of person, number, and gender. Persons are spoken *to* and spoken *of* sometimes in the same verse; and he passes from the singular to the plural number, and the reverse, and sometimes from the masculine to the feminine gender. To account for these transitions is not always easy.

It has been thought by many critics, that the received Hebrew text of Hosea is in a more imperfect state than that of any other portion of Scripture; but Bishop Horsley denies this in a manner the most unhesitating; and those emendations which Archbishop Newcome introduced in his version, about 51 in number, the Bishop has swept away as unauthorized, and, indeed, as unnecessary, for most of them had been proposed to remedy the anomalies peculiar to the style of this Prophet; and some of those few emendations, which the Bishop himself introduced, founded on the authority of MSS., Calvin's exposition shows to be unnecessary. The fact is, that different readings, collected by the laborious Kennicott and others, have done *chiefly* this great good — to show the extraordinary correctness of our received text. Throughout this Prophet, there is hardly an instance in which the collations of MSS. have supplied an improvement, and certainly no improvement of any material consequence.

This Work of Calvin appears now for the first time in the English language. There is a French translation, but not made by the Author himself, as in the case of some other portions of his writings, and can therefore be of no authority. The following translation has been made from an edition printed at Geneva in 1567, three years after Calvin's death, compared with another, printed also at Geneva in 1610.

It has been thought advisable to adopt our common version as the text, and to put Calvin's Latin version in a parallel column. His version is a literal rendering of the original, without any regard to idiom, and to translate it has been found impracticable, at least in such a way as to be understood by common readers. His practice evidently was to translate the Hebrew word for word, and to make this his text, and then in his Comment to modify the expressions so as to reduce them into readable Latin, and his version thus modified agrees in most instances with our authorized version. The

agreement is so remarkable, that the only conclusion is, that this Work must have been much consulted by our Translators.

In making quotations from Scripture, the Author seems to have followed no version, but to have made one of his own; and they are often given paraphrastically, the meaning rather than the words being regarded. The same is often done also with respect to the passages explained, the words being frequently varied. In these instances the Author has been strictly followed throughout in this Translation, and his quotations, and the text when paraphrased, are marked by a single inverted comma.

The Hebrew words which occur in the Lectures are not accompanied with the points, and it has not been deemed necessary to add them. The words are given in corresponding English characters, with the insertion of such vowels only as are necessary to enunciate them, and these vowels, to distinguish them from the Hebrew vowels, are put in Roman characters. The Hebrew vowels are uniformly given the same, and not with that almost endless variety of sounds to which the points have reduced them. The {ו} *vau,* is always represented by u, except when in sonic instances it is followed by a vowel, and then by v. The Hebrews have four vowels corresponding with a, e, u, i, and o, in English.

This work is calculated to be of material help to those engaged in translations. Our Missionaries may derive from it no small assistance, as it gives as literal a version of the Hebrew as can well be made, and contains much valuable criticism, and develops, in a very lucid and satisfactory manner, the drift and meaning of many difficult passages. There is no existing Commentary in which the text is so minutely examined, and so clearly explained. There are also many of the most approved expositions given by others referred to and stated; and the Translator has added, on interesting and difficult passages, what has been suggested by learned critics since the time of the Author.

If it be a right rule to judge of the impressions which the perusal of this volume, now presented to the public, may produce on others, by what one has himself experienced, the Editor will mention one thing in particular, and that is, that he fully expects that those who will carefully read this volume will be more impressed than ever with the extreme propensity of human nature to idolatry, and with the amazing power and blinding effects of superstition. The conduct of the Israelites, notwithstanding all the means employed to restore them to the true worship of God, is here described with no ordinary minuteness and specialty. Though God sent his Prophets to them to remind them of their sins, to reason and expostulate with them, to threaten and to exhort them, to draw and allure them with promises of pardon and acceptance; and though God chastised them in various ways, and then withheld his displeasure, and showed them indulgence, they yet continued obstinately attached to their idolatry and superstition, and all the while professed and boasted that they worshipped the true God, and perversely maintained that their mixed service, the worship of God, and

the worship of idols, was right and lawful, and vastly superior to what the Prophets recommended.

Having this case of the Israelites in view, we need not be surprised at the fascinating and blinding influence of Popery, whose idolatry and superstitions are exactly of the same character with those of the Israelites; no two cases can be more alike. Their identity is especially seen in this, — that there is an union of two worships — of God and of images; and this union was the idolatry condemned in the Israelites, and is the very idolatry that now exists in the Church of Rome: and as among the Israelites, so among the Papists, though God is not excluded, but owned, yet the chief worship is given to false gods and their images. That the two systems are the same, no one can doubt, except those who are under the influence of strong delusion; and this is what is often referred to and amply proved in this work.

It may be useful to subjoin here an account of the time in which THE TWELVE MINOR PROPHETS lived. The precise time cannot be ascertained: they flourished between the two dates which are here given. The names of the other four Prophets are also added.

BEFORE THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

Before Christ

I. Jonah,... 856-784.
II. Amos,... 810-785.
III. Hosea,... 810-725.
1 Isaiah,.... 810-698.
IV. Joel,... 810-660.
V. Micah,... 758-699.
VI. Nahum,... 720-698.
VII. Zephaniah,... 640-609.

IMMEDIATELY PREVIOUS TO AND DURING THE CAPTIVITY

2. Jeremiah,... 628-586.
VIII. Habakkuk,... 612-598.
3. Daniel,... 606-534.
IX. Obadiah,... 588-583.
4. Ezekiel,... 595-536.

AFTER THE CAPTIVITY

X. Haggai,... 520-518.
XI. Zechariah,... 520-518.
XII. Malachi,... 436-420.

In the last Volume, the fourth, will be given the two Indices appended to the original work.

J.O.

THRUSSINGTON, September 1, 1816.

POSTSCRIPT

After the preceding Preface had gone through the press, it has been discovered that The Twelve Minor Prophets cannot be comprised in four volumes

of the size generally published in the present Series of The Works Of John Calvin.

The Translation, though it be as brief and concise as the idiom of the English language will well admit, takes up more space than the Editor at first anticipated. His first calculation was made from the Latin: he was not then fully aware of the *great* disparity in the two languages as to relative diffuseness of style. He has since found, by a minute comparison, that a work in Latin, comprised in five volumes, would require at least *six* of the same size and type in English: and in the present instance, what was calculated would be contained in four, must be extended to *five* volumes, on account of the respective Prefaces and Notes, &C. by the Editor, besides the Literal Translations Of each of the Books Of The Twelve Minor Prophets, which it has since been resolved shall be appended to each successive Commentary,

The arrangement of this Work, now made with some degree of certainty, is as follows:

The **First** Volume is to contain **Hosea**;
The **Second** Volume, **Joel**, **Amos**, and **Obadiah**;
The **Third** Volume, **Jonah**, **Micah**, and **Nahum**;
The **Fourth** Volume, **Habakkuk**, **Zephaniah**, and **Haggai**; and
The **Fifth** Volume, **Zechariah** and **Malachi.**

On this account, the Volumes cannot be all of equal size, some being considerably above, and some below, the average extent of the present Series of Calvin's Works, being 500 pages on the average. To avoid such inequality, it would have been needful to divide some of the Books — a thing by no means desirable in any case, and which has been studiously shunned in all the other Commentaries.

In addition to what was originally contemplated, there will be given at the end of each Book a continuous Literal Translation Of Calvin's Latin Version, as modified by his Commentary; and the Editor is requested to state that a similar plan is to be observed in all the other Prophetical Books of the Old Testament.

Editor.
Thrussington, September 1846.

Calvin's Epistle Dedicatory

THE EPISTLE DEDICATORY

JOHN CALVIN

To The Most Serene And Most Mighty

KING GUSTAVUS, [1]

The King Of The Goths And Vandals.

What I once said, most excellent king, when the Annotations On Hosea, taken from my Lectures, were published, I now again repeat, — that I was not the author of that edition: for I am one who is not easily pleased with works I finish with more labor and care. Had it been in my power, I should have rather tried to prevent the wider circulation of that extemporaneous kind of teaching, intended for the particular benefit of my auditory, and with which benefit I was abundantly satisfied.

But since that specimen, (The Commentary On Hosea,) published with better success than I expected, has kindled a desire in many to see that one Prophet followed by the other eleven Minor Prophets, I thought it not unseasonable to dedicate to your Majesty a work of suitable extent, and replete with important instructions, not only that it may be a pledge of my high regards, but also that the dedication to so celebrated a name might procure for it some favor. It is not, however, ambition that has led me to do this, for I have long ago learned not to court the applause of the world, and have become hardened to the ingratitude of the many; but I wished that some fruit might come to men of your station from the recesses of our

[1] Gustavus was the King of Sweden, the inhabitants of which were then called Goths and Vandals. He was the first king of that name in Sweden, and had the surname of Vasa. He was born in 1490, and was a descendant of the royal family of Sweden. He delivered the kingdom from the attempted usurpation of Christian II of Denmark, and was made king in 1523, abolished Popery, and introduced Lutheranism in 1530, and died, at the age of seventy, in 1560, the year following the date of this Epistle. — Ed.

mountains; and it has also been my legitimate endeavor, that many to whom I am unknown, being influenced by the sacred sanction of their king, might be made more impartial, and come better prepared to read the work.

And this, I promise to myself, will be the case, as you enjoy so much veneration among all your subjects, provided you condescend to interpose your judgment, such as your singular wisdom may dictate; or, as age may possibly not bear the fatigue of reading, such as your Majesty's eldest son *Heric,* the heir to the throne, may suggest, whom you have taken care to be so instructed in the liberal sciences, that this office may be safely intrusted to him. And that I might have less doubt of your kindness, there are many heralds of your virtues, and even some judicious and wise men, who are entitled to be deemed competent witnesses. It is not, therefore, to be wondered, most noble king, that a present from so distant a region should be offered to your Majesty by a man as yet unknown to you, who, on account of the excellent and heroic endowments of mind and heart in which he has understood you to excel, thinks himself to be especially attached to you.

But though the excellency of the Book may not, perhaps, be such as will procure much favor to myself, you will not yet despise the desire by which I have been led to manifest the high regards I entertain towards your Majesty, nor will you yet find this present now offered to you wholly unworthy, however much it may be below the elevated station of so great a king. If God has endued me with any aptness for the interpretation of Scripture, I am fully persuaded that I have faithfully and carefully endeavored to exclude from it all barren refinements, however plausible and fitted to please the ear, and to preserve genuine simplicity, adapted solidly to edify the children of God, who, being not content with the shell, wish to penetrate to the kernel. What I have really done it is not for me to say, except that pious and learned men persuade me that I have not labored without success. But these Commentaries may not, perhaps, answer the wishes and expectations of all; and I myself could have wished that I had been able to give something more excellent and more perfect, or at least what would have come nearer to the Prophetic Spirit. But this, I trust, will be the issue, — that experience will prove to upright and impartial readers, and those endued with sound judgment, provided they read with well-disposed minds, and not fastidiously, what I have written for their benefit, that more light has been thrown on the Twelve Prophets than modesty will allow me to affirm.

With the industry of others I compare not my own, (which would be unbecoming,) nor do I ask any thing else, but that intelligent and discreet Readers, profiting by my labors, should study to be of more extensive advantage to the public good of the Church; but as it has not been my care, nor even my desire, to adorn this Book with various attractives, this admonition is not unseasonable; for it may invite the more slothful to read, until, by making a trial, they may be able to judge whether it may be useful for them to proceed farther in their course of reading. Indeed, the fruit which

my other attempts in the interpretation of Scripture have produced, and the hope which I entertain of the usefulness of this, please me so much, that I desire to spend the remainder of my life in this kind of labor, as far as my continued and multiplied employment's will allow me. For what may be expected from a man at leisure cannot be expected from me, who, in addition to the ordinary office of a pastor, have other duties, which hardly allow me the least relaxation: I shall not, however, deem my spare time in any other way better employed.

I now return again to you, most valiant king. He who knows your prudence and equity in managing public affairs, your moral habits, your whole character and virtues, will not wonder that I have resolved to dedicate to you this work. But as it is not my design to write a long eulogy on what is praiseworthy in you, I shall only briefly touch on what is well known, both by report and public writings: — God tried you in a wonderful manner before he raised you to the throne, for the purpose not only of exhibiting in you a singular proof of his providence, but also of setting forth to our age as well as to posterity, an illustrious example of a steady perseverance in a right course. You have, doubtless, been thus proved by both fortunes, that there might not be wanting a due trial of your temperance and moderation in prosperity, and of your patience in adversity, until it was given you from above to emerge at length, no less happily than in a praiseworthy manner, from so many dangers, perils, difficulties, and hindrances, that having set the kingdom in order, you might publicly and privately enjoy a cheerful tranquillity. And now, by the unanimous consent of all orders, you bear a burden more splendid and honorable to you than grievous, for all venerate your authority, and show their esteem by love as well as by commendations.

In addition to these benefits of God comes this, the chief, which must not be omitted, — that your eldest son, *Heric*, a successor chosen by you from your own blood, is not only of a generous disposition, but also adorned with mature virtues; and hardly any one more fit, had you no children, could the people have chosen for themselves. And this, among other things, is his rare commendation, that he has made so much progress in the liberal sciences, that he occupies a high station among the learned, and that he is not tired with diligent application to them, as far as he is allowed by those many cares and distractions in which the royal dignity is involved. At the same time, the principal thing with me is this, that he hath consecrated in his palace a sanctuary, not only to the heathen muses, but also to celestial philosophy. The more confidence therefore I have, that some place will be there found, and some favor shown to these Commentaries, which he will find to have been written according to the rule of true religion, and will perceive calculated to be of some small help to himself.

May God, O most serene king! keep your Majesty long in prosperity, and continue to enrich you with all kinds of blessings. May He guide you by his Spirit, until, having finished your course, and migrating from earth to

the celestial kingdom, you may leave alive behind you the most serene king *Heric*, your successor, and his most illustrious brothers, *John Magnus* and *Charles*: and may the same grace of God, after your death, appear eminent in them, as well as fraternal and unanimous concord.

Geneva, January 26, 1559.

Calvin's To the Reader

JOHN CALVIN

TO THE CHRISTIAN READER, HEALTH

Since I can truly and justly say and prove by competent witnesses, that the writings, which I have hitherto sent forth to the public, and which might have been finished with more care and attention, have been almost extorted from me by importunity, it is evident that these Annotations, which I thought might bear a hearing, but were unworthy of being read, would have never through me been brought forth to the light. For if, by many watchings, I can hardly succeed in rendering even a small benefit to the Church by my meditations, how foolish were it in me to claim a place for my sermons among the works which are published? Besides, if, with regard to those compositions which I write or dictate privately at home, when there is more leisure for meditation, and when a finished brevity is attained by care and diligence, my industry is yet made a crime by the malignant and the envious, how can I escape the charge of presumption, if I now force upon the whole world the reading of those thoughts which I freely poured forth for the present edification of my hearers? But since to suppress them was not in my power, and their publication could not be otherwise prevented by me than by undertaking the labor (which my circumstances allowed not) of writing the whole anew, and many friends, thinking me to be too scrupulous a judge of my own labors, cried out, that I was doing an injury to the Church, I chose to allow this volume, as it *is,* taken from my lips, to go forth to the public, rather than by prohibition to impose on myself the necessity of writing; which I was forced to do as to The Psalms, before I found out, by that long and difficult work, how unequal I am to so much writing. [2]

[2] He was at this time engaged in writing his Comments on The Psalms; and they were published the following July. — Ed.

Let, then, these explanations on Hosea go forth, which it is not in my power to keep from the public. But how they have been taken down, it is needful to declare, not only that the diligence, industry, and skill of those who have performed this labor for the Church, may not be deprived of their commendation, but also that readers may be fully persuaded, that there are here no additions, and that the writers did not allow themselves to change a single word for a better one. How they assisted one another, one of their number, my best friend, and through his virtues, dear to all good men, Mr. John Budaeus, will, as I expect, more fully explain.

But it would have been incredible to me, had I not clearly seen, when the day after they read the whole to me, that what they had written differed nothing from my discourse. It would have perhaps been better had more liberty been taken to cut off redundancies, to bring the arrangement into better order, and to use, in some instances, more distinct or graceful language: but I do not interpose my judgment; this only I wish to witness with my own hand, That they have taken down what they have heard from my lips with so much fidelity, that I perceive no change. Farewell, Christian reader, whoever thou be, who desirest with me to make progress in celestial truth.

Geneva, February 13, 1557.

Budaeus' To the Reader

JOHN BUDAEUS

TO CHRISTIAN READERS, HEALTH.

When some years ago the most learned John Calvin, at the request and entreaty of his friends, undertook to explain in the School The Psalms Of David, some of us, his hearers, took notes from the beginning of a few things in our own way, for our own private meditation, according to our own judgment and discretion. But being at length admonished by our own experience, we began to think how great a loss would it be to many, and almost to the whole Church, that the benefit of such Lectures should be confined to a few hearers. Having therefore gathered courage, we fully thought that it was our duty to unite a care and concern for the public with our own private benefit, and this seemed possible, if, instead of following our usual practice, we tried, as far as we could, to take down the Lectures word for word. Without delay I joined myself as the third to two zealous brethren in this undertaking; and it so happened, through God's kindness, that a happy issue was not wholly wanting to our attempt: for when the labors of each of us were compared together, and the Lectures were immediately written out, we found that so few things had escaped us, that the gaps could easily be made up. And that this was the case as to the work in which was made the first trial of our capacities, Calvin himself is a witness to us; and that this has been far more fully the case with respect to the Lectures on Hosea, (as by long use and exercise we became more skillful) even all the hearers will readily acknowledge.

But the design on this occasion was to induce him, if possible, to publish complete Commentaries on this Author; but it then happened to us otherwise than we expected: for all hope of obtaining this object he cut off from us from reverence to Bucer, who, in this case, as well as in all other things, had performed most faithful and most useful services, as the whole Church

acknowledges, and as Calvin in particular has at all times most honorably declared to us and to all. It therefore remained that the Lectures, as taken down by us, should be published. And as all the most pious promised to themselves great benefit from our labor, we daily increased our exertions, that such a hope might not pass away into smoke. Being therefore stirred on by these desires, as well, doubtless, as by the prospect of benefiting the godly, we exerted ourselves so much, that all readily allowed that we exercised nothing short of the greatest diligence. The more wonderful it may seem, that he was afterwards induced to change his mind, so as to frustrate our hope and that of many of the godly; and that, on the other hand, he was constrained, however anxious to perform a most useful service to the Church, to incur the great envy and implacable hatred of many. But those who plead only the authority of Bucer in this affair are moved, I willingly acknowledge, by a reason not altogether unjust; yet they will seem to me too stiff and unbending, if they will not suffer themselves to be influenced by sufficient excuses, which I hope will be the case before long. But as to those who are carried away by the insane love of evil-speaking, and avail themselves of the least opportunity of strife, as they ought to be disregarded and detested as monsters by all the godly, so it is not needful to labor much to satisfy them, for the barking of dogs, provided it hurt not the Church, may without great danger be passed by and despised.

We have, indeed, prefaced these things for the sake of those who have very often solicited us respecting the Lectures On The Psalms, that they may not think themselves to have been deceived by us with a vain expectation; for, let them know, that they shall sometimes have, through God's favor, correct and complete Commentaries on The Book of Psalms. But if this long desire does much distress them, let them remember that we also no less anxiously look for that great treasure. But it is right that we both should pardon a man who has constant and most burdensome occupations, and somewhat moderate our too prurient and premature wishes: and to indulge him seems right even on this one account, that he, the least of all, indulges himself, never taking any rest or relaxation of mind from his vast labors, so that it is a matter of doubt to none but that he drags a little body, not only through the divine kindness, but by a singular miracle, which cannot be told to posterity, — a body, by nature weak, violently attacked by frequent diseases, and then exhausted by immense labors; and, lastly, pierced by the unceasing stings of the ungodly, and on all sides distressed and tormented by all kinds of reproaches.

But as this is not the place for making complaints, I now come to you, Christian Readers, to whom it is our purpose to dedicate this work, The Lectures On The Prophet Hosea; and we dedicate it, not that we claim any thing as our own, except the diligence we employed in collecting it: but we hesitate not to make it, as it were, our own, for it would have never come to you except through our assistance. For though we judged the work

altogether excellent, which is now offered to the Church, yet we could hardly at last convince the author of this; and he suffered himself to be overcome by our importunate entreaties only on this condition, that we were to be accountable for whatever judgment good men might form of the work: so unfit a judge he is of his own productions. But we, though he may modestly extenuate them more than what is right, yet dare to promise to ourselves, that not only the author's labor will be duly appreciated by you, but that we shall also secure to ourselves no common favor.

These Lectures, we trust, will not be less acceptable to you, because the author, regarding the benefit of the school, (as it was right,) in some degree departed from the usual elegance of all his other works, and from embellishment of style. For, being oppressed with a vast quantity of business, he was constrained to leave home, after having had hardly, for the most part, half an hour to meditate on these Lectures: he preferred to advance the edification and benefit of his hearers by eliciting the true sense and making it plain, rather than by vain pomp of words to delight their ears, or to regard ostentation and his own glory. I would not, at the same time, deny, but that these Lectures were delivered more in the scholastic than in the oratorical style. If, however, this simple, though not rude, mode of speaking should offend any one, let him have recourse to the works of others, or of this author himself, especially those in which, being freed from the laws of the school, he appears no less the orator than the illustrious theologian: and this we declare without hesitation, and with no less modesty than with the full consent and approbation of the best and the most learned.

We do not indeed thus speak as if we would, by a censorious superciliousness, claim for him alone the glory of an orator, or would not, by calling him a theologian, acknowledge many others as celebrated men. Far from us be such a folly. But an occasion such as this being offered of testifying our mind, we could hardly, even in any other way, excuse our neglect to the godly, to whom it is well known, that our silence concerning Calvin has not hitherto well pleased turbulent men; who are more willing to have their vanity expressly reprobated by us, than to suffer us by a tacit consent and modest silence either to approve of his doctrine, and to acknowledge in him an evidence, the most clear, of God's kindness towards us, or to cover by a fraternal dissimulation their madness; and thus each of us would have to mourn by himself in silence.

But, as I have said, the language here is unadorned and simple, very like that which we know was ever wont to be used formerly in Lectures: not such as many of whom we have heard employ, who repeat to their hearers from a written paper what had been previously prepared at home; but such as could be formed and framed at the time, more adapted to teach and edify than to please the ear. Except, then, we are greatly mistaken, he so expresses almost to the life the mind of the Prophet, that no addition seems possible. For, after having carefully examined every sentence, he then briefly shows

the use and application of the doctrine, so that no one, however ignorant, can mistake the meaning: in short, he so unfolds and opens the subjects and fountains of true theology, that it is easy for any one to draw from them what is needful to restore and refresh the soul; yea, the ministers of the word may hence advantageously derive ample streams, with which, as by a celestial dew, they may abundantly refresh the people of God, whether by exhortation, or consolation, or reproof, or edification. And of these things we clearly see some instances and examples in all his discourses, especially in those in which he so accommodates the doctrine of the Prophets to our own times, that it seems to suit their age no better than ours.

But that we may at length make an end, it remains, Christian Readers, that we receive and embrace with suitable gratitude all the other innumerable gifts of God which he daily pours on us in great abundance, as well as this incomparable treasure of his goodness, and employ them for the purpose of leading a holy and godly life to the glory of his name, and to the edification of our brethren: and that this may be done, we must pray for the Spirit of God, that we may come to the reading of Scripture instructed by him, and bring a mind purified from the defilement's of the flesh, and a meek spirit capable of receiving celestial truth. And for this end much help may be given us by the short prayers which we have taken care to add at the close of every Lecture, as gathered by us with the same care and fidelity as the Lectures were: the minds of the pious may by these be refreshed, and may collect new vigor for the next Lecture; and the ignorant may also have in these a pattern, as it were, painted before them, by which they may form their prayers from the words of Scripture. For as at the beginning of the Lectures he ever used the same form of prayer, which we intend also to add, that his manner of teaching may be fully known to you; so he was wont ever to finish every Lecture by a new prayer formed at the time, as given him by the Spirit of God, and accommodated to the subject of the Lecture.

If we shall understand that these Commentaries will be acceptable to you, though the work is the fruit of anothers labor, we shall yet engage, God favoring us, to do the same as to the remaining Prophets. When he shall undertake to lecture on them, it is our purpose to follow him with no less diligence, and take down what remains to the end. In the meantime, enjoy these. Farewell.

Geneva, February 14, 1557.

Crispin's To the Reader

JOHN CRISPIN

TO CHRISTIAN READERS, HEALTH.

As it may seem wonderful to some, and indeed incredible, that these Lectures were taken down with such fidelity and care, that Mr. John Calvin uttered not a word in delivering them, which was not immediately written down; it may be needful here shortly to remind pious readers of the plan they pursued who have transmitted them to us. And this is done, that their singular diligence and industry may stimulate others to do the same, and that the thing itself may not appear incredible.

And, first, it must be remembered, that Calvin himself never dictated, as many do, any of his Lectures, nor gave any orders that any thing should be noted down while he was interpreting Scripture, much less after finishing the Lecture, or on the day after its delivery; but he occupied a whole hour in speaking, and was not wont to write in his book a single word to assist his memory. When, therefore, some years ago, Mr. John Budaeus and Charles Jonvill, with two other brethren, (whom Budaeus himself mentions in his preface, and that so it was many know,) found, in writing out The Exposition On The Psalms, that their common labor would not be wholly in vain, they were impelled by a stronger desire and alacrity of mind, so that they resolved to take down, with more diligence than before, if possible, the whole exposition on what are called The Twelve Minor Prophets. And, in copying, they followed this plan. Each had his paper prepared in a form the most convenient, and each took down by himself with the greatest speed. If a word had escaped one, (which sometimes happened, particularly on points of dispute and in those parts which were delivered with some warmth,) it was taken up by another; and when it so happened, it was easily set down again by the writer. Immediately at the close of the Lecture, Jonvill took with

him the papers of the other two, placing them before him, and consulting his own, and collating them together, he dictated to some other person for the purpose of copying what they had hastily taken down. At last he read the whole over himself, that he might be able to recite it the following day before Mr. Calvin at home. When sometimes any little word was wanting, it was added in its place; or, if any thing seemed not sufficiently explained, it was readily made plainer.

Thus it happened that these Lectures came forth to the light; and what great benefit they will derive from them, who will seriously read them, can by no means be told: for who, endued with a sound judgment, does not see that such was the way which this most illustrious man possessed in explaining Scripture, that he had it in common with very few? He everywhere so unfolds the design of the Holy Spirit, so gives his genuine meaning, and also so sets before our eyes every recondite doctrine, that you find nothing but what is openly explained; and this is what his many writings most abundantly testify, in which he has made every point of the Christian religion so plain, that all, except they be wholly blind to the sun, acknowledge him to be a most faithful interpreter.

But that I may now say nothing of his many Commentaries, he has so surpassed himself in these Lectures, that one can hardly persuade himself that a style so elegant, and so perfect in all its parts, could have flowed extemporaneously, for he explains the weightiest sentiments in suitable words, clearly handles obscure things, clothes them with various ornaments, and so proceeds in his teaching, that the language he uses, spontaneously poured forth, seems to have been long and much labored. But of all these things I prefer that a judgment should be formed by a perusal, rather than that I should longer detain readers by a lengthened discussion of particulars. Then farewell all ye who hope for some benefit from these Lectures.

Geneva, February 1, 1559.

The Argument

The Commentaries of
John Calvin
on the Prophet
Hosea

The prayer which John Calvin was wont to use at the beginning of his lectures:

May the Lord grant, that we may engage in contemplating the mysteries of his heavenly wisdom with really increasing devotion, to his glory and to our edification. Amen.

The Argument

I have undertaken to expound The Twelve Minor Prophets. They have been long ago joined together, and their writings have been reduced to one volume; and for this reason, lest by being extant singly in our hands, they should, as it often happens, disappear in course of time on account of their brevity.

Then the Twelve Minor Prophets form but one volume. The first of them is Hosea, who was specifically destined for the kingdom of Israel: Micah and Isaiah prophesied at the same time among the Jews. But it ought to be noticed, that this Prophet was a teacher in the kingdom of Israel, as Isaiah and Micah were in the kingdom of Judah. The Lord doubtless intended to employ him in that part; for had he prophesied among the Jews, he would not have complimented them; since the state of things was then very corrupt, not only in Judea, but also at Jerusalem, though the palace and sanctuary of God were there. We see how sharply and severely Isaiah and Micah reproved the people; and the style of our Prophet would have been the same had the Lord employed his service among the Jews: but he followed his own call. He knew what the Lord had intrusted to him; he faithfully discharged his own

office. The same was the case with the Prophet Amos: for the Prophet Amos sharply inveighs against the Israelites, and seems to spare the Jews; and he taught at the same time with Hosea.

We see, then, in what respect these four differ: Isaiah and Micah address their reproofs to the kingdom of Judah; and Hosea and Amos only assail the kingdom of Israel, and seem to spare the Jews. Each of them undertook what God had committed to his charge; and so each confined himself within the limits of his own call and office. For if we, who are called to instruct the Church, close our eyes to the sins which prevail in it, and neglect those whom the Lord has appointed to be taught by us, we confound all order; since they who are appointed to other places must attend to those to whom they have been sent by the Lord's call.

We now, then, see to whom this whole book of Hosea belongs, — that is, to the kingdom of Israel.

But with regard to the Prophets, this is true of them all, as we have sometimes said, that they are interpreters of the law. And this is the sum of the law, that God designs to rule by his own authority the people whom he has adopted. But the law has two parts, — a promise of salvation and eternal life, and a rule for a godly and holy living. To these is added a third part, — that men, not responding to their call, are to be restored to the fear of God by threatening and reproofs. The Prophets do further teach what the law has commanded respecting the true and pure worship of God, respecting love; in short, they instruct the people in a holy and godly life, and then offer to them the favor of the Lord. And as there is no hope of reconciliation with God except through a Mediator, they ever set forth the Messiah, whom the Lord had long before promised.

As to the third part, which includes threats and reproofs, it was peculiar to the Prophets; for they point out times, and denounce this or that judgement of God: "The Lord will punish you in this way, and will punish you at such a time." The Prophets, then, do not simply call men to God's tribunal, but specify also certain kinds of punishment, and also in the same way they declare prophecies respecting the Lord's grace and his redemption. But on this I only briefly touch; for it will be better to notice each point as we proceed.

I now return to Hosea. I have said that his ministry belonged especially to the kingdom of Israel; for then the whole worship of God was there polluted, nor had corruption lately begun; but they were so obstinate in their superstitions, that there was no hope of repentance. We indeed know, that as soon as Jeroboam withdrew the ten tribes from their allegiance to Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, fictitious worship was set up: and Jeroboam seemed to have wisely contrived that artifice, that the people might not return to the house of David; but at the same time he brought on himself and the whole people the vengeance of God. And those who came after him followed the same impiety. When such perverseness became intolerable, God resolved to put

forth his power, and to give some signal proof of his displeasure, that the people might at length repent. Hence Jehu was by God's command anointed King of Israel, that he might destroy all the posterity of Ahab: but he also soon relapsed into the same idolatry. He executed God's judgement, he pretended great zeal; but his hypocrisy soon came to light, for he embraced false and perverted worship; and his followers were nothing better even down to Jeroboam, under whom Hosea prophesied; but of this we shall speak in considering the inscription of the book.

Hosea 1

Chapter 1

Lecture first

Hosea 1:1

1. The word of the LORD that came unto Hosea— the son of Beeri— in the days of Uzziah— Jotham— Ahaz— and Hezekiah— kings of Judah— and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash— king of Israel.

1. Sermo Jehovae— qui fuit ad Hoseam filium Beri— diebus Uzia— Jotham— Achaz— Ezechiae— regum Jehuda— et diebus Jarobeam filii Joas regis Israel.

This first verse shows the time in which Hosea prophesied. He names four kings of Judah, — Uzziah, Jotham, Ahab, Hezekiah. Uzziah, called also Azariah, reigned fifty-two years; but after having been smitten with leprosy, he did not associate with men, and abdicated his royal dignity. Jotham, his son, succeeded him. The years of Jotham were about sixteen, and about as many were those of king Ahab, the father of Hezekiah; and it was under king Hezekiah that Hosea died. If we now wish to ascertain how long he discharged his office of teaching, we must take notice of what sacred history says, — Uzziah began to reign in the twenty seventh year of Jeroboam, the son of Joash. By supposing that Hosea performed his duties as a teacher, excepting a few years during the reign of Jeroboam, that is, the sixteen years which passed from the beginning of Uzziah's reign to the death of Jeroboam, he must have prophesied thirty-six years under the reign of Uzziah. There is, however, no doubt but that he began to execute his office some years before the end of Jeroboam's reign.

Here, then, there appear to be at least forty years. Jotham succeeded his father, and reigned sixteen years; and though it be a probable conjecture, that the beginning of his reign is to be counted from the time he undertook

the government, after his father, being smitten with leprosy, was ejected from the society of men, it is yet probable that the remaining time to the death of his father ought to come to our reckoning. When however, we take for granted a few years, it must be that Hosea had prophesied more than forty-five years before Ahab began to reign. Add now the sixteen years in which Ahab reigned and the number will amount to sixty-one. There remain the years in which he prophesied under the reign of Hezekiah. It cannot, then, be otherwise but that he had followed his office more than sixty years, and probably continued beyond the seventieth year.

It hence appears with how great and with how invincible courage and perseverance he was endued by the Holy Spirit. But when God employs our service for twenty or thirty years we think it very wearisome, especially when we have to contend with wicked men, and those who do not willingly undertake the yoke, but pertinaciously resist us; we then instantly desire to be set free, and wish to become like soldiers who have completed their time. When therefore, we see that this Prophet persevered for so long a time, let him be to us an example of patience so that we may not despond, though the Lord may not immediately free us from our burden.

Thus much of the four kings whom he names. He must indeed have prophesied (as I have just shown) for nearly forty years under the king Uzziah or Azariah, and then for some years under the king Ahab, (to omit now the reign of Jotham, which was concurrent with that of his father,) and he continued to the time of Hezekiah: but why has he particularly mentioned Jeroboam the son of Joash, since he could not have prophesied under him except for a short time? His son Zachariah succeeded him; there arose afterward the conspiracy of Shallum, who was soon destroyed; then the kingdom became involved in great confusion; and at length the Assyrian, by means of Shalmanazar, led away captive the ten tribes, which became dispersed among the Medes. As this was the case, why does the Prophet here mention only one king of Israel? This seems strange; for he continued his office of teaching to the end of his reign and to his death. But an answer may be easily given: He wished distinctly to express, that he began to teach while the state was entire; for, had he prophesied after the death of Jeroboam, he might have seemed to conjecture some great calamity from the then present view of things: thus it would not have been prophecy, or, at least, this credit would have been much less. "He now, forsooth! divines what is, evident to the eyes of all." For Zachariah flourished but a short time; and the conspiracy alluded to before was a certain presage of an approaching destruction, and the kingdom became soon dissolved. Hence the Prophet testifies here in express words, that he had already threatened future vengeance to the people, even when the kingdom of Israel flourished in wealth and power, when Jeroboam was enjoying his triumphs, and when prosperity inebriated the whole land.

This, then, was the reason why the Prophet mentioned only this one king; for under him the kingdom of Israel became strong, and was fortified by many

strongholds and a large army, and abounded also in great riches. Indeed, sacred history tells us, that God had by Jeroboam delivered the kingdom of Israel, though he himself was unworthy, and that he had recovered many cities and a very wide extent of country. As, then, he had increased the kingdom, as he had become formidable to all his neighbours, as he had collected great riches, and as the people lived in ease and luxury, what the Prophet declared seemed incredible. "Ye are not," he said, "the people of the Lord; ye are adulterous children, ye are born of fornication." Such a reproof certainly seemed not seasonable. Then he said, "The kingdom shall be taken from you, destruction is nigh to you." "What, to us? and yet our king has now obtained so many victories, and has struck terror into other kings." The kingdom of Judah, which was a rival, being then nearly broken down, there was no one who could have ventured to suspect such an event.

We now, then, perceive why the Prophet here says expressly that he had prophesied under Jeroboam. He indeed prophesied after his death, and followed his office even after the destruction of the kingdom of Israel, but he began to teach at a time when he was a sport to the ungodly, who exalted themselves against God, and boldly despised his threatening as long as he spared and bore with them; which is ever the case, as proved by the constant experience of all ages. We hence see more clearly with what power of the Spirit God had endued the Prophet, who dared to rise up against so powerful a king, and to reprove his wickedness, and also to summon his subjects to the same judgement. When, therefore, the Prophet conducted himself so boldly, at a time when the Israelites were not only sottish on account of their great success, but also wholly insane, it was certainly nothing short of a miracle; and this ought to avail much to establish his authority. We now then, see the design of the inscription contained in the first verse. It follows

Hosea 1:2

2. The beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea. And the Lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms: for the land hath committed great whoredom, departing from the Lord

2. Principiam quo loquutus est Jehova per Hoseam, (alii vertunt, cum Hosea; ad verbum est, in Hosea; est liters beth.) Dixit Jehova ad Hoseam, Vade, sume tibi uxorem scortationum et filios scortationem, quia scortando scortabitur terra, (hoc est, scortata est,) ne sequatur Jehovam..

The Prophet shows here what charge was given him at the beginning, even to declare open war with the Israelites, and to be, as it were, very angry in the person of God, and to denounce destruction. He begins not with smooth things, nor does he gently exhort the people to repentance, nor adopt a circuitous course to soften the asperity of his doctrine. He shows that he had used nothing of this kind, but says, that he had been sent like heralds or messengers to proclaim war. The beginning, then, of what the Lord spake by Hosea was this, "This people are an adulterous race, all are born, as it

were, of a harlot, the kingdom of Israel is the filthiest brothel; and I now repudiate and reject them, I no longer own them as my children." This was no common vehemence. We hence see that the word *beginning* was not set down without reason, but advisedly, that we may know that the Prophet, as soon as he undertook the office of teaching, was vehement and severe, and, as it were, fulminated against the kingdom of Israel.

Now, if it be asked, why was God so greatly displeased? why did he not first recall the wretched men to himself, since the usual method seems to have been, that the Prophet tried, by a kind and paternal address, to restore those to a sound mind who had departed from the pure worship of God, — why, then, did not God adopt this ordinary course? But we hence gather that the diseases of the people were incurable. The Prophet, no doubt, intimates here distinctly, that he was sent by God, when the state of things was almost past recovery. We indeed know that God is not wont to deal so severely with men, but when he has tried all other remedies; and this may doubtless be easily learned from the records of Scripture. The ten tribes, immediately after their revolt from the family of David, having renounced the worship of God, embraced idolatry and ungodly superstitions. They ought to have retained in their minds the recollection of this oracle,

'The Lord has chosen mount Zion, where he has desired to be worshipped; this,' he said 'is my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it,' (Psalm 132:13,14.)

And this prediction, we know, had not been once or ten times repeated, but a hundred times, that it might be more firmly fixed in the hearts of men. Since, then, they ought to have had this truth fully impressed on their hearts, that the Lord would have himself worshipped nowhere except on mount Zion, it was monstrous stupidity in them to erect a new temple and to make the calves. That the people, then, had so quickly fallen away from God was an instance of the most perverse madness. But, as I have said, they had reached the highest point of impiety. When God punished so great sins by Jehu, the people ought then to have returned to the pure worship of God, and there was some reformation in the land; but they ever reverted to their own nature, yea, the event proved that they only dissembled for a short time; so blinded they were by a diabolical perverseness, that they ever continued in their superstitions. It is not, then, to be wondered at, that the Lord made this beginning by Hosea, "*Ye are all born of fornication*, your kingdom is the filthiest brothel; ye are not my people, ye are not beloved." Who, then, will not allow, that God, by fulminating in so dreadful a manner against this people, dealt justly with them, and for the best reason? The contumacy of the people was so indomitable that it could be overcome in no other way. We now understand why the Prophet used this expression, *The beginning of speaking which God made*

Then it follows, *in Hosea.* He had said in the first verse, *The word of Jehovah which was to Hosea*; he now says, {בהושע}, *beusho*, in Hosea; and

he adds God spake and said to Hosea, repeating the preposition used in the first verse. The word of the Lord is said to have been to Hosea, not simply because God addressed the Prophet, but because he sent him forth with certain commissions, for in this sense is the word of God said to have been to the Prophets. God addresses his word also indiscriminately to others whomsoever he is pleased to teach by his word, but he speaks to and addresses his Prophets in a peculiar way, for he makes them the ministers and heralds of his word, and puts, as it were, into their mouth what they afterwards bring forth to the people. So Christ says, that the word of God came to kings, because he constitutes and appoints them to govern mankind. "If he calls them gods," he says, "to whom the word of God came;" and that psalm, we know, was written with a special reference to kings. We now perceive what this sentence in the first verse contains. *The word of God came to Hosea*; for the Lord did not simply address the Prophet in a common way, but furnished him with instructions, that he might afterwards teach the people, as it were, in the person of God himself.

It is now added in the second verse, *The beginning of speaking, such as the Lord made by Hosea.* They who give this rendering, "with Hosea," seem to explain the Prophet's meaning frigidly. The letter בְּ, *beth*, I know, has this sense often in Scripture; but the Prophet, no doubt, in this place represents himself as the instrument of the Holy Spirit. God then spake *in Hosea*, or by Hosea, for he brought forth nothing from his own brain, but God spake by him; this is a form of speaking with which we shall often meet. On this, indeed, depends the whole authority of God's servants that they give not themselves loose reins, but faithfully deliver, as it were, from hand to hand, what the Lord has commanded them, without adding any thing whatever of their own. God then spake in Hosea. It afterwards follows, *The Lord said to Hosea.* Now this, which is said the third time, or three times repeated, is nothing else than the commission in different forms. He first said in general, "The word of the Lord which was to Hosea;" now he says, *The Lord spake thus,* and he expresses distinctly what the word was which he referred to in the first verse.

Go, he says, *take to thee a wife of wantonness, and the children of wantonness*; and the reason is added, *for by fornicating, or wantoning, has the land grown wanton.* He doubtless speaks here of the vices which the Lord had long endured with inexpressible forbearance. *By wantoning then has the land grown wanton, that it should not follow Jehovah.*

Here interpreters labour much, because it seems very strange that the Prophet should take a harlot for a wife. Some say that this was an extraordinary case. [3] Certainly such a license could not have been borne in a

[3] Much difference has prevailed on this subject. That is it was a real transaction, has been the opinion of not a few. Poole quotes Basil, Augustine, Jerome, and Theodoret, as entertaining this view. Bishop Horsley agrees with them; but he makes this wise remark, "This is in truth a question of little importance to the interpretation of the prophecy, for the act was equally emblematical, whether it was real or visionary only; and the significance of the emblem, whether the act were done in reality or in vision, will be the same." Henry seems to lean to the opinion

teacher. We see what Paul requires in a bishop, and no doubt the same was required formerly in the Prophets, that their families should be chaste and free from every stain and reproach. It would have then exposed the Prophet to the scorn of all, if he had entered a brothel and taken to himself a harlot; for he speaks not here of an unchaste woman only, but of a woman of wantonness, which means a common harlot, for a woman of wantonness is she called, who has long habituated herself to wantonness, who has exposed herself to all, to gratify the wish of all, who has prostituted herself, not once nor twice, nor to few men, but to all. That this was done by the Prophet seems very improbable. But some reply as I have said, that this ought not to be regarded as a common rule, for it was an extraordinary command of God. And yet it seems not consistent with reason, that the Lord should thus gratuitously render his Prophet contemptible; for how could he expect to be received on coming abroad before the public, after having brought on himself such a disgrace? If he had married a wife such as is here described, he ought to have concealed himself for life rather than to undertake the Prophetic office. Their opinion, therefore, is not probable, who think that the Prophet had taken such a wife as is here described.

Then another reason, utterly unresolvable, militates against them; for the Prophet is not only bidden to take a wife of wantonness, but also children of wantonness, begotten by whoredom. It is, therefore, the same as if he himself had committed whoredom. [4] For if we say that he married a wife who had previously conducted herself with some indecency and want of chastity, (as Jerome at length argues in order to excuse the Prophet,) the excuse is frivolous, for he speaks not only of the wife, but also of the children, inasmuch as God would have the whole offspring to be adulterous, and this could not be the case in a lawful marriage. Hence almost all the Hebrews agree in this opinion, that the Prophet did not actually marry a wife, but that he was bidden to do this in a vision. And we shall see in the third chapter (Hosea 3:1) almost the same thing described; and yet what is narrated there could not have been actually done, for the Prophet is bidden to marry a wife who had violated her conjugal fidelity, and after having bought her, to retain her at home for a time. This, we know, was not done. It then follows that this was a representation exhibited to the people.

Some object and say, that the whole passage, as given by the Prophet, cannot be understood as relating a vision. Why not? For the vision, they say, was given to him alone, and God had a regard to the whole people rather than to the Prophet. But it may be, and it is probable, that no vision was presented to the Prophet, but that God only ordered him to proclaim what had been given him in charge. When, therefore, the Prophet began to teach,

that it was a parable; and Scott, that it was a real transaction. The notion of a parable is attended with the least difficulty, and corresponds with the mode of teaching often adopted both in the Old and New Testament. — Ed.

[4] This does not follow; for, as Bishop Horsley justly observes, "the children of wantonness" were those previously begotten. The Prophet was to take a woman who was a harlot, together with her spurious children. This is the evident message of the passage. —Ed.

he commenced somewhat in this way: "The Lord places me here as on a stage, to make known to you that I have married a wife, a wife habituated to adulteries and whoredoms, and that I have begotten children by her." The whole people knew that he had done no such thing; but the Prophet spake thus in order to set before their eyes a vivid representation. Such then, was the vision, a figurative exhibition, not that the Prophet knew this by a vision, but the Lord had bidden him to relate this parable, (so to speak,) or this similitude, that the people might see, as in a living portraiture, their turpitude and perfidiousness. It is, in short, an exhibition, in which the thing itself is not only set forth in words, but is also placed, as it were, before their eyes in a visible form. The reason is added, *for by wantoning has the land grown wanton*

We now then see how the words of the Prophet ought to be understood; for he assumed a character, when going forth before the public, and in this character he said to the people, that God had bidden him to take a harlot for his wife, and to beget adulterous children by her. His ministry was not on this account made contemptible, for they all knew that he had ever lived virtuously and temperately; they all knew that his household was exempt from every reproach; but here he exhibited in his assumed character, as it were, a living image of the baseness of the people. This is the meaning, and I see nothing strained in this explanation; and we, at the same time, see the meaning of this clause, *By wantoning has the land grown wanton.* Hosea might have said this in one word, but he had to address the deaf, and we know how great and how stupid is the madness of those who delight themselves in their own superstitions, they cannot bear any reproof. The Prophet then would not have been attended to, unless he had exhibited, as in a mirror before their eyes, what he wished to be understood by them, as though he had said, "If none of you can so know himself as to own his public baseness, if ye are all so obstinate against God, at least know now by my assumed character, that you are all adulterous, and derive your origin from a filthy brothel, for God declares thus concerning you; and as you are not willing to receive such a declaration, it is now set before you in my assumed character."

That it should not follow Jehovah, literally, *From after Jehovah*, {מאחרי}, *meachri.* We here see what is the spiritual chastity of God's people, and what also is the signification of the word wantoning. Then the spiritual chastity of God's people is to follow the Lord; and what else is this to follow, but to suffer ourselves to be ruled by his word, and willingly to obey him, to be ready and prepared for any work to which he may call us? When then the Lord goes before us with his instruction and shows the way, and we become teachable and obedient, and look up to him, and turn not aside, either to the right or to the left hand, but bring our whole life to the obedience of faith, — this is really to follow the Lord; and it is a most beautiful definition of the spiritual chastity of God's people.

And we may also, from the opposite of this, learn what it is to grow wanton; we do so when we depart from the word of the Lord, when we give ear to false doctrines, when we abandon ourselves to superstitions; when we, in short, wander after our own devices, and keep not our thoughts under the authority of the word of the Lord. But as to the word wantoning, more will be said in chapter 2; but I only wished now briefly to touch on what the Prophet means when he chides the Israelites for having all become wanton. Now follows —

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast once adopted us, and continues to confirm this thy favour by calling us unceasingly to thyself, and dost not only severely chastise us, but also gently and paternally invite us to thyself, and exhort us at the same time to repentance, — O grant that we may not be so hardened as to resist thy goodness, nor abuse this thine incredible forbearance, but submit ourselves in obedience to thee; that whenever thou mayest severely chastise us, we may bear thy corrections with genuine submission of faith, and not continue untameable and obstinate to the last, but return to thee the only fountain of life and salvation, that as thou has once begun in us a good work, so thou mayest perfect it to the day of our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Second

Hosea 1:3, 4

3. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; which conceived, and bare him a son.

3. Et profectus est et accepit Gomer, filiam Diablaim: et concepit et peperit ei filium.

4. And the LORD said unto him, Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.

4. Et dixit Jehova ad eum, Voca nomen Jizreel, quia adhuc pauxillum, et visitabo sanguines Jizreel super domum Jehu, et cessare faciam (hoc est, abolebo) regnum domus Israel.

We said in yesterday's Lecture, that God ordered his Prophet to take a wife of whoredoms, but that this was not actually done; for what other effect could it have had, but to render the Prophet contemptible to all? and thus his authority would have been reduced to nothing. But God only meant to show to the Israelites by such a representation, that they vaunted themselves without reason; for they had nothing worthy of praise, but were in every way ignominious. It is then said, Hosea *went and took* to himself *Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim* {גמר}, *Gomer*, means in Hebrew, *to fail*; and sometimes it signifies actively, *to consume*; and hence *Gomer* means consumption. But *Diblaim* are masses of figs, or dry figs reduced to a mass. The Greeks call them {παλαθας}. The Cabalists say here that the wife of Hosea was called by this name, because they who are much given to wantonness at length fall into

death and corruption. So consumption is the daughter of figs, for by figs they understand the sweetness of lusts. But it will be more simple to say, that this representation was exhibited to the people, that the Prophet set before them, instead of a wife, consumption, the daughter of figs; that is, that he laid before them masses of figs or {παλαθας}, representing Gomer, which means consumption and that he adopted a similar manner with mathematicians, when they describe their figures, — "If this be so much, then that is so much." We may then thus understand the passage, that the Prophet here named for his wife the corrupt masses of figs; so that she was consumption or putrefaction, born of figs, reduced into such masses. For I still persist in the opinion I expressed yesterday, that the Prophet did not enter a brothel to take a wife to himself: for otherwise he must have begotten bastards, and not legitimate children; for, as it was said yesterday, the case with the wife and the children was the same.

We now then understand the true meaning of this verse to be, that the Prophet did not marry a harlot, but only exhibited her before the eyes of the people as though she were corruption, born of putrified masses of figs.

It now follows, the wife *conceived*, — the imaginary one, the wife as represented and exhibited. She *conceived*, he says, *and bare a son: then said Jehovah to him, Call his name Jezreel.* Many render {יזרעאל}, *Izroal*, dispersion, and follow the Chaldean paraphraser. They also think that this ambiguous term contains some allusion; for as {זרע}, *zaro* is seed, they suppose that the Prophet indirectly glances at the vain boasting of the people; for they called themselves the chosen seed, because they had been planted by the Lord; hence the name Jezreel. But the Prophet here, according to these interpreters, exposes this folly to contempt; as though he said, "Ye are Israel; but in another respect, ye are dispersion: for as the seed is cast in various directions so the Lord will scatter you, and thus destroy and cast you away. You think yourselves to have been planted in this land, and to have a standing from which you can never be shaken or torn away; but the Lord will, with his own hand, lay hold on you to cast you away to the remotest regions of the world." This sense is what many interpreters give; nor do I deny but that the Prophet alludes to the words sowing and seed; with this I disagree not: only it seems to me that the Prophet looks farther, and intimates that they were wholly degenerate, not the true nor the genuine offspring of Abraham.

There is, as we see, much affinity between the names *Jezreel* and *Israel*. How honourable is the name, Israel, it is evident from its etymology; and we also know that it was given from above to the holy father Jacob. God, then, the bestower of this name, procured by his own authority, that those called Israelites should be superior to others: and then we must remember the reason why Jacob was called Israel; for he had a contest with God, and overcame in the struggle, (Genesis 32:28.) Hence the posterity of Abraham gloried that they were Israelites. And the prophet Isaiah also glances at this

arrogance, when he says,

'Come ye who are called by the name of Israel,'
(Isaiah 48:1;)

as though he said, "Ye are Israelites, but only as to the title, for the reality exists not in you."

Let us now return to our Hosea. *Call*, he says *his name Jezreel*; [5] as though he said, "They call themselves Israelites; but I will show, by a little change in the word, that they are degenerate and spurious, for they are Jezreelites rather than Israelites." And it appears that Jezreel was the metropolis of the kingdom in the time of Ahab, and where also that great slaughter was made by Jehu, which is related in 2 Kings 10 We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet to be, that the whole kingdom had degenerated from its first beginning, and could no longer be deemed as including the race of Abraham; for the people had, by their own perfidy, fallen from that honour, and lost their first name. God then, by way of contempt, calls them Jezreelites, and not Israelites.

A reason afterwards follows which confines this view, *For yet a little while, and I will visit the slaughters of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.* Here interpreters labour not a little, because it seems strange that God should visit the slaughter made by Jehu, which yet he had approved; nay, Jehu did nothing thoughtlessly, but knew that he was commanded to execute that vengeance. He was, therefore, God's legitimate minister; and why is what God commanded imputed to him now as a crime? This reasoning has driven some interpreters to take "bloods" here for wicked deeds in general: 'I will avenge the sins of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu.' Some say, "I will avenge the slaughter of Naboth:" but this is wholly absurd, nor can it suit the place, for, "upon the house of Jehu," is distinctly expressed; and God did not visit the slaughter on the house of Jehu, but on the house of Ahab. But they who are thus embarrassed do not consider what the Prophet has in view. For God, when he wished Jehu with his drawn sword to destroy the whole house of Ahab, had this end as his object, — that Jehu should restore pure worship, and cleanse the land from all defilements. Jehu then was stirred up by the Spirit of God, that he might re-establish God's pure worship. When a defender of religion, how did he act? He became contented with his prey. After having seized on the kingdom for himself, he confirmed idolatry and every abomination. He did not then spend his labour for God. Hence that slaughter with regard to Jehu was robbery; with regard to God it was a just revenge. this view ought to satisfy us as to the explanation of this passage; and I bring nothing but what the Holy Scripture contains. For after Jehu

[5] The explanation given of this word by Horsley does not in the least correspond with the context, or with the reason afterwards assigned for it. He interprets in "the seed of God," meaning the servants of God, according to the supposed etymology of the word: but the first son of Hosea was called Jezreel, as stated expressly on account of what was to take place in the city, or in the valley of Jezreel. And to say that as the word is taken in its etymological sense in chapter 2 verse 22, it ought to be so taken here, is no valid reason. When a word, as in this case, has two meanings, it is the context that must be our guide, and not the sense of it in another chapter. —Ed.

seemed to burn with zeal for God, he soon proved that there was nothing sincere in his heart; for he embraced all the superstitions which previously prevailed in the kingdom of Israel. In short, the reformation under Jehu was like that under Henry King of England; who, when he saw that he could not otherwise shake off the yoke of the Roman Antichrist than by some disguise, pretended great zeal for a time: he afterwards raged cruelly against all the godly, and doubled (*duplicavit* — duplicated) the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff: and such was Jehu.

When we duly consider what was done by Henry, it was indeed an heroic valour to deliver his kingdom from the hardest of tyrannies: but yet, with regard to him, he was certainly worse than all the other vassals of the Roman Antichrist; for they who continue under that bondage, retain at least some kind of religion; but he was restrained by no shame from men, and proved himself wholly void of every fear towards God. He was a monster, (*homo belluinus* — a beastly man) and such was Jehu.

Now, when the Prophet says, *I will avenge the slaughters of Jezreel* upon the house of Jehu, it is no matter of wonder. How so? For it was the highest honour to him, that God anointed him king, that he, who was of a low family, was chosen a king by the Lord. He ought then to have stretched every nerve to restore God's pure worship, and to destroy all superstitions. This he did not; on the contrary, he confirmed them. He was then a robber, and as to himself, no minister of God.

The meaning of the whole then is this: "Ye are not Israelites, (there is here only an ambiguity as to the pronunciation of one letter,) but Jezreelites;" which means, "Ye are not the descendants of Jacob, but Jezreelites;" that is, "Ye are a degenerate people, and differ nothing from king Ahab. He was accursed, and under him the kingdom became accursed. Are ye changed? Is there any reformation? Since then ye are obstinate in your wickedness, though ye proudly claim the name of Jacob, ye are yet unworthy of such an honour. I therefore call you Jezreelites."

And the reason is added, *For yet a little while, and I will visit the slaughters upon the house of Jehu.* God now shows that the people were destitute of all glory. But they thought that the memory of all sins had been buried since the time that the house of Ahab had been cut off. "Why? I will avenge these slaughters," saith the Lord. It is customary, we know, with hypocrites, after having punished one sin, to think that all things are lawful to them, and to wish to be thus discharged before God. A thief will punish a murder, but he himself will commit many murders. He thinks himself redeemed, because he has paid God the price in punishing one man; but he lets go others, who have been his accomplices, and he himself hesitates not to commit many unjust murders. Since, then, hypocrites thus mock God, the Prophet now justly shakes off such senselessness, and says*, I will avenge these slaughters.* "Do ye think it a deed worthy of praise in Jehu, to destroy and root out the house of Ahab? I indeed commanded it to be done but he turned the

vengeance enjoined on him to another end." How so? Because he became a robber; for he did not punish the sins of Ahab, because he did the same himself to the end of life, and continued to do the same in his posterity, for Jeroboam was the fourth from him in the kingdom. "Since, then, Jehu did not change the condition of the country, and ye have ever been obstinate in your wickedness, I will avenge these slaughters."

This is a remarkable passage; for it shows that it is not enough, nay, that it is of no moment, that a man should conduct himself honourably before men, except he possesses also an upright and sincere heart. He then who punishes evil deeds in others, ought himself to abstain from them, and to measure the same justice to himself as he does to others; for he who takes to himself a liberty to sin, and yet punishes others, provokes against himself the wrath of God.

We now then perceive the true sense of this sentence, *I will avenge the slaughters of Jezreel*, to be this, that he would avenge the slaughters made in the valley of Jezreel on the house of Jehu. It is added *and I will abolish the kingdom of the house of Israel*. The house of Israel he calls that which had separated from the family of David, as though he said, "This is a separated house." God had indeed joined the whole people together, and they became one body. It was torn asunder under Jeroboam. This was God's dreadful judgement; for it was the same as if the people, like a torn body, had been cut into two parts. But God, however, had hitherto preserved these two parts, as though they were but one body, and would have become the Redeemer of both people, had not a base defection followed. And the Israelites having become, as it were, putrified, so as now to be no part of his chosen people, our Prophet, by way of contempt and reproach, rightly calls them the house of Israel. It now follows —

Hosea 1:5

5. And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.

5. Et erit in die illa et conteram arcum (vel— confringum) Israel in valle Jizreel.

This verse was intentionally added; for the Israelites were so inflated with their present good fortune, that they laughed at the judgement denounced. They indeed knew that they were well furnished with arms, and men, and money; in short, they thought themselves in every way unassailable. Hence the Prophet declares, that all this could not prevent God from punishing them. "Ye are," he says, "inflated with pride; ye set up your valour against God, thinking yourselves strong in arms and in power; and because ye are military men, ye think that God can do nothing; and yet your bows cannot restrain his hand from destroying you. But when he says, *I will break the bow*, he mentions a part for the whole; for under one sort he comprehends every kind of arms. But as to what the Prophet had in view, we see that his only object was to break down their false confidence; for the Israelites

thought that they should not be exposed to the destruction which Hosea had predicted; for they were dazzled with their own power, and thought themselves beyond the reach of any danger, while they were so well fortified on every side. Hence the Prophet says, that all their fortresses would be nothing against God; for *in that day*, when the ripe time for vengeance shall come, the Lord will break all their bows, he will tear in pieces all their arms, and reduce to nothing their power.

We are here warned ever to take heed, lest any thing should lead us to a torpid state when God threatens us. Though we may have strength, though fortune (so to speak) may smile on us, though, in a word, the whole world should combine to secure our safety, yet there is no reason why we should felicitate ourselves, when God declares himself opposed to and angry with us. Why so? Because, as he can preserve us when unarmed whenever he pleases, so he can spoil us of all our arms, and reduce our power to nothing. Let this verse then come to our minds whenever God terrifies us by his threatening; and what it teaches us is, that he can take away all the defences in which we vainly trust.

Now, as Jezreel was the metropolis of the kingdom, the Prophet distinctly mentions the place, *I will break in pieces the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel*; that is, the Lord sees what sort of fortress there is in Samaria, in Jezreel; but he will make an end of you there, in the very midst of the land. Ye think that you have there a place of safety and a firm position; but the Lord will bring you to nothing even in the valley of Jezreel. It follows —

Hosea 1:6

6. And she conceived again — and bare a daughter. And God said unto him — Call her name Loruhamah: for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.

6. Et concepit adhuc (concepit rursum) et peperit filiam: et dixit ei— Voca nomen ejus Loruchama— (hoc est— non adepta misericordiam— vel— non dilecta: sic enim Graeci verterunt— et Paulus sequutus est illam receptam versionem capite— ad Rom.) quia non adjiciam amplius ut misericordia persequar (vel— ut diligam) domum Israel— quia tollendo tollam eos.

The Prophet shows in this verse that things were become worse and worse in the kingdom of Israel, that they sinned, keeping within no limits, that they rushed headlong into the extremes of impiety. He has already told us, by calling them Jezreelites, that they were from the beginning rejected and degenerate; as though he said, "Your origin has nothing commendable in it; ye think yourselves to be very eminent, because ye derive your descent from holy Jacob; but ye are spurious children, born of a harlot: a brothel is not the house of Abraham, nor is the house of Abraham a brothel. Ye are then the offspring of debauchery." But he now goes farther and says, that as time advanced, they had ever been falling into a worse state; for this word, Loruchamah, is a more disgraceful name than Jezreel: and the Lord also denounces here his vengeance more openly, when he says,

I will no more add to pursue with mercy the house of Israel {רחם}, *rechem*, means to pity, and also to love: but this second meaning is derived from the other; for {רחם}, *rechem*, is not simply to love, but to show gratuitous favour. By calling the daughter, then, Lo-ruchamah, God intimates that his favour was now taken away from the people. We know, indeed, that the people had been freely chosen; for if the cause of adoption be inquired for, it must be said to have been the mere mercy and goodness of God. Now then God, in repudiating the people, says, "Ye are like a daughter whom her father casts away and disowns, because he deems her unworthy of his favour." We now, then, comprehend the design of the Prophet; for, after having shown the Israelites to have been from the beginning spurious, and not the true children of Abraham, he now adds, that, in course of time, they had become so corrupt, that God would now utterly disown them, and would no longer deem them as his house. He, therefore, charges them with something more grievous than before, by saying, 'Call this daughter Lo-ruchamah;' for she was born after Jezreel. Here he describes by degrees the state of the people, that it continually degenerated. Though they were at the beginning depraved; but they were now, after the lapse of some time, utterly unworthy of God's favour.

I will no more add, he says, *to pursue with favour the house of Israel.* God here shows what constant forbearance he had exercised towards this people. *I will no more add*, he says; as though the Lord had said, "I do not now sally forth at the first heat of wrath to take vengeance on you, as passionate men are wont to do, who seize the sword as soon as any affront is given; I become not so suddenly hot with anger. I have, therefore, hitherto borne with you; but now your obstinacy is intolerable; I will not then bear with you any more." The Prophet, as we see, evidently intimates that the Israelites had very long abused the Lord's mercy, while he spared them, so that now the ripe time of vengeance had come; for the Lord had, for many years showed his favour to them, though they never ceased at any time to seek destruction to themselves. Hence we learn, as stated yesterday, that the Prophet's vehemence was not hasty: for God had before given warnings, more than sufficient, to the Israelites; he had also forgiven them many sins; he had borne with them until the state of things proved that they were altogether incurable. Since, then, the forbearance of God produced no effect on them, it was necessary to come to this last remedy, that the Lord should, as it were, with a drawn sword, appear as a judge to take vengeance.

He afterwards says, {להם} {אשא} {נשוא} {כי}, *ki neshua asha lem.* This sentence is variously explained. Some think that the verb is derived from the root {נשה}, *nesche*, with a final {ה}, *he*; which means "to forget", as though it was said "By forgetting, I will forget them;" and the sense is not unsuitable. The Chaldean paraphraser wholly departs from this meaning, for he renders the clause, "By sparing, I will spare them." There is no reason for this; for God, as the context clearly shows, does not yet promise pardon

to them; this meaning, then, cannot stand. They come nearer to the design of the Prophet who thus translate, “I will bring to them,” that is, the enemy; for {נשא}, *nesha*, signifies to take, and also to bring into the middle. But I prefer embracing their opinion who consider that {להם}, *lem*, is placed here for {אותם}, *autem*; for the servile letter {ל}, *lamed*, has often the same meaning with the particle {את}, *at*, which is prefixed to an objective case. Then the rendering is, literally given, “For, by taking away, I will take them away:” and the Hebrews often use this mode of speaking, and the sense is plainer, “By taking away, I will take them away.” Some render the passage, “I will burn them;” but this explanation is rather harsh. I am satisfied with the meaning, to take, but I understand it in the sense of taking away. Then it is, “By taking away, I will take them away.” [6]

And this is what the following verse confirms; for when the Prophet speaks of the house of Judah, the Lord says, “With mercy will I follow the house of Judah, and will save them.” The Prophet sets “to save” and “to take away” in opposition the one to the other.

We may then learn by the context what he meant by these words, and that is, that Israel had hitherto stood through the Lord’s mercy; as though he said, “How has it happened that ye continue as yet alive? Do you think yourselves to be safe through your own valour? Nay, my mercy has hitherto preserved you. Now, then, when I shall withdraw my favour from you, your ruin will be inevitable; you must necessarily perish, and be brought to nothing: for as I have hitherto preserved you, so I will utterly tear you away and destroy you.” A profitable lesson may be farther gathered from this passage, and that is, that hypocrites deceive themselves when they boast of the present favour of God, and, at the same time, exult without any fear against him; for as God for a time spares and tolerates them, so he can justly destroy and reduce them to nothing. But the next verse must be also joined.

Hosea 1:7

7. But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, and will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

7 Et domum Jehudah misericordia prosequar, (vel, favore; vel, diligam: diximus enim jam de hoc verbo,) et servabo eos in Jehova Deo ipsorum, et non servabo eos in arcu, neque in gladio, neque in prelio, neque in equis, neque in equitibus

This verse sufficiently proves what I said yesterday, that the Prophet was specifically appointed to the kingdom of Israel; for he seems here to speak favourably of the Jews, who yet, we know, had been severely and deservedly

[6] Though Newcome and others agree with Calvin in this sense, yet I still believe that the true rendering is that which is substantially given in the margin of our version. The verb here used, when followed by {{ל does not mean to take away, but to pardon, to forgive, and the particle {כי} is sometimes rendered, that, so that, ut. Then the two lines may be thus translated: --- ``I will no more show mercy to the house of Israel, That by pardoning I should pardon them.'' The main drift of the passage is still the same with what is assigned to it by Calvin. The version of Bishop Horsley favors what I have offered: he renders the last line thus: --- ``Insomuch as to be perpetually forgiving them.''

reproved by their own teachers. For what does Isaiah say, after having spoken of the dreadful corruptions which then prevailed in the kingdom of Israel? 'Come,' he says, 'into the house of Judah, they at least continue as yet pure: there,' he says, 'all the tables are full of vomiting; they are drunken; there reigns also the contempt of God and all impiety,' (Isaiah 28:8.) We see then that the Jews were not a virtuous people, of whom the Prophet has spoken so honourably. For though the exterior worship of God continued at Jerusalem, and the temple, at least under Uzziah and Jotham, was free from every superstition, and also under king Hezekiah; yet the morals of the people, we know, were very corrupt. Avarice, and cruelty, and every kind of fraud, reigned there, and also filthy lusts. The conduct, then, of that people was nothing better than that of the Israelites. Why, then, does the Prophet dignify them with so great an honour as to exempt them from God's vengeance? Because he had an eye to the people to whom he was appointed a Prophet. He therefore institutes a comparison. He interferes not with the Jews, for he knew that they had faithful pastors who reproved their sins; but he continued among his own hearers. But this comparison served, in an especial manner, to touch the hearts of the people of Israel; for the Prophet, we know, made this reference particularly for this end, to condemn fictitious worship. He now sets the worship at Jerusalem in opposition to all those superstitions which Jeroboam first introduced, which Ahab increased, and all their posterity followed. Hence he says, "I will show favour" to the house of Judah.

That we may better understand the mind of the Prophet, it may be well to repeat what we said yesterday: — The kingdom of Judah was then miserably wasted. The kingdom of Israel had ten tribes, the kingdom of Judah only one and a half, and it was also diminished by many slaughters; yea, the Israelites had spoiled the temple of the Lord, and had taken all the gold and silver they found there. The Jews, then, had been reduced to a very low state, they hardly dared to mutter; but the Israelites, as our Prophet will hereafter tell us, were like beasts well fed. Since, then, they despised the Jews, who seemed despicable in the eyes of the world, the Prophet beats down this vain confidence, and says*, With mercy will I follow the house of Judah* "The house of Judah seems now to be almost nothing, for they are few in number, nor are they very strong, and wealth abounds not among them as among you; but with them shall dwell my favour, and I will take it away from you."

It afterwards follows, *And I will save them by Jehovah their God.* Salvation is here set in opposition to the destruction which the Prophet mentioned in the last verse. But Hosea shows that salvation depends not in the least either on arms or on any of the intervenients [7] , as they say, of this world; but has its foundation only on God's favour. *I will save them,* he says — why? *because*

[7] Mediis-media means. We use medium, but not media; and yet we have no word as a substitute. "Intervenients," perhaps, is the most intelligible word to the English reader. —Ed.

my favour will I show them This connection ought to be carefully noticed. Where the Lord's favour is, there is life. 'Thou art our God, then we shall never perish,' as it is written in the first chapter of Habakkuk. Hence the Prophet here connects salvation with God's gratuitous favour; for we cannot continue safe, but as long as God is propitious to us. He has, on the other hand, declared that it would be all over with the Israelites as soon as God would take away from them his favour.

But he says, *By Jehovah their God.* An antithesis is to be understood here between the false gods and Jehovah, who was the God of the house of Judah. It is the same as though the Prophet said, "Ye indeed profess the name of God, but ye worship the devil and not God: for ye have nothing to do with Jehovah, with the God who is the creator and maker of heaven and earth; for he dwells in his own temple; he pledged his faith to David, when he commanded him to build a temple for him on mount Zion; he dwells there between the cherubim, as the Prophets invariably declare: but the true God is become exiled from you." We hence see how he condemns here all the worship which the Israelites then so highly valued. Why did he do so? Because it was not acceptable to God.

And this passage deserves to be noticed, for we see how stupid men are in this respect. When once they are persuaded that they worship God, they are seized by some fascination of Satan so as to become delighted with all their own dotages, as we see to be the case at this day with the Papists, who are not only insane, but doubly frantic. If any one reproves them and says, that they worship not the true God, they are instantly on fire — "What! does not God accept our worship?" But the Prophet here shows by one word that Jehovah is not in any place, except where he is rightly worshipped according to the rule of his word. *I will save them*, he says — How? *By Jehovah their God;* and God himself speaks: He might have said, "I will save them by myself;" but it was not without reason that he used this circuitous mode of speaking; it was to show the Israelites that they had no reason to think that God would be propitious to them. How so? Because God had chosen an habitation for himself on mount Zion and in Jerusalem. A fuller declaration afterwards follows, I will save them *neither by the bow, nor by the sword, nor by war, nor by horses, nor by horsemen* But this clause, by God's favour, I will explain tomorrow.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we were from our beginning lost, when thou wert pleased to extend to us thy hand, and to restore us to salvation for the sake of thy Son; and that as we continue even daily to run headlong to our own ruin, — O grant that we may not, by sinning so often, so provoke at length thy displeasure as to cause thee to take away from us the mercy which thou hast hitherto exercised towards us, and through which thou hast adopted us: but by thy Spirit destroy the wickedness of our heart, and restore us to a sound mind, that we may ever cleave to thee with a true and sincere

heart, that being fortified by thy defence, we may continue safe even amidst all kinds of danger, until at length thou gatherest us into that blessed rest, which has been prepared for us in heaven by our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Third

We have to explain first this clause, *I will save the house of Judah neither by the bow, nor by the sword, nor by war, nor by horses, nor by horsemen.* What the Prophet had touched upon before is here more clearly expressed, and that is, that God has no need of foreign aids, for he is content with his own power. But Hosea continues his contrast; for the people of Israel, as they possessed much carnal power, thought themselves, as they say, beyond the reach of darts: but the kingdom of Judah was exposed to all dangers, as it was not powerful in forces and arms. This folly the Prophet exposes to contempt, and says, that safety is dependent on God alone, that men in vain trust in their own valour, and that there is no reason why the needy and destitute should despair of their safety, as God alone is abundantly sufficient to preserve the faithful. The meaning then is, that though the destitute condition of the kingdom of Judah was an object of contempt to all, yet this would be no obstacle, that it should not be preserved through God's favour, though it obtained no aid from men. And let us learn from this place, that we are not so preserved by the Lord, that he never employs any natural means; and further, that when he has no recourse to them, he is abundantly sufficient to secure our safety. We ought then so to ascribe our safety to the Lord as not to think that any thing comes to us through ourselves, or through angels, or through men. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 1:8-9

8. Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son.

8. Et ablactavit Lo-ruchama, et concepit et peperit filiam.

9. Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God

9. Et dixit, Voca nomen ejus, Non populus meus, (Lo-ammi:) quia vos non populus meus, et ego non ero vobis (hoc est, non ero vester.)

The *weaning* the Prophet mentions here is by some understood allegorically; as though he said, that the people would for a time be deprived of prophecies, and of the priesthood, and of other spiritual gifts: but this is frigid. The Prophet here, I have no doubt, sets forth the patience of God towards that people. The Lord then, before he had utterly cast away the Israelites, waited patiently for their repentance, if, indeed, there was any hope for it; but when he found them to be ever like themselves, he then at length proceeded to the last punishment. Hence Hosea says, that the daughter, who was the second child, was weaned; as though he said, that the people of Israel had not been suddenly cast away, for God had with long patience borne with them, and thus suspended heavier judgement, until, having found their wickedness to be unhealable, he at length commenced what follows, *Call* the third child Lo-ammi.

The reason is added *For ye are not my people, and I will not hereafter be your God.* This, as I have said, is the final disowning of them. They had been before called Jezreelites, and then by the name of the daughter God testified that he was alienated from them; but now the third name is still more grievous, *Ye are not my people;* for God here abolishes, in a manner, the covenant he made with the holy fathers, so that the people would cease to have any preeminence over other nations. So then the Israelites were reduced to a condition in which they differed nothing from the profane Gentiles; and thus God wholly disinherited them. The Prophet, doubtless, was not well received, when he denied them to be God's people, who had yet descended from Abraham according to the flesh, who had ever been so accounted, and who continued proudly to boast of their election.

But let us hence learn, that those awfully mistake who are blind to their own vices, because God spares and indulges them. For we must ever remember what I have said before, that the kingdom of Israel was then opulent; and yet the Prophet denies them, who flourished in strength, and power, and riches, to be God's people. There is then no reason for hypocrites to felicitate themselves in prosperity; but they ought, on the contrary, to have regard to God's judgement. But though these, as we see to be the case, heedlessly despise God, yet this passage reminds us carefully to beware lest we abuse the present favours of God. It follows —

Hosea 1:10

10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.

10. Et erit numerus filiorum Israel tanquam arena maris, quae non mensuratur et non numeratur, (non mensurabitur nec numeratur, ad verbum sed significant haec verba actum continuum, et est indefinita etiam locutio;) et erit in loco ubi dicetur, (hoc est, ubi dictum fuerit eis,) Non populus meus vos; et dicetur (hoc est, illic dicetur) Filii Dei vivi.

Now follows consolation, yet not unmixed. God seems here to meet the objections which we know hypocrites had in readiness, whenever the Prophets denounced destruction on them; for they accused God of being unfaithful if he did not save them. Arrogating to themselves the title of Church, they concluded that it would be impossible for them to perish for God would not be untrue in his promises. "Why! God has promised that his Church shall be for ever: we are his Church; then we are safe, for God cannot deny himself." In what they took as granted they were deceived; for though they usurped the title of Church, they were yet alienated from God. We see that the Papists swell with this pride at this day. To excuse all their errors they set up against us this shield, "Christ promised to be with his own to the end of the world. Can the spouse desert his Church? Can the Son of God, who is the eternal Truth of the Father, fail in his faithfulness?" The Papists

magnificently extol the faithfulness of Christ, that they may bind him to themselves: but at the same time, they consider not that they are covenant breakers; they consider not that they are manifestly the enemies of God; they consider not that they have divorced themselves from him.

The Prophet, therefore seeing that he had to do with proud men, who were wont to arraign the justice of God, says, *The number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea;* that is, "When the Lord shall cut you off, still safe will remain this promise which was given to Abraham;

'Look at the stars of heaven, number, if thou canst, the sand of the sea; so shall thy seed be,"' (Genesis 15:5.)

We indeed know, that whenever the Prophets severely reproved the people and denounced destruction, this was ever opposed to them, "What! can it be that the Lord will destroy us? What would then become of this promise, Thy seed shall be as the stars of heaven and as the sand of the sea?" Hence the Prophet here checks this vain-confidence, by which hypocrites supported themselves against all threatening, "Though God may cut you off, he will yet continue true and faithful to the promise, that Abraham's seed shall be innumerable as the sand of the sea."

I indeed admit that the Prophet here gave hope of salvation to the faithful; for it is certain that there were some remaining in the kingdom of Israel. Though the whole body had revolted, yet God, as it was said to Elijah, had preserved to himself some seed. The Prophet then was unwilling to leave the faithful, who remained among that lost people, without hope of salvation; but, at the same time, he had regard to hypocrites, as we have already stated. We now see the design of the Prophet, for he teaches that there would be such a vengeance as he had spoken of, though God would not yet be forgetful of his word; he teaches that there would be such a casting away of the people, though God's election would yet remain firm and unchangeable; in short, he teaches that the adoption by which God had chosen the offspring of Abraham as his people would not be void. This is the import of the whole. Then the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which is not to be measured nor numbered.

He afterwards adds, *And it shall be in the place where it had been said to them,* (*shall be said*, literally,) *Ye are not my people; there it shall be said, Ye are the sons of the living God* It has been asked, whether this prophecy belongs to the posterity of those who had been dispersed. This, indeed, would be strange; for so long a time has passed away since their exile, and dejected and broken, they dwell at this day in mountains and in other desert places; at least many of them are in the mountains of Armenia, some are in Media and Chaldea; in short, throughout the whole of the East. And since there has been no restoration of this people, it is certain that this prophecy ought not to be restricted to seed according to the flesh. For there was a prescribed time for the Jews, when the Lord purposed to restore them to their country; and, at the end of seventy years, a free return was granted

them by Cyrus. Then Hosea speaks not here of the kingdom of Israel, but of the Church, which was to be restored by a return, composed both of Jews and of Gentiles. So Paul, a fit interpreter of this passage, reminds us,

'Whom he has called, not only of the Jews,
but also of the Gentiles; as he says by Hosea,
I will call a people, who were not mine, my people;
and her beloved, who was not beloved: and it shall be,
where it had been said to them, Ye are not my people;
there shall they be called the sons of the living God,'
(Romans 9:24, etc.)

Paul applies this passage, and that rightly, to the whole body of the faithful, collected without any difference, from the Jews as well as from the Gentiles: for otherwise, as we have said, the correctness and truth of prophecy would not be evident: and this view also agrees best with the design of the Prophet which I have just explained. For, since hypocrites in a manner tie to themselves the power of God, the Prophet says, that God can, if he chooses, raise up in an instant a new Church, which would exceed in number the sand of the sea. How so? God will create a Church for himself. From what? From stones, from nothing: for, as Paul says elsewhere,

'he calls those things which are not,
as though they were,'
(Romans 4:17.)

At the same time, God, as it has been said, by his goodness contended with the wickedness of that people; for though they rejected his favour, yea, and obstinately thrust it away from themselves, yet such perverseness did not hinder the Lord from preserving a remnant for himself.

Now, this passage teaches, that they are very perverted in their notions, who, by their own feelings, form a judgement of the state of the Church, and accuse God of being unfaithful, when its external appearance does not correspond with their opinion. So the Papists think; for except they see the splendour of great pomp, they conclude that no Church remains in the world. But God at one time so diminishes the Church, that it seems to be almost reduced to nothing; at another time, he increases and multiplies it beyond all hope, after having raised it, as it were, from death. Isaiah says in Isaiah 10:22,

Were the number of the children of Israel as the sand of the sea, a remnant only shall be saved.

The Prophet there designedly exposes to scorn the hypocrites, who falsely pleaded that prophecy, 'Look on the stars of heaven, and on the sand of the sea, if thou can't number them; so shall thy seed be.' Since, then, Isaiah saw that hypocrites, relying on that prophecy, were rising so perversely against him, he said, "Be it so, be it so, that ye are as the stars of heaven, and as the sand of the sea; yet a remnant only shall be saved;" which means, "The Lord will at last cut you down, and reduce you to so small a number,

that ye shall be extremely few." Now, on the other hand, Hosea says, That after the Israelites shall be reduced to a very small number, that nothing but waste and solitude will appear, then the Lord will restore the Church beyond all human thoughts and will prove that he had not in vain promised to Abraham that his seed would be as the sand of the sea. Since, then, the Lord wonderfully defends his Church, and preserves it in this world, so that at one time he seems to bury it, and then he raises it from death; at one time he cuts it down as to its outward appearance, and then afterwards he renews it; we ought to take heed, lest we measure according to our own judgement and carnal reason, what the Lord declares respecting the preservation of his Church. For its safety is often hid from the eyes of men. However the case may be, God does not bind himself here to human means, nor to the order of nature, but his purpose is to surpass by his incredible power whatever the minds of men can conceive.

Thus then ought this passage, *The number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea,* to be expounded: God will gather his Church from all quarters, from the Gentiles as well as from the Jews when the whole world will think it to be extinct.

And it shall be in the place where it had been said, Ye are not my people; there it shall be said, Ye are the sons of the living God The Prophet, in these words, amplifies by a comparison the grace of God; as though he said, "When God shall restore anew his Church, its state shall be more excellent than before." How so? "They shall not only," he says, "be the people of God, but also the sons of the living God;" which means, that God will more familiarly show himself a Father to those, whom he will thus suddenly gather into one body. I indeed allow that the ancients under the law were honoured with this title; but we ought to attend to the present passage; for the Prophet contrasts the two clauses, the one with the other: *And it shall be in the place where it had been said, Ye are not my people; it shall be said there, Ye are the sons of the living God* He might have said, "And it shall be in the place where it had been said, Ye are not my people; there it shall be said, Ye are not my people:" but he ascends higher; God will confer more honour on his new people, for he will more clearly manifest his favour to them by this title of adoption: and it belongs in common to all, to the Gentiles as well as to the Israelites. We ought not to apply this, as it is commonly done, exclusively to the Gentiles: for Hosea speaks not here only of the Church which God attained for himself from the Gentiles, but of the whole Israel of God, a part of whom is the seed of Abraham. Let us then know that God here offers his grace generally, to the Israelites as well as to the Gentiles, and testifies, that after having justly cast away this people, he would make all to know that he had not been unmindful of his covenant, for he would attain to himself a much larger Church — from whom? From the children of Abraham, as it has been said, as well as from strangers.

And there is an important meaning in the verb, 'It shall be said:' *It shall*

be where it had been said, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said, — The Prophet means, that our salvation appears not, before the Lord has begun to testify to us of his good-will. Hence the beginning of our salvation is God's call, when he declares himself to be propitious to us: without his word, no hope shines on us. Hosea might have said, 'It shall be in the place where it had been said, Ye are not my people, there they shall begin to be the sons of God:' but he expresses more, 'It shall be where it had been said, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said, Ye are the sons of the living God.'

As to the first clause, it must be referred to the threatenings which have been already explained; and in this way was also checked the contumacy of the people, who heedlessly despised all the Prophets. "What! God has bound himself to us: we are the race of Abraham; then we are a holy and elect nation." But the Prophet here claims authority to himself as a teacher: "I am a herald of God's vengeance, and seriously proclaim to you your rejection: there is then no reason why ye should now harden your hearts and close your ears; for now at length will follow the execution of that vengeance which I now declare to you." The Prophet then declares here that he had not rashly pronounced what we before noticed, that it was not an empty bug bear, but that he had spoken in the Lord's name; as Paul also says,

'Vengeance is prepared by us against all them
who extol themselves against Christ,' (2 Corinthians 10:6.)

And we see also what was said to Ezekiel, 'Go and besiege Jerusalem; turn thy face, and stand there until thou stormest it, until thou overthrowest it.' The prophet was not certainly furnished with an army, so that he could make an attack upon Jerusalem: but God means there that there is power enough in his word to destroy all the ungodly. So also Hosea signifies the same here: "When by the word alone the Israelites shall be cast away it shall be said, Ye are the sons of the living God." Let us then know, that God rises upon us with certain salvation, when we hear him speaking to us. It follows —

Hosea 1:11

11. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

11. Et congregabuntur filii Jehudah et filii Israel simul— et ponent sibi caput unum— et ascendent e terra; quia magnus dies Jizreel.

The Prophet speaks here peculiarly of the children of Abraham; for though God would make no more account of them than of other nations, he yet wished it to be ascribed to his covenant, that they in honor excelled others; and the right of primogeniture, we know, is everywhere given to them. Then as Abraham's children were first-begotten in the Church, even after the coming of Christ, God here especially addresses them, *Ascend together from the land shall the children of Israel and the children of Judah, and they shall assemble together, and appoint for themselves one head* In the last verse, Hosea spoke of the universal gathering of the Church; but now he

confines his address to the natural race of Abraham. Why? Because God commenced a restoration with that people, when he extended his hand to the miserable exiles to bring them back from the Babylonian captivity to their own country. As then this was the beginning of the gathering, the Prophet, not without reason, turns his address here to them, and thus sets them in higher honor, not that they were worthy, not that they could by any merit claim this dignity; but because God would not make void his covenant, and because he had chosen them that they might be the first-begotten, as it has been already stated, and as they are also elsewhere called, 'My first-begotten is Ephraim,' (Jeremiah 31:9) We now then understand the order and arrangement of the Prophet, which is to be carefully noticed, and the more so, because interpreters confound all these things, and make no distinctions, when yet the Prophet has not here mingled together the children of Israel and the children of Judah with the Gentiles, except for a certain purpose.

Let us now consider the words of the Prophet. *Assembled together,* he says, *shall be the children of Israel and the children of Judah* No doubt, the Prophet has in view the scattering, which had now lasted more than two hundred years, when Jeroboam had led away the ten tribes. Inasmuch as the body became then torn asunder, the Prophet says, *Together shall be gathered the children of Judah and the children of Israel* And designedly does he thus speak, lest the Israelites should felicitate themselves on their own power; since they were a mutilated body without a head; for the king of Israel, properly speaking, was not legitimate. The Lord had indeed anointed Jeroboam; and afterwards Jehu, I admit, had been anointed; but it was done for the sake of executing judgment. For when the Lord intended really to bless the people, he chose David to rule over them; and then he committed the government over all the children of Abraham to the posterity of David. There was therefore no legitimate head over the people of Israel. And the Prophet intended distinctly to express this by saying, *Gathered together shall be the children of Judah and the children of Israel;* which means this, "Ye are now secure, because fortune smiles on you; because ye are overflowing with money and all good things; because ye are terrible to your neighbors; because ye have cities well fortified; but your safety depends on another thing, even on this, that ye be one body under one head. For ye must be miserable except God rules over you; and the only way in which this can be is, that ye be under the government of David. Your separation, then, proves your state to be accursed; your earthly happiness, in which you felicitate yourselves, is unhappiness before God." The Prophet then reminded the people of Israel, that God would at last deal kindly with them by restoring them to their first unity. The import of the whole then is, that the children of Abraham shall then at length be blessed, when they shall unite again in one body, and when one head shall rule over them. They *shall* then *be gathered together, and appoint one head.* The Prophet shows here also what kind of

assembling this will be which he mentions, which was to be this, they shall be gathered under the government of one king. For whenever God speaks of the restoration of the people, he ever calls the attention of the faithful to David: 'David shall rule, there shall be one shepherd.' Then one king and one head shall be among them. We now perceive the design of the Prophet.

But this passage clearly teaches, that the unity of men is of no account before God, except it originates from one head. Besides, it is well known that God set David over his ancient people until the coming of Christ. Now, then, the Church of the Lord is only rightly formed, when the true David rules over it; that is, when all with one consent obey Christ, and submit to his bidding, (*pendebunt ab ejus nutu* hang on his nod:) and how Christ designs to rule in his Church, we know; for the scepter of his kingdom is the gospel. Hence, when Christ is honored with the obedience of faith, all things are safe; and this is the happy state of the Church, of which the Prophet now speaks. It seems, indeed, strange, that what is peculiar to God should be transferred to men that is, to appoint a king. But the Prophet has, by this expression, characterized the obedience of faith; for it is not enough that Christ should be given as a king, and set over men, unless they also embrace him as their king, and with reverence receive him. We now learn, that when we believe the gospel we choose Christ for our king, as it were, by a voluntary consent.

He afterwards subjoins, *They shall ascend from the land.* He expresses more than at the beginning of the verse; for he says, that God would restore them from exile to their own country. He then promises what was very necessary, that exile would be no hindrance to God to renew his Church; for it was the people's ruin to be removed far from their country, and consequently to be deprived of their promised inheritance during their dispersion among heathen nations. The Lord then takes away this difficulty, and distinctly declares, that though for a time they should be as wholly destroyed, they shall yet come again to their own land. They *shall*, therefore, *ascend* (this is said with regard to Judea, for it is higher than Chaldea) they *shall,* therefore, *ascend* from Chaldea and other places in which they had been dispersed. We now understand what the Prophet means by saying, *Gathered together shall be the children of Israel and the children of Judah* that is, into one body; and further, they *shall appoint* for themselves one head. This is the manner of the gathering; and it must be also added, that the Church then obeys God, when all, from the first to the last, consent to one head: for it is not enough to be constrained, unless all willingly offer themselves to Christ; as it is said in Psalm 110, "There shall be a willing people in the day in which the King will call his own.' Then the Prophet intended to express the obedience of faith, which the faithful will render to Christ, when the Lord shall restore them.

And they *shall ascend*, he says, *from the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.* It may be asked, why does he here call the day of Jezreel great;

for it seems contrary to prophecy? This passage may be explained in two ways. Great shall be the day of Jezreel, some say, because God will sow the people whom he had before scattered. So they think that the Prophet, as in a former instance, alludes to the word, Jezreel. But the sense seems to me to be another. I do not restrict this clause to the last, nor to the promise, but apply it to the slaughter which has been before mentioned; for they correspond with one another. *They shall ascend from the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.* The Israelites were as yet resting in their nests, and thought that they could not by any means be torn away; besides, the kingdom of Judah did not then fear a near destruction. The Prophet, therefore, intimates here, that there would be a need of some signal and extraordinary remedy; for it shall be the severe and dreadful slaughter in the day of Jezreel. We now perceive the real meaning of the Prophet, *They shall ascend from the land; for* [8] *great shall be the day of Jezreel*

They might, indeed, have otherwise objected, and said, "Why dost thou thus prophesy to us about ascending? What is this ascending? Do we not rest quietly in the inheritance which God formerly promised to our fathers? What meanest thou, then, by this ascending?" The Prophet here rouses them, and reminds them that they had no reason to trust in their now quiet state, as wine settled on its lees; and this very similitude is even used in another place, (Jeremiah 48:11.) The Prophet here declares, that there would be a most dreadful slaughter, which would call for the signal mercy of God; for he would in a wonderful manner restore the people, and draw them out like the dead from their graves: *for great* then shall be the day of Jezreel; that is, "As the calamity which the Lord shall bring on you will be grievous and dreadful, I do not in vain promise to you this return and ascending." This seems to be really the meaning of the Prophet.

Prayer.

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have not only been redeemed from Babylonian exile, but have also emerged from hell itself; for when we were the children of wrath thou didst freely adopt us, and when we were aliens, thou didst in thine infinite goodness open to us the gate of thy kingdom, that we might be made thy heirs through the Son, O grant that we may walk circumspectly before thee, and submit ourselves wholly to thee and to thy Christ, and not feign to be his members, but really prove ourselves to be his body, and to be so governed by his Spirit, that thou mayest at last gather us together into thy celestial kingdom, to which thou daily invitest us by the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

[8] If this were rendered 'though,' as it is by some, the meaning would be more evident; that is, they shall ascend from the land, notwithstanding the greatness of the slaughter of Jezreel, when they should be led captive. —Ed.

Hosea 2

Chapter 2

Lecture Fourth

Hosea 2:1

1. Say ye unto your brethren, Ammi; and to your sisters, Ruhamah.

1. Dicite fratribus vestris— Populus meus; et sororibus vestris— Dilecta.

The Prophet having spoken of the people's restoration, and promised that God would some time receive into favour those whom he had before rejected, now exhorts the faithful mutually to stir up one another to receive this favour. He had previously mentioned a public proclamation; for it is not in the power of men to make themselves the children of God, but God himself freely adopts them. But now the mutual exhortation of which the Prophet speaks follows the proclamation; for God at the same time invites us to himself. After we are taught in common, it remains then that each one should extend his hand to his brethren, that we may thus with one consent be brought together to the Lord.

This then is what the Prophet means by saying, *Say ye to your brethren,* {עמי} *omi, and to your sisters* {רוחמה} *ruchamah;* that is, since I have promised to be propitious to you, you can now safely testify this to one another. We then see that this discourse is addressed to each of the faithful, that they may mutually confirm themselves in the faith, after the Lord shall offer them favour and reconciliation. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 2:2

2. Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband: let her therefore put away her whoredoms out of her sight, and her adulteries from between her breasts;

2. Litigate cum matre vestra— litigate; quia ipsa non uxor mea— et ego non maritus ejus: et tollat (hoc est— tollat igitur) scortationes suas e facie

sua— et adulteria sua e medio uberum suorum.

The Prophet seems in this verse to contradict himself; for he promised reconciliation, and now he speaks of a new repudiation. These things do not seem to agree well together that God should embrace, or be willing to embrace, again in his love those whom he had before rejected, — and that he should at the same time send a bill of divorce, and renounce the bond of marriage. But if we weigh the design of the Prophet, we shall see that the passage is very consistent, and that there is in the words no contrariety. He has indeed promised that at a future time God would be propitious to the Israelites: but as they had not yet repented, it was needful to deal again more severely with them, that they might return to their God really and thoroughly subdued. So we see that in Scripture, promises and threatening are mingled together, and rightly too. For were the Lord to spend a whole month in reproving sinners they may in that time fall away a hundred times. Hence God, after showing to men their sins adds some consolation and moderates severity, lest they should despond: he afterwards returns again to threatening, and does so from necessity; for though men may be terrified with the fear of punishment, they do not yet really repent. It is then necessary for them to be reproved not only once and again, but very often.

We now then perceive what the Prophet had in view: he had spoken of the people's defection; afterwards he proved that the people had been justly rejected by the Lord; and then he promised the hope of pardon. But now seeing that they still continued obstinate in their vices, he reproves again those who had need of such chastisement. He, in a word, has in view their present state.

Almost all so expound this verse as if the Prophet addressed the faithful: and with greater refinement still do they expound, who say, that the Prophet addresses the faithful who had fallen away from the synagogue. They have and I have no doubt, been much deceived; for the Prophets on the contrary, shows here that God was justly punishing the Israelites, who were wont to excuse themselves in the same way as hypocrites are wont to do. When the Lord treated them otherwise than according to their wishes, they expostulated, and raised up contention — "What does this mean?" So do we find them introduced as thus speaking, by Isaiah. [Isaiah 58:1-3.] There, indeed, they fiercely contend with God, as if the Lord dealt with them unjustly, for they seemed not conscious of having done any evil. Hence the Prophet, seeing the Israelites so senseless in their sins, says, *Contend, contend with your mother.* He speaks here in the person of God: and God, as it has been stated, uses the similitude of a marriage. Let us now see what is the import of the words.

When a husband repudiates his wife, he fixes a mark of disgrace on the children born by that marriage: their mother has been divorced; then the children, on account of that divorce, are held in less esteem. When a husband

repudiates his wife through waywardness, the children justly regard him with hatred. Why? "Because he loved not our mother as he ought to have done; he has not honoured the bond of marriage." It is therefore usually the case, that the children's affections are alienated from their father, when he treats their mother with too little humanity or with entire contempt. So the Israelites, when they saw themselves rejected, wished to throw the blame on God. For by the name, "mother", are the people here called; it is transferred to the whole body of the people, or the race of Abraham. God had espoused that people to himself, and wished them to be like a wife to him. Since then God was a husband to the people, the Israelites were as sons born by that marriage. But when they were repudiated, the Israelites said, that God dealt cruelly with them, for he has cast them away for no fault. The Prophet now undertakes the defence of God's cause, and speaks also in his person, *Contend, contend, he says with your mother* In a word, this passage agrees with what is said in the beginning of Isaiah 50:1,

'Where is the bill of repudiation? Have I sold you to my creditors? But ye have been sold for your sins, and your mother has been repudiated for her iniquity.'

Husbands were wont to give a bill of divorce to their wives, that they themselves might see it: for it freed them from every reproach, inasmuch as the husband bore a testimony to his wife: "I dismiss her, not that she has been unfaithful, not that she has violated the bond of marriage; but because her beauty does not please me, or because her manners are not agreeable to me." The law compelled the husband to give such a testimony as this. God now says by his Prophet, "Show me now the bill of repudiation: have I of my own accord cast away your mother? No, I have not done so. Ye cannot accuse me of cruelty, as though her beauty did not please me, and as though I had followed the common practice approved by you. I have not willingly rejected her, nor at my own pleasure, and I have not sold her to my creditors, as your fathers were sometimes wont to do, as to their children, when they were in debt." In short, the Lord shows there that the Jews were to be blamed, that they were rejected together with their mother. So he says also in this place, *Contend, contend with your mother;* which means, "Your dispute is not with me:" and by the repetition he shows how inveterate was their perverseness, for they never ceased to glamour against God. We now see the real meaning of the Prophet.

In vain then do they philosophise, who say that the mother was to be condemned by her own children; because, when they shall be converted to their former faith, they ought then to condemn the synagogue. The Prophet meant no such thing; but, on the contrary, he brings this charge against the Israelites, that they had been repudiated for the flagitious conduct of their mother, and had ceased to be counted the children of God. For the comparison between husband and wife is here to be understood; and then the children are placed as it were in the middle. When the mother is dismissed,

the children indignantly say that the father has been too inhuman if indeed he wilfully divorces his wife: but when a wife becomes unfaithful to her husband, or prostitutes herself to any shameful crime, the husband is then free from every blame; and there is no cause for the children to expostulate with him; for he ought thus to punish a shameless wife. God then shows that the Israelites were justly rejected, and that the blame of their rejection belonged to the whole race of Abraham; but that no blame could be imputed to him.

And for a reason it is added, *Let her then take away her fornication from her face, and her adulteries from the midst of her breasts* The Prophet, by saying, "Let her then take away her fornications", (for the copulative {ו}, *vau,* ought to be regarded as an illative,) confirms what we have just now said; that is that God had stood to his pledged faith, but that the people had become perfidious; and that the cause of the divorce or separation was, that the Israelites persevered not, as they ought to have done, in the obedience of faith. Then God says, *Let her take away her fornications.* But the phrase, *Let her take away from her face and from her breasts*, seems singular; and what does it mean? because women commit fornication neither by the face nor by the breasts. It is evident the Prophet alludes to meretricious finery; for harlots, that they may entice men, sumptuously adorn themselves, and carefully paint their face and decorate their breasts. Wantonness then appears in the face as well as in the breasts. But interpreters do not touch on what the Prophet had in view. The Prophet, no doubt, sets forth here the shamelessness of the people; for they had now so hardened themselves in their contempt of God, in their ungodly superstitions, in all kinds of wickedness, that they were like harlots, who conceal not their baseness, but openly prostitute themselves, yea, and exhibit tokens of their shamelessness in their eyes as well as in every part of their bodies. We see then that the people are here accused of disgraceful impudence as they had grown so callous as to wish to be known to be such as they were. In the same way does Ezekiel set forth their reproachful conduct,

'Spread has the harlot her feet,
she called on all who passed by the way,'
(Ezekiel 16:25.)

We now then understand why the Prophet expressly said, *Let her take away from her face her fornication, and from her breasts her adulteries:* for he teaches that the vices of the people were not hidden, and that they did not now sin and cover their baseness as hypocrites do, but that they were so unrestrained in their contempt of God, that they were become like common harlots.

Here is a remarkable passage; for we first see that men in vain complain when the Lord seems to deal with them in severity; for they will ever find the fault to be in themselves and in their parents: yea, when they look on all impartially, they will confess that all throughout the whole community

are included in one and the same guilt. Let us hence learn, whenever the lord may chastise us, to come home to ourselves, and to confess that he is justly severe towards us; yea, were we apparently cast away, we ought yet to confess, that it is through our own fault, and not through God's immoderate severity. We also learn how frivolous is their pretext, who set up against God the authority of their fathers, as the Papists do: for they would, if they could, call or compel God to an account, because he forsakes them, and owns them not now as his Church. "What! has not God bound his faith to us? Is not the Church his spouse? Can he be unfaithful?" So say the Papists: but at the same time they consider not, that their mother has become utterly filthy through her many abominations; they consider not, that she has been repudiated, because the Lord could no longer bear her great wickedness. Let us then know, that it is in vain to bring against God the examples of men; for what is here said by the Prophet will ever stand true, that God has not given a bill of divorce to his Church; that is, that he has not of his own accord divorced her, as peevish and cruel husbands are wont to do, but that he has been constrained to do so, because he could no longer connive at so many abominations. It now follows —

Hosea 2:3

3. Lest I strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst.

3. Ne expoliem eam nudam— (hoc est— ne expoliando denudem—) et statuam eam secundam diem nativitatis suae— et ponam eam quasi desertum— ponam eam quasi terram siccitatis (hoc est— terram aridam) et occidam eam siti— (hoc est— perire faciam: Je la feray mourir— ad verbum.)

Though the Prophet in this verse severely threatens the Israelites, yet it appears from a full view of the whole passage, that he mitigates the sentence we have explained: for by declaring what sort of vengeance was suspended over them, except they timely repented, he shows that there was some hope of pardon remaining, which, as we shall see, he expresses afterwards more clearly.

He now begins by saying, *Lest I strip her naked, and set her as on the day of her nativity* This alone would have been dreadful; but we shall see in the passage, that God so denounces punishment, that he cuts not off altogether the hope of mercy: and at the same time he reminds them that the divorce, for which they were disposed to contend with God, was such, that God yet shows indulgence to the repudiated wife. For when a husband dismisses an adulteress, he strips her entirely, and rightly so: but God shows here, that though the Israelites had become wanton, and were like a shameless woman, he had yet so divorced them hitherto, that he had left them their dowry, their ornaments and marriage gifts. We then see that God had not used, as he might have done, his right; and hence he says, *Lest I strip her naked*;

which means this, "I seem to you too rigid, because I have declared, that I am no longer a husband to your mother: and yet see how kindly I have spared her; for she remains as yet almost untouched: though she has lost the name of wife, I have not yet stripped her; she as yet lives in sufficient plenty. Whence is this but from my indulgence? for I did not wish to follow up my right, as husbands do. But except she learns to humble herself, I now gird up myself for the purpose of executing heavier punishments." We now comprehend the whole import of the passage.

What the Prophet means by the day of nativity, we may readily learn from Ezekiel 16; for Ezekiel there treats the same subject with our Prophet, but much more at large. He says that the Israelites were then born, when God delivered them from the tyranny of Egypt. This then was the nativity of the people. And yet it was a miserable sight, when they fled away with fear and trembling, when they were exposed to their enemies: and after they entered the wilderness, being without bread and water, their condition was very wretched. The Prophet says now, *Lest I set her as on the day of her nativity*, and *set her as the desert*. Some regard the letter {כ} *caph* to be understood, as if it were written, {כבמדבר} as in the desert; that is, I will set her as she was formerly in the desert; and this exposition is not unsuitable; for the day of nativity, the Prophet doubtless calls that time, when the people were brought out of Egypt: they immediately entered the desert, where there was the want of every thing. They might then have soon perished there, being consumed by famine and thirst, had not the Lord miraculously supported them. The sense then seems consistent by this rendering, *Lest I set her as in the deserts and as in a dry land*. But another exposition is more approved, *Lest I set her like the desert and dry land*

With regard to what the Prophet had in view, it was necessary to remind the Israelites here of what they were at their beginning. For whence was their contempt of God, whence was their obstinate pride, but that they were inebriated with their pleasures? For when there flowed an abundance of all good things, they thought of themselves, that they had come as it were from the clouds; for men commonly forget what they formerly were, when the Lord has made them rich. As then the benefits of God for the most part blind us, and make us to think ourselves to be as it were half-gods, the Prophet here sets before the children of Abraham what their condition was when the Lord redeemed them. "I have redeemed you," he says, "from the greatest miseries and extreme degradation." Sons of kings are born kings, and are brought up in the midst of pomps and pleasures; nay, before they are born, great pomps, we know, are prepared for them, which they enjoy from their mother's womb. But when one is born of an ignoble and obscure mother, and begotten by a mean and poor father, and afterwards arises to a different condition, if he is proud of his splendour, and remembers not that he was once a plebeian and of no repute, this may be justly thrown in his face, "Who were you formerly? Why! do you not know that you were a cow-

herd, or a mechanic, or one covered with filth? Fortune has smiled on you, or God has raised you to riches and honours; but you are so self-complacent as though your condition had ever been the same."

This is the drift of what the Prophet says: *I will set* thy mother, he says, as she was at her first nativity. For who are you? A holy race, a chosen nation, a people sacred to me? Be it so: but free adoption has brought all this to you. Ye were exiles in Egypt, strangers in the land of Canaan, and were nothing better than other people. Besides, Pharaoh reduced you to a base servitude, ye were then the most abject of slaves. How magnificent, with regard to you, was your going forth! Did you not flee away tremblingly and in the night? And did you not afterwards live in a miraculous way for forty years in the desert, when I rained manna on you from the clouds? Since then your poverty and want has been so great, since there is nothing to make you to raise your crests, how is it that you show no more modesty? But if your present condition creates in you forgetfulness, I will set you as on the day of your nativity." It now follows —

Hosea 2:4-5

4. And I will not have mercy upon her children; for they be the children of whoredoms.

4. Et filiorum ejus non miserabor, quia filii adulterini sunt.

5. For their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully: for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink.

5. Quia scortata est mater eorem, probriis foedata est quae concepit ipsos, (vel, genitrix ipsorum:) dixit enim, Ibo post amatores meos, datores panis mei (vel, qui dant panem meum) et aquas meas, lanam meam et linum meum, et oleum meum et potum meum.

The Lord now comes close to each individual, after having spoken in general of the whole people: and thus we see that to be true which I have said, that it was far from the mind of the Prophet to suppose, that God here teaches the faithful who had already repented, that they ought to condemn their own mother. The Prophet meant nothing of the kind; but, on the contrary, he wished to check the waywardness of the people, who ceased not to contend with God, as though he had been more severe than just towards their race. Now then he reproves each of them; *your children*, he says, *I will not pity; for they are spurious children* He had indeed said before that they had been born by adultery; but he afterwards received them into favour. This is true; but what I have said must be remembered that the Prophet as yet continues in his reproofs; for though he has mingled some consolation, he yet saw that their hearts were not as yet contrite and sufficiently humbled. We must bear in mind the difference between their present state and their future favour. God before promised that he would be propitious to apostates who had departed from him: but now he shows that it was not yet the ripe time, for they had not ceased to sin. Hence he says, *I will not pity your*

children

Having spoken of the mother's divorce, he now says that the children, born of adultery, were not his: and certainly what the Prophet promised before was not immediately fulfilled; for the people, we know, had been disowned, and when deprived of the land of Canaan, were rejected, as it were, by the Lord. The Babylonian exile was a kind of death: and then when they returned from exile, a small portion only returned, not the whole people; and they were tossed, we know, by many calamities until Christ our Redeemer appeared. Since then the Prophet included the whole of this time, it is no wonder that he says that the children were to be repudiated by the Lord, because they were born of adultery: for until they returned from captivity, and Christ was at length revealed, this repudiation, of which the Prophet speaks, ever continued *Thy children,* he says, *I will not pity.* At first sight it seems very dreadful, that God takes away the hope of mercy; but we ought to confine this sentence to that time during which it pleased God to cast away his people. As long, then, as that temporary casting away lasted, God's favour was hid; and to this the Prophet now refers, *I will not* then pity her children, *for they are born by adultery.* At the same time, we must remember that this sentence specifically belonged to the reprobate, who boasted of being the children of Abraham, while they were profane and unholy, while they impiously perverted the whole worship of God, while they were wholly ungovernable. Then the Prophet justly pronounces such a severe judgement on obstinate men, who could be reformed by no admonitions.

He afterwards declares how the children became spurious; *their mother, who conceived* or *bare them, has been wanton; with shameful acts has she defiled herself* {בוש} *bush,* means, to be ashamed; but here the Prophet means not that the Israelites were touched with shame, for such a meaning would be inconsistent with the former sentence; but that they were like a shameless and infamous woman, touched with no shame for her baseness. *Their mother*, then, *had been wanton, and she who bare them had become scandalous* Here the Prophet strips the Israelites of their foolish confidence, who were wont to profess the name of God, while they were entirely alienated from him: for they had fallen away by their impiety from pure worship, they had rejected the law, yea, and every yoke. Since then they were wild beasts, it was extreme stupidity ever to set up for their shield the name of God, and ever to boast of the adoption of their father Abraham. But as the Jews were so perversely proud, the Prophet here answers them, "*Your mother has been wanton, and with shameful acts has she defiled herself;* I will not therefore count nor own you as my children, for ye were born by adultery."

This passage confirms what I have shortly before explained, — that it is not enough that God should choose any people for himself, except the people themselves persevere in the obedience of faith; for this is the spiritual chastity which the Lord requires from all his people. But when is a wife, whom God has bound to himself by a sacred marriage, said to become wanton? When

she falls away, as we shall more clearly see hereafter, from pure and sound faith. Then it follows that the marriage between God and men so long endures at they who have been adopted continue in pure faith, and apostasy in a manner frees God from us, so that he may justly repudiate us. Since such apostasy prevails under the Papacy, and has for many ages prevailed, how senseless they are in their boasting, while they would be thought to be the holy Catholic Church, and the elect people of God? For they are all born by wantonness, they are all spurious children. The incorruptible seed is the word of God; but what sort of doctrine have they? It is a spurious seed. Then as to God all the Papists are bastards. In vain then they boast themselves to be the children of God, and that they have the holy Mother Church, for they are born by filthy wantonness.

The Prophet pursues still the same subject: "She said, *I will go after my lovers, the givers of my bread, of my waters, of my wool, and of my flax, and of my oil, and of my drink* The Prophet here defines the whoredom of which he had spoken: this part is explanatory; the Prophet unfolds in several words what he had briefly touched when he said, *your mother has been wanton.* Now, if the Jews object and say, How has she become wanton? Because, "she said, *I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my waters, etc.* The Prophet here compares false gods to lovers, who seduce women from their conjugal fidelity; for he pursues the similitude which he had introduced. The Church, to whom God has pledged his faith, is represented as a wife; and as a woman does, when enticed by gifts, and as many women follow covetousness and become lascivious, that they may dress sumptuously, and live luxuriously, so the Prophet now points out this vice in the Israelitic Church, *She said, I will go after my lovers* Some understand by lovers either the Assyrians or the Egyptians; for when the Israelites formed connections with these heathen nations, they were drawn away, we know, from their God. But the Prophet inveighs especially against false and corrupt modes of worship, and all kinds of superstitions; for the pure worship of God, we know, is ever to have the first place, and that justly; for on this depend all the duties of life. I therefore doubt not, but that he includes all false gods, when he says, "I will go after my lovers".

But by introducing the word, "said", he amplifies the shamelessness of the people, who deliberately forsook their God, who was to them as a legitimate husband. It indeed happens sometimes that a man is thoughtlessly drawn aside by a mistake or folly, but he soon repents; for we see many of the unexperienced deceived for a short time: but the Prophet here shows that the Israelites premeditated their unfaithfulness, so that they wilfully departed from God. Hence *she said*; and we know that this *said* means so much; and it is to be referred, not to the outward word as pronounced, but to the inward purpose. *She* therefore *said*, that is, she made this resolution; as though he said, "Let no one make this frivolous excuse, that they were deceived, that they did it in their simplicity: ye are, he says, avowedly perfidious, ye have

with a premeditated purpose sought this divorce." He, however, ascribes this to their mother: for defection began at the root, when they were drawn away by Jeroboam into corrupt superstitions; and the promotion of this evil became as it were hereditary. He therefore intended to condemn here the whole community. Hence, "she said, I will go after my lovers, who give me my bread and my waters". But I cannot finish today; I must therefore break off the sentence.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast not only of late adopted us as thy children, but before we were born, and as thou hast been pleased to sign us, as soon as we came forth from our mother's womb, with the symbol of that holy redemption, which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only begotten Son, though we have by our ingratitude renounced so great a benefit, — O grant, that being mindful of our defection and unfaithfulness, of which eve are all guilty, and for which thou hast justly rejected us, we may now with true humility and obedience of faith embrace the grace of thy gospel now again offered to us, by which thou reconciles thyself to us; and grant that we may steadfastly persevere in pure faith, so as never to turn aside from the true obedience of faith, but to advance more and more in the knowledge of thy mercy, that having strong and deep roots, and being firmly grounded in the confidence of sure faith, we may never fall away from the true worship of thee, until thou at length receives us in to that eternal kingdom, which has been procured for us by the blood of thy only Son. Amen.

Lecture Fifth

It remains for us to explain what the Prophet declares concerning the Israelites, that they boasted of their abundance of wine and oil, and all good things as having come to them through their superstitions. What, then, they ought to have ascribed to God alone, they absurdly transferred to their idols. Of this ingratitude the Prophet here accuses them in the person of God himself, and at the same time shows that the ungodly are so deluded by prosperity, that they harden themselves more and more in their superstitions; and this is not the case only at one time, but almost universally in the world. We see how full of pride the Papists are at this day, because they bear rule in the world, and possess riches and honours. They think their services acceptable to God, because he shows not himself openly opposed to and angry with them; and so it has been from the beginning.

But the Prophet here condemns this foolish presumption, that we may learn not to judge at all times of God's love by the prosperous issue of events. There are then two things to be observed here, — that the superstitious falsely ascribe to their idols what comes from God alone; — and further, that they conclude that they are loved by God, whenever he does not immediately take vengeance on them. The Sodomites, we find, became obstinate in their sins for the same reason; when all kinds of pleasures abounded, they thought themselves to be approved of God. Let us now proceed to what follows.

Hosea 2:6

6. Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths.

6. Propterea ecce ego concludo viam tuam spius, et circumdo (circumdabo) sepem (ad verbum, sepire sepem; sed tamen sensus clarus est, circumdabo sepem, vel maceriem) et semitam suam non reperiet.

The Prophet here pursues the subject we touched upon yesterday; for he shows how necessary chastisement is, when people felicitate themselves in their vices. And God, when he sees that men confess not immediately their sins, defends as it were his own cause, as one pleading before a judge. In a word, God here shows that he could not do otherwise than punish so great an obstinacy in the people, as there appeared no other remedy.

Therefore, he says, *behold I* — There is a special meaning in these words; for God testifies that he becomes the avenger of impieties, when people are brought into straits; as though he said, "Though the Israelites are not ready to confess that they suffer justly, yet I now declare that to punish them will be my work, when they shall be deprived of their pleasures, and when the occasion of their pride shall be removed from them." And he intimates by the metaphorical words he uses, that he would so deal with them, as to keep the people from wandering, as they had done hitherto, after their idols; but he retains the similitude of a harlot. Now when an unchaste wife goes after her paramours, the husband must either connive at her, or be not aware of her base conduct. However this may be, wives cannot thus violate the marriage-vow, except they are set at liberty by their husbands. But when a husband understands that his wife plays the wanton, he watches her more closely, notices all her ways day and night. God now takes up this comparison, *I will close up,* he says*, her way with thorns, and surround her with a mound,* that there may be no way of access open to adulterers.

But by this simile the Prophet means that the people would be reduced to such straits, that they might not lasciviate, as they had done, in their superstitions; for while the Israelites enjoyed prosperity, they thought everything lawful for them; hence their security, and hence their contempt of the word of the Lord. By *hedge,* then, and by *thorns,* God means those adversities by which he restrains the ungodly, so that they may cease to flatter themselves, and may not thoughtlessly follow, as they were before wont to do, their own superstitions. *She shall not* then *find her ways*; that is, "I will constrain them so to groan under the burden of evils, that they shall no longer, as they have hitherto done, allow loose reins to themselves." It afterwards follows —

Hosea 2:7

7. And she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now.

7. Et persequentur amatores suos— et non apprehendet eos; et quaeret

eos— et non inveniet: tunc dicet— Ibo et revertar as maritum meum priorem— quia melius mihi tunc fuit quam nunc.

God now shows what takes place when he chastises hardened and rebellious people with heavy punishment. In the first clause he shows that perverseness will cleave so completely to their hearts, that they will not immediately return to a sound mind. *She will follow her lovers, he says, and seek them.* Here the Prophet tells us, that though the Israelites should be chastised by frequent punishments, they would yet continue in their obstinacy. It hence appears how hard a neck they had, and how uncircumcised in heart they were; and such did the Prophets, as well as Moses, represent them to be. And we hence learn, that had they been only moderately corrected, it would not have been sufficient for their amendment. Amazing, indeed, was their obstinacy; for God had divorced them, and then led them into great straits; and yet they went on in their course, as though they were utterly stupid and destitute of every feeling. Is it not a prodigious madness, when men run on so obstinately, even when God sets his hand so strongly against them? Such, however, is represented to have been the obstinacy of the Israelites.

The meaning then is, that when they were subdued, God would not immediately soften their hearts. Then God, though he bruised, did not yet reform them; for their hardness was so great, that they could not be turned immediately to a docile state of mind; but, on the contrary, they followed their lovers. By the word, *follow,* is expressed that mad zeal which possesses idolaters; for as we see, they are like men who are frantic. As then the superstitious know no bounds, nor any moderation, but a mad zeal at times lays hold on them, the Prophet says *She will follow her lovers and shall not overtake them.* What does the latter clause mean? That God will frustrate the hope of the ungodly, that they may know that they in vain worship false gods and follow with avidity absurd superstitions. *They will seek them*, he says, *and shall not find them.* He ever speaks of the people under the character of a shameless and unfaithful wife.

We then see what the Prophet intended to do, — to vindicate God from every blame, that men might not raise a clamour, as though he dealt unkindly with them. He shows that God, even when so rigid, produces hardly any effect; for the ungodly in their perverseness struggle against his scourges, and suffer not themselves to be brought immediately into due order.

But in the second clause the Prophet adds, that some benefit would at length arise, that though idolaters abused God's goodness, and even hardened themselves against his rods, yet this would not be perpetually the case; for the Lord would grant better success. Hence it follows, *She will then say, I will go and return to my former husband.* Here the Prophet shows more clearly a hope of pardon, inasmuch as he speaks of the people's repentance; for men, we know, repent not without benefit, as God is ever ready to receive them when they return to him in genuine sorrow. Then the Prophet here

avowedly speaks of the repentance of the people, that the Israelites might hence know, that corrections, which men naturally ever dislike, would be profitable to them. It is our wish that God should always favour us, and that we should be nourished kindly and tenderly in his bosom; but in the meantime, he cannot allure us to himself, by whatever means he may try to do so: and hence it is, that chastisements are bitter to us, and our flesh immediately murmurs. When the Lord raises his finger, before he strikes us, we instantly groan and become angry, and even roar against him: in short, men can never be brought willingly to offer themselves to be chastised by God. Hence the Prophet now shows, that the severity of God is profitable to us; for it drives us at length to repentance: in a word, he commends the favour of God in his very severity, that we may know that he furthers our salvation, even when he seems to treat us most unkindly. *She will then say, I will go and return to my former husband.*

But we must observe, that when men really repent, they do so through the special influence of the Spirit; for they would otherwise perpetually remain in that perverseness of which we have spoken. Were God for a hundred years continually to chastise perverse men, they would not yet change their disposition; and true is that common saying, "The wicked are sooner broken than reformed." But when men, after many admonitions, begin to be wise, this change comes through the Spirit of God. We may also learn from this passage what true repentance is; that is, when he who has sinned not only confesses himself to be guilty, and owns himself worthy of punishment, but is also displeased with himself, and then with sincere desire turns to God. Many, we see, are ready enough, and disposed, to confess their sins, and yet go on in the same course. But the Prophet shows here that true repentance is something very different, "I will go and return", he says. Repentance then consists (as they say) in the act itself; that is, repentance produces a reforming change in man, so that he reconciles himself to God, whom he had forsaken.

I will then *go and return to my former husband.* Why? *Because better was it with me then than now.* The Prophet again confirms what I lately said, — that the faithful are not made wise, except they are well chastised; for the Prophet speaks not here of the reprobate, but of the remnant seed. The people of Israel were to be exterminated; but the Prophet now declares that there would be some remaining who would at last receive benefit from God's chastisements. Since then we must understand the Prophet as speaking of the elect, we may hence readily conclude, that chastisements are necessary for us; for we grow torpid in our vices, as long as God spares us. Unless, then it appears that God is really displeased with us, it will never come to our minds, that we ought to repent. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 2:8

8. For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal.

8. Et ipsa non cognovit quod ego dederim ei triticum et vinum (תירוש} significat propice mustum,) et oleum, et argentum multiplicaverim ei, et aurum aptarunt ipsi Baal.

9. Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness.

9. Propterea revertar et tollam triticum meum tempore suo, et mustum meum suo statuto tempore, et linum meum ad tegendum turpitudinem ejus (vel, nuditatem; hoc est, quibus texit suam nuditatem.)

God here amplifies the ingratitude of the people, that they understood not whence came such abundance of good things. *She understood not*, he says, *that I gave to her corn and wine.* The superstitious sin twice, or in two ways; — first, they ascribe to their idols what rightly belongs to God alone; and then they deprive God himself of his own honour, for they understand not that he is the only giver of all things, but think their labour lost were they to worship the true God. Hence the Prophet now complains of this ingratitude, *She understood not that I gave to her corn and wine and oil.* And this was an inexcusable stupidity in the Israelites, since they had been abundantly instructed, that the abundance of all good things, and every thing that supports man, flow from God's bounty. Of this they had the clear testimony of Moses; and then the land of Canaan itself was a living representation of the Divine favour. It was then a prodigious madness in the people, that they who had been taught by word and by fact, that God alone is the Giver of all things, should yet not consider this truth. The Prophet, therefore, condemns this outrageous folly of the people, that neither experience nor the teaching of the law availed anything, *She knew not*, he says. There is stress to be laid on the pronoun, she; for the people ought to have been familiarly acquainted with God, inasmuch as they had been brought up in his household, as a wife, who is her husband's companion. It was then incapable of any excuse, that the people should thus turn their minds and all their thoughts away from God.

She knew not then *that I had given to her corn and wine and oil, that I had multiplied to her the silver, and also the gold she has prepared for Baal* The verb {עשה} means specifically, to make: but here to appropriate to a certain purpose. They have, therefore, *prepared gold for Baal;* when they ought to have dedicated to me the first-fruits of all good things, in obedience to me and to the honour of my name, they have appropriated to Baal whatever blessings I have bestowed on them. We then see that in this verse two evils are condemned, — that the people deprived God of his just honour, — and that they transferred to their own idols what they ought to have given to God only. But he touched upon the last wickedness in the fifth verse, where he said in the person of the people, *I will go after my lovers, who give my bread and my waters, my wool and my wine, etc.* Here again he repeats, that they had *prepared gold for Baal.*

As to the word Baal, no doubt the superstitious included under this name all those whom they called inferior gods. No such madness had indeed possessed the Israelites, that they had forgotten that there is but one Maker of heaven and earth. They therefore maintained the truth, that there is some supreme God; but they added their patrons; and this, by common consent, was the practice of all nations. They did not then think that God was altogether robbed of his own glory, when they joined with him patrons or inferior gods. And they called them by a common name, Baalim, or, as it were, patrons. Baal of every kind was a patron. Some render it, husband. But foolish men, I doubt not, have ever had this superstitious notion, that inferior gods come nearer to men, and are, as it were, mediators between this world and the supreme God. It is the same with the Papists of the present day; they have their Baalim; not that they regard their patrons in the place of God: but as they dread every access to God, and understand not that Christ is a mediator, they retake themselves here and there to various Baalim, that they may procure favour to themselves; and at the same time, whatever honour they show to stones, or wood, or bones of dead men, or to any of their own inventions, they call it the worship of God. Whatever then, is worshipped by the Papists is Baal: but they have, at the same time, their patrons for their Baalim. We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet in this verse.

It now follows *Therefore will I return, and take away my corn in its time, and my new wine in its stated time.* Here, again, the Prophet shows that God was, by extreme necessity, constrained to take vengeance on an ungodly and irreclaimable people. He makes known how great was the hardness of the people, and then adds, "What now remains, but to deprive those who have been so ungrateful to me of all their blessings?" It is, indeed, more than base for men to enjoy the gifts of God and to despise the giver; yea, to exalt his creatures to his place, and to reduce, as it were, all his authority to nothing. This the superstitious indeed do, for they thrust God from his pre-eminence, and insult his glory. Will God, in the meantime, so throw away his blessings as to suffer them to be profaned by the ungodly, and himself to be thus mocked with impunity? We now then see the object of the Prophet; for God here shows that there was no other remedy, but to deprive the Israelites of all their gifts: he had indeed enriched them, but they had abused all their abundance. It was therefore necessary to reduce them to extreme want, that they might no longer pollute God's gifts which ought to be held sacred by us.

And he uses a very suitable word; for {נצל} *natsal* means properly, to pluck away, to set free. *I will by force take away*, he says, *my wool and my flax.* It seems, indeed, to denote an unjust possession, as when one takes away by force from the hand of a robber what he unjustly possesses, or as when any one rescues wretched men from the power of a tyrant. So God now speaks, 'I will pluck away my gifts from these men who basely and unjustly

pollute them.'

And he adds, *to cover her nakedness* {ערוה}, *orue,* properly, though not simply, means nakedness: it is the nakedness of the uncomely parts. Moses calls any indecorous part of the body {ערוה}, *orue,* and so it means what is uncomely. This word we ought carefully to notice; for God here shows, that except he denudes idolaters, they will ever continue obstinate. How so? Because they use coverings for their baseness. While the ungodly enjoy their triumphs in the world, they regard them as veils drawn over them, so that nothing base or disgraceful can be seen in them. The same is the case with great kings and monarchs; they think that the eyes of all are dazzled by their splendour; and hence it is, that they are so audaciously dissolute. They think their own filth to be fine odour: such is the arrogance of the world. It is even so with the superstitious; when God is indulgent to them, they think that they have coverings. When, therefore, they abandon themselves to any kind of wickedness, they regard it as if it were a holy thing. How so? Because, whatever obscene thing is in them, it is covered by prosperity. When God observes such madness as this in men, can he do otherwise than pluck away his blessings, that such a pollution may not continually prevail? For it is an abuse extremely gross, that when God's blessings are so many images of his glory, and when his paternal goodness shines forth even towards the ungodly, the world should convert them to a purpose wholly contrary, and make them as coverings for themselves, that they may conceal their own baseness, and more freely sin and carry on war against God himself. Hence he says, "That they may no longer cover their baseness, I will pluck away whatever I have bestowed on them."

When he says, *I will take away the corn and wine in its time, and in its stated time,* he alludes, I have no doubt, to the time of harvest and vintage; as though he said, "The harvest will come, the vintage will come: there has been hitherto great fruitfulness; but I will show that the earth and all its fruits are subject to my will. Though, then, the Israelites are now full, and have their storehouses well furnished, they shall know that I rule over the harvest and the vintage, when the stated time shall come." Now, the Spirit of God denounced this punishment early, that the Israelites, if reclaimable, might return to a right course. But as their blindness was so great that they despised all that had been said to them, no excuse remained for them. It now follows —

Hosea 2:10-12

10. And now will I discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of mine hand.

10. Et nunc retegam flagitium ejus in oculis amatorum ejus, et nullus eripiet eam e manu mea.

11. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts.

11. Et cessare faciam omne gaudium ejus, festivitatem ejus (alii vertunt,

tripudium,) novilunium ejus, sabbathum ejus et omnem diem ejus festum.

12. And I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, whereof she hath said, These are my rewards that my lovers have given me: and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them.

12. Et destruam (vel, in solitudinem redigam) vineam ejus et ficum ejus, de quibus dixit, Merces haec sunt mihi, quam dederunt mihi amatores mei: et ponam eas (vel, redigam, nempe vineas et ficus) in sylvam, et comedat (vel, depascet) eas fera campestris.

He pursues the same subject; and the Prophet explains at large, and even divides what he had briefly said before, into many clauses or particulars. He says firsts *I will uncover her baseness.* How was this done? By God, when he took away the coverings by which the Israelites kept themselves hid: for, as we have said hypocrites felicitate themselves on account of God's gifts, and thus hide themselves as thieves do in caverns; and they think that they can mock God with impunity; for, through the fatness of their eyes, as it is said in Psalm 73:7, they have but a very dim sight. Now then God declares, that the filthiness of the people would be made to appear, when he deprived them of those gifts with which he had for a time enriched them.

Now, he says, *will I uncover her baseness before the eyes of her lovers* By this sentence he intimates a change, of which the people were not apprehensive; for, as long as the wicked feel not the strokes, they laugh at all threatening. Hence God, that he might rouse them from such an indifference, says, *Now will I uncover her before the eyes of her lovers.* The Prophet, no doubt, speaks of false gods, and of all those devices by which the Israelites corrupted the pure worship of God: for I cannot be persuaded to explain this either of the Assyrians or of the Egyptians. I indeed know, as I mentioned briefly yesterday, that the treaties into which the Jews, as well as the Israelites, entered with idolaters, were the tenter-hooks of Satan: this I allow; but at the same time, I look on what the Prophet especially treats of; for he directly inveighs here against absurd and vicious modes of worship. What then does he mean by saying, that God will uncover the baseness of the people before their lovers? He alludes to shameless women, who dare, by terror, to check their husbands, that they may not exercise their own right. "What! do you treat me ill? there is one who will resent this conduct." Even when husbands indignantly bear their own reproach, they often attempt not to assert their own right, because they see that fear is in the way. But God says, "Nothing will hinder me from chastising thee as thou deserves (for he addresses the people under the character of a wife;) before thy lovers then will I uncover thy baseness."

And no man shall rescue thee from my hand. The word man is put here for idols; for it is a word of general import among the Hebrews. Sometimes when brute animals are spoken of, this word, man, is used; and it is also applied to the fragments of a carcass. For when Moses describes the sacrifice made by Abraham, 'Man,' he says, 'was laid to his fellow;' that is, Abraham

joined together the different parts of the sacrifice, as we say in French, *Il n'y a piece* God then speaks here of idols: *No one*, he says, *shall rescue them from my hand.* We now comprehend the meaning of the Prophet.

We must, at the same time, see what he had in view. The Israelites indeed thought, that as long as their corrupt modes of worship prevailed, they were safe and secure: it seemed impossible to them that any adversity should happen to them while idolatry continued. As, then, they imagined their false gods to be to them like an invincible rampart, "Thy idols," he says, "shall remain, and yet thou shalt fall: for I will before thy lovers uncover thy baseness, and not one of them shall deliver thee from my hand."

The Prophet now descends to particulars; and, in the first place, he says, that the people would be deprived of their sacrifices and feast-days, and of that whole external pomp, which was with them the guise of religion. He then adds, that they would be spoiled of their food, and all their abundance. He has hitherto been speaking of their nakedness; but he now describes what this nakedness would be: and he specially mentions, that sacrifices would cease, that feast days, new-moons, and whatever belonged to external worship, would cease. *I will make to cease,* he says, *all her joy.* He speaks doubtless, of sacred joys; and this may be easily collected from the context. He adds, *her every festal-day* As they were wont to dance on their festal-days, this word may be referred to that practice. He afterwards adds, "her sabbath", and all feast-days. Then the first kind of nakedness was, that God would take away from the Israelites that fallacious and empty form of religion in which they foolishly delighted. The second kind of nakedness was, that they were to be stripped of all earthly riches, and be reduced to misery and extreme want. But I cannot finish to-day.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as we are so dull and slothful, that though often admonished, we yet consider not our sins, yea, though chastised by thy hand, we yet return not immediately to a right mind, — O grant, that we may hereafter profit more under thy rod, and not he refractory and untractable; but as soon as thou raises thy hand, may each of us mourn, know our own evils, and then, with one consent, surrender ourselves to be ruled by thee; and may we, in the meantime, patiently and calmly endure thy chastisements, and never murmur against thee, but ever aspire to the attainment of true repentance, until, having at length put off all the vices and corruptions of our flesh, we attain to the fulness of righteousness, and to that true and blessed glory which has been prepared for us in heaven by Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Sixth

We began yesterday to explain the verse in which the Lord speaks of the intermission of the Sabbath, and of the new-moon, and of external worship. The people of Israel, as we have stated, were to be deprived of these excellent gifts with which they had been favoured. And God, we know, is in two

respects bountiful to men. There is his common bounty as to foods and other earthly benefits: but he is especially bountiful to his people in those gifts which are called supernatural. Hence the Prophet says in the first place, *I will make to cease the sabbath, and the new-moon, and the festal-days* They indeed thought themselves, blessed when they celebrated the festal-days, when they offered sacrifices, and in a word, when the external pomp of God's worship shone forth among them: yet we know that they worshipped God neither in a lawful place nor in a right manner, as he had commanded in the law; for they mingled many superstitions; nay, the whole of religion among them was polluted; and yet they thought that their worship pleased God. We now see that the object of their punishment was this, — that the people of Israel might now cease to felicitate themselves on account of their external form of religion, when deprived of their temple, and sacrifices, and all outward worship: and all this happened when the Israelites were driven away into exile. We indeed know that they did not leave off their superstitions until they were deprived of their country and driven into banishment.

I now come to the second kind of nakedness: the Prophet says, *I will waste* or *destroy her vine and her fig-tree, of which she has said, Reward are these to me; that is,* These things are wages to me, *which my lovers have given to me: and I will make them a forest, and feed on them shall the beast of the field.* The second part of the spoiling, as we have said, is, that the Israelites would be reduced to miserable want, who, before, had not only great abundance of good things, but also luxury, as we shall hereafter see more fully in other passages. As then they were swollen with pride on account of their prosperity, the Prophet now announces their future nakedness, *I will take away,* he says, *the vine and the fig-tree.* It is a mode of speaking by which a part is to be taken for the whole; for under the vine and the fig-tree the Prophet intended to comprehend every variety of temporal blessings. Whatever then belongs to man's support, the Prophet here includes in these two words: and he repeats what he had said before, that the Israelites falsely thought, that it was a reward paid them for their superstitions, while they worshipped false gods.

She said, These are my reward. The word is derived from the verb {תנה} *tene:* some have rendered it gift, but not rightly. I indeed allow that {נתנו}"natnu", which means to give, follows shortly after; from which some derive this word. But we know that in many parts of Scripture {אתנה}, *atne,* is strictly taken for reward; and is sometimes applied to hired soldiers: but the Prophets often use this word when they speak of harlots. Hence the Prophet here introduces the people of Israel under the character of a harlot; *These are my reward,* or, *These things are my reward, which to me have my lovers given.*

Since then the Israelites had so hardened themselves in their superstitions, that this false persuasion could not be driven out of them, until they were deprived of all their blessings, he announces to them this punishment, —

that God would take away whatever they thought had come to them from their idols or false gods: *I will turn*, he says, *all these into a forest*, that is, "I will reduce to a waste, both the vineyards and all the well cultivated parts; so that they will produce nothing, as is usually the case with desert places." We now understand the whole meaning of the Prophet. Let us proceed —

Hosea 2:13

13. And I will visit upon her the days of Baalim, wherein she burned incense to them, and she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels, and she went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith the LORD.

13. Et visitabo super eam dies Baalim, quibus incensum (vel, suffitum) illis obtulit (vel, adolevit illis,) et ornata fuit inaure sua et monili (vel, torque) suo, et profecta est post amatores suos, et mei oblita est, dixit Dominus.

He confirms what he taught last. We have said before, that this admonition is very necessary, that whenever God deals severely with men, he thus visits their sins, and inflicts a just punishment. For though men may consider themselves to be chastised by the Lord, they yet do not thoroughly search and examine themselves as they ought. Hence the Prophet repeats what we have before met with, and that is, that this chastisement would be just; and at the same time, he shows us as by the finger what chiefly displeased God in the Israelites, which was, that religion was corrupted by them: for there is nothing more necessary to be known than that in order that men may ever habituate themselves to worship God in a pure manner, this should be testified to them, that all superstitions are such an abomination to God that he cannot bear them.

He therefore says, *I will visit upon her the days of Baalim*; that is, when the Israelites shall find themselves to be without a temple, deprived of sacrifices and new-moons, and having no more any external form of worship, let them know that they are thus punished, because they worshipped Baalim instead of the only true God. The Prophet, at the same time, alludes again to harlots, who more finely adorn themselves and with greater care, when they look for their lovers, that they may captivate them with their charms. *She decked herself*, he says, *with her ear-ring and her jewel* This the superstitious usually do, when they celebrate their fast-days; for they think that a great part of holiness consists in the splendour of vestments; and we see that this stupidity prevails at this day among those under the Papacy: for they would think themselves to be doing great dishonour to God, or rather to their idols, were they not to adorn themselves when going to perform sacred duties. This, no doubt, was then a common error and custom. But in order to show more clearly that God abominated each gross superstitions, the Prophet says that they were like harlots. For as a strumpet, in order to allure men, paints herself, and also dresses splendidly, puts on her ornaments, and decks herself with jewels and gold; even so, he says, the Israelites did; they played the wanton, and bore the tokens of their lewdness. This then is the allusion, when the Prophet says, that *she decked herself with jewels and an ear-ring,*

and went after her lovers.

But most grievous is what he adds at the end of the verse, *Me*, he says, *has she forgotten* God here complains that the fellowship of marriage availed nothing: though he had lived with the people a long time, and treated them bountifully and kindly, yet the memory of this was buried, *Me*, he says, *has she forgotten.* There is then here an implied comparison between the Israelites whom God had joined to himself, and other nations who had known nothing of true religion, nor understood who the true God was. It was indeed no wonder for the Gentiles to be deceived by the impostures of Satan: but it was a monstrous ingratitude for the Israelites, who had been rightly taught and long habituated to the pure worship of God, to cast away the recollection of him. It was like the bestial depravity of a wife, who, having for a time lived with her husband, and having been kindly treated by him, afterwards prostitutes herself to adulterers, and no more cherishes or retains in her heart any love for her husband. We now see for what end it was added, that the Israelites had forgotten God. It was indeed a grave and severe reproof to say, that they, after having long worshipped the true God, had been led away into such madness as to worship false gods, the figments of their own brains: for they had before learnt who the true and the only God was.

The Prophet, in a word, confirms in this verse (as I have before reminded you) the truth, that the punishment which God was about to inflict on this ungodly people would not only be just, but also necessary; and he proves at the same time, how basely they had violated their marriage-vow, since the recollection of God did not prevail among them, after they had become the followers of idols, and of the figments of their own hearts. Let us now go on

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Hosea 2:14

14. Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her.

14. Propterea ecce ego inclino illam (vel, persuadeo illi: dicemus postea de hoc verbo) et proficisci eam faciam (hoc est, deducam eam) in desertum, et loquar super cor ejus (hoc est, luquar quod gratum est.)

Here the Lord more clearly expresses, that after having long, and in various ways, afflicted the people, he would at length be propitious to them; and not only so, but that he would also make all their punishments to be conducive to their salvation, and to be medicines to heal their diseases. But there is an inversion in the words, *Behold, I will incline her, and I will make her to go into the wilderness;* and so they ought to be explained thus, "Behold, I will incline her, or, persuade her, after I shall have drawn her into the desert; then, *I will speak to her heart."* {פתה}, *pete* is often taken in a bad sense, to deceive, or, to persuade by falsehoods or, to use a vulgar word, to wheedle: but it means in this place, to speak kindly; so that God persuades a rebellious and obstinate people as to what is right: and then he declares

that this would take place, when he led the people into the wilderness. This is connected with the former sentence, where it is said, 'I will set her as on the day of her nativity:' for God alludes to the first redemption of the people, which was like their birth; for it was the same as though the people had emerged from their grave; they obtained a new life when they were freed from the tyranny of Egypt. God therefore begot them a people for himself.

But the Prophet adds, After having led her into the wilderness, *I will incline her;* that is, render her pliable to myself. He intimates by these words, that there would be no hope of repentance until the people were led to extreme evils; for had their punishment been moderate, their perverseness would not have been corrected. Then God shows in this verse, that there would be no end or lessening of evils until the people were drawn into the wilderness, that is, until they were deprived of their country and sacrifices, and all their wealth; yea, until they were deprived of their ordinary food, and cast into a wilderness and solitude, where the want of all things would press upon them, and extreme necessity would threaten them with death. If then the people had been visited with light punishment, nothing would have been effected; for their hardness was greater than could have been softened by slight or common remedies.

But this declaration was full of great comfort. The faithful might have otherwise wholly desponded, when they found themselves led into exile, and the sight of the land, which was, as it were, the mirror of the divine adoption, was taken from them, when they saw themselves scattered into various parts, and that there was now no community, no seed of Abraham. The Lord, therefore, that despair might not swallow up the faithful, intended in this way to ease their sorrow; assuring them, that though they were drawn again into the wilderness, God, who first redeemed them, was still the same, and endued with the same strength and power which he put forth in behalf of their fathers. We now apprehend the design of the Prophet. Calamity might have shaken their hearts with so much terror, as to take away every confidence in God's favour, and make them to think themselves wholly lost: but God sets the desert before them, "What! have I not once drawn you out of the desert? Has my power diminished since that tithe? I indeed continue to be the same God as your fathers found me to be: I will again draw you out of the wilderness." But at the same time, God reminded them that their diseases would be unhealable, until they were led into the wilderness, until they were deprived of their country and all the tokens of his favour, that they might no more delude themselves with vain confidence.

He therefore says, *After I shall draw her into the wilderness, then I will persuade,* or, *turn her.* I prefer the word, turning or inclining, though the word, persuading, is by no means unsuitable. But there seems to be an implied comparison between the present contumacy of the people, and the obedience they would render to their God after having been subdued by various afflictions. "The people," he says, "will be then pliable, when they

shall be drawn into the wilderness."

And I will speak then to her heart. What is the import of this expression we know from Isaiah 40. To speak to the heart is to bring comfort, to soothe grief by a kind word, to offer kindness, and to hold forth some hope, that he who had previously been worn out with sorrow may breathe freely, gather courage, and entertain hope of a better condition. And this kind of speaking ought to be carefully observed; for God means, that there was now no place for his promises, because the Israelites were so refractory. Paul did not say in vain to the Corinthians

'Open ye my mouth, [9] O Corinthians; for I am not narrow towards you; but ye are narrow in your own bowels,'
(2 Corinthians 6:11,12.)

The Corinthians, when alienated from Paul, had obstructed, as it were, the passage of his doctrine, that he could not address them in a paternal manner. So also in this place, the Lord testifies that the floor was closed against his promises; for if he gave to the Israelites the hope of pardon, it would have been slighted; if he had invited them kindly to himself, they would have scornfully refused, yea, spurned the offer with contempt, so great was their ferocity; if he had wished to be reconciled to them, they would have despised him, or refused, or proceeded in abusing his kindness as before. He then shows, that it was their fault that he could not deal kindly and friendly with them. Hence, *After I shall draw her into the wilderness, I will address her heart.*

Let us then know, that whenever we are deprived of the sense of God's favour, the way has been closed up through our fault; for God would ever be disposed willingly to show kindness, except our contumacy and hardness stood in the way. But when he sees us so subdued as to be pliable and ready to obey, then he is ready in his turn, to speak to our heart; that is, he is ready to show himself just as he is, full of grace and kindness.

We hence see how well the context of the Prophet harmonises. There are, in short, two parts, — the first is, that God takes not away wholly the hope of pardon from the Israelites, provided there were any healable among them, but shows that though the chastisement would be severe, it would yet be useful, as it would appear from its fruit; this is one clause; — and the other is, that they might not be too hasty in inquiring why God would not sooner mitigate his severity, he answers that the time was not as yet ripe; for they would not be capable of receiving his kindness, until they were by degrees subdued and humbled by heavier punishment. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 2:15

15. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as

[9] As there is no different reading that favors this view of the text, it is difficult to know how Calvin came to give this paraphrase, as it is the reverse of the meaning of the passage. It is literally rendered in our version, "Our mouth is opened unto you." Though the text is not correctly given, yet what is here taught is true and important. —Ed.

in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

15. Et dabo ei vineas suas illinc (ab eo loco) et vallem Achor in apertionem (vel, januam) spei: et canet illic sicuti diebus adolescentiae (vel, pueritiae) suae, et sicut in die quo ascendit e terra Aegypti.

The Prophet now plainly declares, that God's favour would be evident, not only by words, but also by the effects and by experience, when the people were bent to obedience. The Prophet said in the last verse, 'I will speak to her heart;' now he adds, 'I will bring a sure and clear evidence of my favour, that they may feel assured that I am reconciled to them.' He therefore says that he would give them vines. He said before, 'I will destroy her vines and fig-trees;' but now he mentions only vineyards: but as we have said, the Prophet, under one kind, comprehends all other things; and he has chosen vines, because in vines the bounty of God especially appears. For bread is necessary to support life, wine abounds, and to it is ascribed the property of exhilarating the heart, Psalm 104: 'Bread strengthens,' or, 'supports man's heart; wine gladdens man's heart.' As then vines are usually planted not only for necessary purposes, but also for a more bountiful supply, the Prophet says, that the Lord, when reconciled to the people, will give them their vineyards from that place.

And I will give, he says, *the valley of Achor, etc.* He alludes to their situation in the wilderness: as soon as the Israelites came out of the wilderness, they entered the plain of Achor, which was fruitful, pleasant, and vine-bearing. Some think that the Prophet alludes to the punishment inflicted on the people for the sacrilege of Achan, but in my judgement they are mistaken; for the Prophet here means nothing else than that there would be a sudden change in the condition of the people, such as happened when they came out of the wilderness. For in the wilderness there was not even a grain of wheat or of barley, nor a bunch of grapes; in short, there was in the wilderness nothing but penury, accompanied with thousand deaths; but as soon as the people came out, they descended into the plain of Achor, which was most pleasant, and very fertile. The Prophet meant simply this, that when the people repented, there would be no delay on God's part, but that he would free them from all evils, and restore a blessed abundance of all things, as was the case, when the people formerly descended into the plain of Achor. He therefore brings to the recollection of the Israelites what had happened to their fathers, *Her vines*, then, *will I give her from that place,* that is, "As soon as I shall by word testify my love to them, they shall effectually know and find that I am really and from the heart reconciled to them, and shall understand how inclined I am to show kindness; for I shall not long hold the people in suspense."

And he adds, *For an opening,* or *a door of hope* He signifies here, that their restoration would be as from death into life. For though the people daily saw with their eyes that God took care of their life, for he rained manna from heaven and made water to flow from a rock; yet there was at the same time

before their eyes the appearance of death. As long, then, as they sojourned in the wilderness, God did ever set before them the terrors of death: in short, their dwelling in the wilderness, as we have said, was their grave. But when the people descended into the plain of Achor, they then began to draw vital air; and they felt also that they at length lived, for they had obtained their wishes: they had now indeed come in sight of the inheritance promised to them. As then the valley of Achor was the beginning, and as it were the door of good hope to their fathers, so the Prophet, now alluding to that redemption, says, that God would immediately deal with so much kindness with the Israelites as to open for them a door of hope and salvation, as he had done formerly to their fathers in the valley of Achor.

And she shall sing there. We may easily learn from the context that those interpreters mistake who refinedly philosophise about the valley of Achor. It is indeed true that the root of the word is the verb {עכר}, *ocar,* which means, to confound or to destroy, and that this name was given to the place on account of what had occurred there: but the Prophet referred to no such thing, as it appears clearly from the second clause; for he says, "She shall sing there as in the days of her youth", and as in the day in which she ascended from the land of Egypt. For then at length the people of God openly celebrated his praises, when they beheld with their eyes the promised land, when they saw an end to God's severe vengeance, which continued for forty years. Hence the people then poured forth their hearts and employed their tongues in praises to God. The Prophet, therefore, teaches here, that their restoration would be such, that the people would really sing praises to God and offer him no ordinary thanks; not as they are wont to do who are relieved from a common evil, but as those who have been brought from death into life. *She shall sing* then *as in the days of her childhood, as in that day when she ascended from the land of Egypt*

Thus we see that a hope of deliverance is here given, that the faithful might sustain their minds in exile, and cherish the hope of future favour; that though the face of God would for a time be turned away from them, they might yet look for a future deliverance, nor doubt but that God would be propitious to them, after they had endured just punishment, and had been thus reformed: for as we have said, a moderate chastisement could not have been sufficient to subdue their perverseness. It follows —

Hosea 2:16

16. And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Ishi; and shalt call me no more Baali.

16. Et erit in die illo, dicit Jehova, vocabis me, vir meus (vel, marite mi,) et non vocabis me amplius Baal meus, (alii vetunt, non vocabi me amplius, Dominus meus; sed retinendum est nomen Baal, sicuti mox dicam.)

The Prophet now expands his subject, and shows that when the people repented, the fruits of repentance would openly appear. One fruit he records, and that is, that they would then begin to worship God purely, all supersti-

tions being abolished. *It shall be*, he says, *in that day that thou shalt call me, My husband;* and he mentions the word, husband, to show to the people, that after having been corrected, they would be mindful of the covenant which God had made with them; and in that covenant, as stated before, there was the condition of a mutual engagement.

We hence see what the Prophet means: he tells us that the people would then be no more given to superstitions as before, but on the contrary would be mindful of God's covenant, and would continue sincere and true to their conjugal vow. Hence, *thou shalt call me, My husband*; that is, "Thou shalt know what I am to thee, that I am joined to thee by a sacred and inviolable marriage." *And thou shalt not call me, My Baal*; that is, "Thou shalt not give me a false and heathenish name:" for the word, Baal, as I have said before, was everywhere in every one's mouth. But the next verse must be added —

Hosea 2:17

17. For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name.

17. Et auferam nomina Baalim ex ore ejus, et non recordabitur amplius nominis ipsorum (Baalim scilicet.)

In this verse the Prophet more clearly unfolds what he said before, that there would be a new mind in the people, so that they would worship God purely, though they were before entangled in their superstitions. The meaning then is, that religion will then return to its true state, for the names of Baalim shall cease. We have already stated whence this name had arisen. Not even the heathens wished to thrust the only true God from his celestial throne, by forming for themselves many gods: but while they allowed some Supreme Being, they wished to have patrons, whom they employed in conciliating his favour and good-will. That this was for the most part the common doctrine, may be easily learnt from Plato: and the Jews also, no doubt, thought of becoming wise by following the common judgement of others; they hence had their Baalim. But though they called their patrons Baalim, they yet gave this name to God: "Let us worship Baalim." The Papists do the same; when they enter their temples, they immediately turn to the image of Mary or of some saint, and dare not come to God. At the same time they worship God, that is, pretend to worship God, and they call superstition God's worship. So it was among the Israelites; though the majesty of the Supreme God was not denied, yet that happened which the Papists also say, "That Christ is not distinguished from his Apostles;" all things were with them mixed together and confused. He therefore says, *I will take away Baalim from her mouth, and she will no more remember the name of Baalim;* which means, "They will be content with the profession of pure faith, and will celebrate the name of the only true God; they will no more mix their own glosses with the doctrine of the law, and thus vitiate the pure and holy worship of God;" We now understand the meaning of the

Prophet.

Now we learn from this place, that the Church cannot be rightly reformed except it be trained to obedience by the frequent scourges of God; for the Lord thereby creates a new people for himself. We see at this day what great stupidity possesses their minds, who have not been well prepared for the worship of God. They indeed laugh at the superstitions of the Papacy; but, at the same time, they are a sort of Cyclops: [10] we see that there is nothing but barbarous ignorance in their hearts. The Prophet then says, not in vain, that the state of religion would then be right, when the Lord had wholly subdued his people. Hence "in that day", which refers to the heavy punishment which God would inflict on the Israelites — *In that day*, then, *saith the Lord, thou wilt no more call me, Baal; but thou wilt call me, Husband* How so? Because "I will take away" the names of Baalim from thy mouth; that is, I will make the people to cast away their own devices, and to be content with the pure doctrine of my law.

We ought also to remember that a confession of faith is here commended by the Prophet. It is no doubt the fruit of true penitence, when we testify by the mouth and tongue that the only true God is our God, and when we are not ashamed to confess his name before the world, though it may rage madly against us.

We are further reminded by these words, that too much diligence and care cannot be taken to cleanse ourselves wholly from all sorts of pollutions; for as long as any relics of superstition continue among us, they will ever entangle us, and thus we shall stumble, or, at least not run so briskly as we ought. Since, then whatever men retain of their own corrupt devices is a hindrance to them in obtaining a direct access to God, it is meet for us to labour that the names of Baalim should cease, and be abolished among us; and for this end, that nothing may hinder and retard us in the true worship of God. Now follows —

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we set up against thee so many obstacles through the depravity of our flesh and natural disposition, that we seem as it were to be designedly striving to close up the door against thy goodness and paternal favour, O grant, that our hearts may be so softened by thy Spirit, and the hardness which has hitherto prevailed may be so corrected, that we may submit ourselves to thee with genuine docility, especially as thou dost so kindly and tenderly invite us to thyself, that being allured by thy sweet invitation, we may run, and so run as not to be weary in our course, until Christ shall at length bring us together to thee, and, at the same time, lead us to thee for that eternal life, which he has obtained for us by his own blood. Amen.

Lecture Seventh

[10] Fabled giants with one eye. These referred to had an eye to see the absurdities of Popery; but they had no eye to see the beauty and glory of the Gospel. —Ed.

Hosea 2:18

18. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.

18. Et percutiam illis foedus in die illa cum bestia agri et cum volucre coeli et cum reptili terrae: et arcum et gladium et proelium confringam e terra et quiescere eos faciam ad fiduciam, (hoc est, confidenter.)

The Prophet shows here that the people would be in every way happy after their return to God's favour: and, at the same time, he reminds us that the cause of all evils is, that men provoke God's wrath. Hence, when God is angry, all things must necessarily be adverse to us; for as God has all creatures at his will, and in his hand, he can arm them in vengeance against us whenever he pleases: but when he is propitious to us, he can make all things in heaven and earth to be conducive to our safety. As then he often threatens in the Law, that when he purposed to punish the people, he would make brute animals, and the birds of heaven, and all kinds of reptiles, to execute his judgement, so in this place he declares that there would be peace to men when he received them into favour.

I will make a covenant, he says, *in that day with the beast of the field* We know what is said in another place,

'If thou shuttest thyself up at home, a serpent shall there bite thee; but if thou goest out of thy house, either a bear or a lion shall meet thee in the way,' (Amos 5:19;)

by which words God shows that we cannot escape his vengeance when he is angry with us; for he will arm against us lions and bears as well as serpents, both at home and abroad. But he says here, 'I will make a covenant for them with the beasts;' so that they may perform their duty towards us: for they were all created, we know, for this end, — to be subject to men. Since, then, they were destined for our benefit, they ought, according to their nature, to be in subjection to us: and we know that Adam caused this, — that wild beasts rise up so rebelliously against us; for otherwise they would have willingly and gently obeyed us. Now since there is this horrible disorder, that brute beasts, which ought to own men as their masters, rage against them, the Lord recalls us here to the first order of nature, *I will make a covenant for them,* he says, *with the beast of the field*, which means, "I will make brute animals to know for what end they were formed, that is, to be subject to the dominion of men, and to show no rebelliousness any more."

We now then perceive the intention of the Prophet: he reminds the Israelites that all things were adverse to their safety as long as they were alienated from God; but that when they returned into favour with him, this disorder, which had for a time appeared, would be no longer; for the regular order of nature would prevail, and brute animals would suffer themselves to be brought to obedience. This is the covenant of which the Prophet now

speaks when he says, *I will make a covenant for them, that is, in their name, with the beast of the field, and with the bird of heaven, and with the reptile of the earth*

It follows, *I will shatter the bow, and the sword, and the battle*, that is, every warlike instrument; for under the word {מלחמה} "milchamah", the Prophet includes every thing adapted for war. Hence, "I will shatter" every kind of weapons "in that day, and make them dwell securely". In the last clause he expresses the end for which the weapons and swords were to be shattered, — that the Israelites before disquieted by various fears, might dwell in peace, and no more fear any danger. This is the meaning.

But it is meet for us to call to mind what we have before said, that the Prophet so speaks of the people's restoration, that he extends his predictions to the kingdom of Christ, as we may learn from Paul's testimony already cited. We then see that God's favor, of which the Prophet now speaks, is not restricted to a short time or to a few years but extends to Christ's kingdom, and is what we have in common with the ancient people. Let us therefore know, that if we provoke not God against us by our sins, all things will be subservient to the promotion of our safety, and that it is our fault when creatures do not render us obedience: for when we mutiny against God, it is no wonder that brute animals should become ferocious and rage against us; for what peace can there be, when we carry on war against God himself? Hence were men, as they ought, to submit to God's authority, there would be no rebelliousness in brute animals; nay, all who are turbulent would gently rest under the protection of God. But as we are insolent against God, he justly punishes us by stirring up against us various contentions and various tumults. Hence, then swords, hence bows, are prepared against us, and hence wars are stirred up against us: all this is because we continue to fight against God.

It must, at the same time, be further noticed, that it is a singular benefit for a people to dwell in security; for we know that though we may possess all other things, yet miserable is our condition, unless we live in peace: hence the Prophet mentions this as the summit of a happy life. It now follows —

Hosea 2:19-20

19. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies.

19. Et desponsabo te mihi in perpetuum, et desponsabo te mihi in justicia, et in judicio, et in clementia, (vel, bonitate,) et in misericordiis.

20. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord.

20. Et desponsabo te mihi in fide, (vel, veritate:) et cognosces Jehovam.

The Prophet here again makes known the manner in which God would receive into favor his people. As though the people had not violated the marriage vow, God promises to be to them like a bridegroom, who marries a virgin, young and pure. We have before spoken of the people's defection; but

as God had repudiated them, it was no common favor for the people to be received again by God, and received with pardon. When a woman returns to her husband, it is a great thing in the husband to forgive her, and not to upbraid her with her former base conduct: but God goes farther than this; for he espouses to himself a people infamous through many disgraceful acts; and having abolished their sins, he contracts, as it were, a new marriage, and joins them again to himself. Hence he says, *I will espouse thee to me.* We now perceive the import of the word, espouse: for God thereby means, that he would not remember the unfaithfulness for which he had before cast away his people, but would blot out all their infamy. It was indeed an honorable reception into favor, when God offered a new marriage, as though the people had not been like an adulterous woman.

And he says, *I will espouse thee to me for ever.* There is here an implied contrast between the marriage of which the Prophet had hitherto spoken, and this which God now contracts. For God, having redeemed the people, had before entered, as we have said, into marriage with them: but the people had departed from their vow; hence followed alienation and divorce. That marriage was then not only temporary, but also weak and soon broken; for the people did not continue long in obedience: but of this new marriage the Prophet declares, that it will continue fast and for ever; and thus he sets its durable state in contrast with the falling away which had soon alienated the people from God. Hence he says, *I will espouse thee to me for ever.*

He then declares by what means he would do this, even in righteousness and judgment, and then in kindness and mercies, and thirdly, in faithfulness. God had indeed from the beginning covenanted with the Israelites in righteousness and judgment; there was nothing disguised or false in his covenant: as then God had in sincerity adopted the people, to what vices does he oppose righteousness and judgment? I answer, These words must be applied to both the contracting parties: then, by righteousness God means not only his own, but that also which is, as they say, mutual and reciprocal; and by *righteousness* and *judgment* is meant rectitude, in which nothing is wanting. We now then perceive what the Prophet had in view.

But he adds, secondly, *In kindness and mercies*: by which words he intimates, that though the people were unworthy, yet, this would be no impediment in their way, to prevent them to return into favor with God; for in this reconciliation God would regard his own goodness, rather than the merits of his people.

In the third place, he adds, *In faithfulness*: and this confirms what we have before briefly referred to, — the fixed and unchangeable duration of this marriage.

The words, righteousness and judgment, are, I know, more refinedly explained by some. They say that righteousness is what is conferred on us by God through gratuitous imputation; and they take judgment for that defense which he affords against the violence and the assaults of our enemies.

But here the Prophet, I doubt not, intimates in a general way, that this covenant would stand firm, because there would be truth and rectitude on both sides. That this may be more clearly understood, let us take a passage from the 31st chapter of Jeremiah [Jeremiah 31:31-34] where God complains, that the covenant he had made with the ancient people had not been firm; for they had forsaken it. 'My covenant,' he says, 'with your fathers has not continued.' — Why? 'Because they departed from my commandments.' God indeed in perfect sincerity adopted the people, and no righteousness was wanting in him; but as there was no constancy and faithfulness in the people, the covenant came to nothing: hence God afterwards adds, 'I will hereafter make a new covenant with you; for I will engrave my laws on your hearts,' etc. We now then see what the Prophet means by righteousness and judgment, even this, that God would cause the marriage vow to be kept on both sides; for the people, restored from exile, would no more violate their pledged faith nor act unfaithfully.

But we must notice what is added, *In goodness and mercies.* And this part Jeremiah does not omit, for he adds, 'Their iniquities I will not remember.' As then the Israelites, conscious of evils might tremble through fear, the Prophet seasonably anticipates their diffidence, by promising that the marriage which God was prepared anew to contract, would be in kindness and mercies. There is then no reason why their own unworthiness should frighten away the people; for God here unfolds his own immense goodness and unparalleled mercies. The Prophet might indeed have expressed this in one word, but he adds mercies to goodness. The people had indeed sunk into a deep abyss, that restoration could have been hardly hoped: hence the word, kindness, or goodness, would have been hardly sufficient to raise up their minds, had not the word, mercies, been added for the sake of confirmation.

Now he adds, *in faithfulness*; and by faithfulness is to be understood, I doubt not, that stability of which I have spoken; for what some philosophize on this expression is too refined, who give this explanation, 'I will espouse thee in faith,' that is by the gospel; for we embrace God's free promises, and thus the covenant the Lord makes with us is ratified. I simply interpret the word as denoting stability.

And the Prophet shows afterwards that this covenant would be confirmed, because faithfulness would be reciprocal, *they shall know*, he says, *Jehovah.* Jeremiah, I doubt not, borrowed from this place what is written in the 31st chapter; for there he also adds, 'No one shall hereafter teach his neighbor, for all, from the least to the greatest shall know me, saith Jehovah.' Our Prophet says here in one sentence, *they shall know Jehovah* Hence then is the stability of the covenant, because God by his light shall guide the hearts of those who had before strayed in darkness and wandered after their own superstitions. Since then a horrible darkness prevailed among the Israelitic people, Hosea promises the light of true knowledge; and this knowledge of God is such,

that the people fall not away from the Lord, nor are they seduced by the fallacies of Satan. Hence God's covenant stands firm. We now understand the import of the words.

Jerome thinks that the Prophet promises espousals thrice, because the Lord once espoused the people to himself in Abraham, then when he led them out of Egypt, and, thirdly, when once he reconciled the whole world in Christ: but this is too refined, and even frivolous. I take a simpler meaning, — that the Prophet proclaims an espousal thrice, because it was difficult to restore the people from fear and despair, for they well understood how grievously and in how many ways they had alienated themselves from God: it was hence necessary to apply many consolations, which might serve to confirm their faith. This is the reason why the Lord does not say once, *I will espouse thee to myself,* but repeats it thrice. The Prophet indeed seemed then to speak of a thing incredible: for what sort of an example is this, that the Lord should take for his wife an abominable harlot? Nay, that he should contract a new marriage with an unclean adulteress, immersed in debauchery? This was like something monstrous. Hence the Prophet, that nothing might hinder souls from recumbing on the promise, says, "Doubt not, for the Lord very often assures you, that this is certain."

Now, since we have this promise in common with them, we see by the words of the Prophet what is the beginning of our salvation: God espoused the Israelites to himself, when restored from exile through his goodness and mercies. What fellowship have we with God, when we are born and come out of the womb, except he graciously adopts us? for we bring nothing, we know, with us but a curse; this is the heritage of all mankind. Since it is so, all our salvation must necessarily have its foundation in the goodness and mercies of God. But there is also another reason in our case, when God receives us into favor; for we were covenant-breakers under the Papacy; there was not one of us who had not departed from the pledge of his baptism; and so we could not have returned into favor with God, except he had freely united us to himself: and God not only forgave us, but contracted also a new marriage with us, so that we can now, as on the day of our youth, as it has been previously said, openly give thanks to him.

But we must notice this short clause, *They shall know Jehovah.* We indeed see that we are in confusion as soon as we turn aside from the right and pure knowledge of God, nay, that we are wholly lost. Since then our salvation consists in the light of faith, our minds ought ever to be directed to God, that our union with him, which he has formed by the gospel, may abide firm and permanent. But as this is not in the power or will of man, we draw this evident conclusion, that God not only offers his grace in the outward preaching, but at the same time in the renewing of our hearts. Except God then recreates us a new people to himself, there is no more stability in the covenant he makes now with us than in the old which he made formerly with the fathers under the Law; for when we compare ourselves with the

Israelites, we find that we are nothing better. It is, therefore, necessary that God should work inwardly and efficaciously on our hearts, that his covenant may stand firm: nay, since the knowledge of him is the special gift of the Spirit, we may with certainty conclude, that what is said here refers not only to outward preaching, but that the grace of the Spirit is also joined, by which God renews us after his own image, as we have already proved from a passage in Jeremiah: but that we may not seem to borrow from another place, we may say that it appears evident from the words of the Prophet, that there is no other bond of stability, by which the covenant of God can be strengthened and preserved, but the knowledge he conveys to us of himself; and this he conveys not only by outward teaching, but also by the illumination of our minds by his Spirit, yea, by the renewing of our hearts. It follows —

Hosea 2:21-22

21. And it shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the LORD, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth;

21. Et erit in die illa, exaudiam, dicit Dominus, exaudiam coelos, etaudient terram:

22. And the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel.

22. Et terra exaudiet frumentum et mustum et oleum, et ipsa exaudient Jezreel.

The Lord promises again that he will not be wanting to the people, when they shall be reconciled to him. We must, indeed, in the first place, seek that God may be propitious to us; for they are very foolish who desire to live well and happily, and in the meantime care nothing for God's favor. The Prophet shows when the happiness of men begins; it begins when God adopts them for his people, and when, having abolished their sins, he espouses them to himself. It is therefore necessary, in the first place, to seek this; for as we have said, the desire of being happy is preposterous, when we first seek the blessings of an earthly life, when we first seek ease, abundance of good things, health of body, and similar things. Hence the Prophet now shows, that we are then only happy when the Lord is reconciled to us, and not only so, but when he in his love embraces us, and contracts a holy marriage with us, and on this condition, that he will be a father and preserver to us, and that we shall be safe and secure under his protection and defense.

But at the same time he comes down to things of the second rank. Our happiness is, indeed, as we have said, in the enjoyment of God's love; but there are accessions which afterwards follow; for the Lord provides for us, and exercises a care over us, so that he supplies whatever is needful for the support of life. Of this later part the Prophet now treats: he says, *In that day.* We see that he reminds us of the covenant, lest we be content with worldly abundance; for as it has been said, men are commonly devoted to their present advantages. Hence the Prophet sets here before our eyes the Lord's covenant; he afterwards adds, that God's favor would reach to the

corn, and to the wine, and the oil.

But we must notice the Prophet's words, *I will hear*, he says, or *I will answer,* ({ענה}, *one,* means to answer, but it is here equivalent to hear,) *I will hear* then, *I will hear the heavens, and they will hear the earth.* The repetition is not superfluous; for the Israelites had been for some time consumed by famine, before they were led away into exile; as though the heavens were iron, no drop of rain came down. They might hence have thought that there was now no hope; but God here raises them up, *I will hear, I will hear,* he says; as though he said, "There is no reason for the miserable condition in which I have suffered you long to languish as your sins deserved, to discourage you; for I will hereafter hear the heavens." As the Prophet before reminded them that when the beasts were cruel to them, it was a token of God's wrath; so also he teaches by these words that the heavens are not dry through any hidden influence; but that when God withholds his favor, there is no rain by which the heavens irrigate the earth. Then God here plainly shows that the whole order of nature, as they say, is in his hand, that no drop of rain descends from heaven except by his bidding, nor can the earth produce any grass; in short, that all nature would be barren were he not to fructify it by his blessing. And this is the reason why he says, *I will hear the heavens and they will hear the earth, and the earth will hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, and all these will hear Jezreel*

The Prophet used the word, *Jezreel*, before in a bad sense; for his purpose was to reproach the Israelites with their unfaithfulness: when they boasted of being the seed of Abraham, and always claimed that honorable and noble distinction, the Lord said, 'Ye are Jezreel, and not Israel.' It may be that the Prophet wished to show again what they deserved; but he teaches, at the same time, that God would by no means be prevented from showing kindness to the unworthy when reconciled to him. Though, then, they were rather Jezreelites than Israelites, yet their unworthiness would be no impediment, that God should not deal bountifully with them. There may also be an allusion here to a new people; for it follows in the next verse, {וזרעתיה}, *usarotie, and I will sow her;* and the word, Jezreel, has an affinity to this verb, it is indeed derived from {זרע}, *saro,* which is to sow: and as the Prophet presently adds, that Jezreel is, as it were, the seed of God, I do not disapprove of this supposed allusion. But yet the Prophet seems here to commend the grace of God, when he declares that they were Jezreelites with whom God would deal so kindly as to fructify the earth for their sake.

Let us now again repeat the substance of the whole, *The corn, and the wine, and the oil, will hear Jezreel* The Israelites were famished, and as it is usual with those in want of food, they cried out, 'Who will give us bread, and wine, and oil?' For the stomach, as it is said, has no ears; nor has it reason and judgment: when there is extreme want, men, as if they were distracted, will call for bread, and wine, and oil. God then has regard for these blind instincts of men, which only crave what will gratify them: hence he says,

The corn, and wine, and oil, will hear Jezreel, — but when? Even when the earth will supply trees with sap and moisture, and extend to the seed its strength; it is then that the earth will hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil: for these grow not of themselves, but derive supplies from the earth; and hence the earth is said to hear them. But cannot the earth of itself hear the corn, or the wine, or the oil? By no means, except rain descends from heaven. Since, then, the earth itself draws moisture and wetness from heaven, we see that men in vain cry out in famine, except they look up to heaven: and heaven is ruled by the will of God. Let men, therefore, learn to ascend up to God, that they may seek from him their daily bread.

We now, then, see how suitable is this gradation employed by the Prophet, by which God, on account of the rude and weak comprehension of men, leads them up at last to himself. For they turn their thoughts to bread, and wine, and oil; from these they seek food: they are in this matter very stupid. Be it so; God is indulgent to their simplicity and ignorance; for by degrees he proceeds from corn, and wine, and oil, to the earth, and then from the earth to heaven; and he afterwards shows that heaven cannot pour down rain except at his will. It follows at last —

Hosea 2:23

23. And I will sow her unto me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them which were not my people, Thou art my people; and they shall say, Thou art my God.

23. Et seminabo eam mihi in terra (vel, in terram) et miserabor ejus quae non erat adapta misericordiam, et dicam, {ללא}-{עמי}, (hoc est, qui non erat populus meus,) Tu populus meus; et ipse dicet, Deus mi.

The Prophet here takes the occasion to speak of the increase of the people. He had promised a fruitful and large increase of corn, and wine, and oil; but for what end would this be, except the land had numerous inhabitants? It was hence needful to make this addition. Besides, the Prophet had said before, 'Though ye be immense in number, yet a remnant only shall be preserved.' He now sets God's new favor in opposition to his vengeance, and says, that God will again sow the people.

From this sentence we learn that the allusion in the word, Jezreel, has not been improperly noticed by some, that is, that they, who had been before a degenerate people and not true Israelites shall then be the seed of God: yet the words admit of two senses; for {זרע} *saro,* applies to the earth as well as to seed. The Hebrews say, 'The earth is sown,' and also, 'The wheat is sown,' or any other grain. If then the Prophet compares the people to the earth, the sense will be, I will sow the people as I do the earth; that is, I will make them fruitful as the earth when it is productive. It must then be thus rendered, *I will sow her for me as the earth*, that is, as though she were my earth. Or it may be rendered thus, I will sow her for myself in the earth, and for this end, that the earth, which was for a time waste and desolate, might have many inhabitants, as we know was the case. But the relative

pronoun in the feminine gender ought not to embarrass us, for the Prophet ever speaks as of a woman: the people, we know, have been as yet described to us under the person of a woman.

And he afterwards adds, {לא}-{רוחמה}, *La-ruchamae.* He speaks here either of *La-ruchamae,* an adulterous daughter, or an adulterous woman, whom a husband takes to himself. As to the matter itself, it is easy to learn what the Prophet means, which is, that God would diffuse an offspring far and wide, when the people had been brought not only to a small number, but almost to nothing: for how little short of entire ruin was the desolation of the people when scattered into banishment? They were then, as it has been stated, like a body torn asunder: the land in the meantime enjoyed its Sabbaths; God had disburdened it of its inhabitants.

We then understand the meaning of the Prophet to be, that God would multiply the people, that the small remnant would increase to a great and almost innumerable offspring. *I will* then *sow her in the earth*, that is, throughout the whole land; *and I will have mercy on La-ruchamae*, that is, I will in mercy embrace her, who had not obtained mercy; *and I will say to the no-people, Ye are now my people* We see that the Prophet insists on this, — That the people would not only seek the outward advantages of the present life, but would make a beginning at the very fountain, by regaining the favor of God, and knowing him as their propitious Father: for this is the meaning of the Prophet, of which something more will be said to-morrow.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are in this life subject to so many miseries, and in the meantime grow insensible in our sins, — O grant that we may learn to search ourselves and consider one sins, that we may be really humbled before thee, and ascribe to ourselves the blame of all our evils, that we may be thus led to a genuine feeling of repentance, and so strive to be reconciled to thee in Christ, that we may wholly depend on thy paternal love, and thus ever aspire to the fulness of eternal felicity, through thy goodness and that immeasurable kindness which thou testifies is ready and offered to all those, who with a sincere heart worship thee, call upon thee, and flee to thee, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hosea 3

Chapter 3

Lecture Eighth

We said in our lecture yesterday, that the Prophet does not in vain bear a testimony again to God's paternal favor to his people; for it is our chief happiness, when God acknowledges us as his own, and when we also can come to his presence with sure confidence. Hence the order of the Prophet's words ought to be noticed: *I will have mercy*, he says, *on Lo-ruchama*; which means, I will be propitious to the Israelites whom I have hitherto deprived of my favor: "and I will say to the no-people, *My people are you*: then it follows *and they will say to me, Thou art our God* [11]

The Prophet, indeed, means that God anticipates us with his favor; for we are otherwise restrained from access to him. Then God of his own good-will precedes, and extends his band to us, and then follows the consent of our faith. Hence God first speaks to the Israelites, that they might know that they are now counted his people: and then, after God has testified of his favor, they answer, 'Thou beginnest now to be from henceforth our God.' We hence see that the beginning of all good is from God, when he makes of aliens friends, and adopts as his sons those who were before his enemies.

The third chapter follows.

Hosea 3:1

1. Then said the LORD unto me, Go yet, love a woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress, according to the love of the LORD toward the children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love flagons of wine.

[11] The original is 'he' and 'my,' as in our version, but this is to disregard the Hebrew idiom. Pronouns in that language referring to 'people,' a noun in the singular number, are also put in the singular number, but no so in our language. 'They' and 'our' ought doubtless to be used here. —Ed.

1. Et dixit jehova ad me, Adhuc vade, ama mulierem dilectum a marito (ad verbum, a proximo, vel, socio: sed intelligit comparem) et quae adultera est (sed copula debet resolvi in adversativam, quae tamen adultera est,) secundum amorem Jehovae erga filios Israel: et ipsi (hoc est, quitamen) respiciunt ad deos alienos, et amant lagenas (vel, cados) uvarum.

The substance of this chapter is, that it was God's purpose to keep in firm hope the minds of the faithful during the exile, lest being overwhelmed with despair they should wholly faint. The Prophet had before spoken of God's reconciliation with his people; and he magnificently extolled that favor when he said, 'Ye shall be as in the valley of Achor, I will restore to you the abundance of all blessings; in a word, ye shall be in all respects happy.' But, in the meantime, the daily misery of the people continued. God had indeed determined to remove them into Babylon. They might, therefore, have despaired under that calamity, as though every hope of deliverance were wholly taken from them. Hence the Prophet now shows that God would so restore the people to favor, as not immediately to blot out every remembrance of his wrath, but that his purpose was to continue for a time some measure of his severity.

We hence see that this prediction occupies a middle place between the denunciation the Prophet previously pronounced and the promise of pardon. It was a dreadful thing, that God should divorce his people and cast away the Israelites as spurious children: but a consolation was afterwards added. But lest the Israelites should think that God would immediately, as on the first day, be so propitious to them as to visit them with no chastisement, it was the Prophet's design expressly to correct this mistake, as though he said, 'God will indeed receive you again, but in the meantime a chastisement is prepared for you, which by its intenseness would break down your spirits were it not that this comfort will ease you, and that is, that God, though he punishes you for your sins, yet continues to provide for your salvation, and to be as it were your husband.' We now perceive the intention of the Prophet. But I shall first run over the words, and then return to the subject

Jehovah said to me, Go yet and love a woman. There is no doubt but that God describes here the favor he promises to the Israelites in a type or vision: for they are too gross in their notions, who think that the Prophet married a woman who had been a harlot. It was then only a vision, as though God had set a picture before the eyes of the people, in which they might see their own conduct. And when he says, "yet", he refers to the vision, mentioned in the first chapter. But he bids a woman to be loved before he took her to be the partner of his conjugal bed; which ought to be noticed: for God intends here to make a distinction between the people's restoration and his hidden favor. God then before he restored the people from exile, loved them as it were in their widowhood. We now understand why the Prophet does not say, 'Take to thee a wife,' but, 'love a woman.' The meaning is this: God intimates, that though exile would be sad and bitter, yet the people, whom

he treated with sharpness and severity, were still dear to him. Hence, *Love a woman, who had been loved by a husband*

The word {רע}, *ro,* is here to be taken for a husband, as it is in the second chapter of Jeremiah, [Jeremiah 3:20] where it is said, 'Perfidiously have the children of Israel dealt with me, as though a woman had departed from her husband, {מרעה}, *meroe,'*, or, 'from her partner.' And there is an aggravation of the crime implied in this word: for women, when they prostitute themselves, often complain that they have done so through too much severity, because they were not treated with sufficient kindness by their husbands; but when a husband behaves kindly towards his wife, and performs his duty as a husband, there is then less excuse for a wife, in case she fixes her affections on others. To increase then the sin of the people, this circumstance is stated that the woman had been loved by her friend or partner, and yet that this kindness of her husband had not preserved her mind in chastity.

He afterwards says, *According to the love of Jehovah towards the children of Israel;* that is, As God loved the people of Israel, who yet ceased not to look to other gods. This metaphor occurs often in Scripture, that is, when the verb {פנה} "panah", which means in Hebrew, to look to, is used to express hope or desire: so that when men's minds are intent on any thing, or their affections fixed on it, they are said to look to that. Since then the Israelites boiled with insane ardor for their superstitions, they are said to look to other gods.

It then follows, *And they love flagons of grapes.* The Prophet, I doubt not, compares this rage to drunkenness: and he mentions flagons of grapes rather than of wine, because idolaters are like drunkards, who sometimes so gorge themselves, that they have no longer a taste for wine; yea, the very smell of wine offends them, and produces nausea through excessive drinking; but they try new arts by which they may regain their fondness for wine. And such is the desire of novelty that prevails in the superstitious. At one time they go after this, at another time after that, and their minds are continually tossed to and fro, because they cannot acquiesce in the only true God. We now then perceive what this metaphor means, when the Prophet reproaches the Israelites, because they loved flagons of grapes.

I now return to what the Prophet, or rather God, had in view. God here comforts the hearts of the faithful, that they might surely conclude that they were loved, even when they were chastised. It was indeed necessary that this difference should have been well impressed on the Israelites, that they might in exile entertain hope and patiently bear God's chastisement, and rise that this hope might mitigate the bitterness of sorrow. God therefore says that though he shows not himself as yet reconciled to them, but appears as yet severe, at the same time he is not without love. And hence we learn how useful this doctrine is, and how widely it opens; for it affords a consolation of which we all in common have need. When God humbles us by adversities,

when he shows to us some tokens of severity or wrath, we cannot but instantly fail, were not this thought to occur to us, that God loves us, even when he is severe towards us, and that though he seems to cast us away, we are not yet altogether aliens, for he retains some affection even in the midst of his wrath; so that he is to us as a husband, though he admits us not immediately into conjugal honor, nor restores us to our former rank. We now then see how the doctrine is to be applied to ourselves.

We must at the same time notice the reproachful conduct of which I have spoken, — That though the woman was loved yet she could not be preserved in chastity, and that she was loved, though an adulteress. Here is pointed out the most shameful ingratitude of the people, and contrasted with it is God's infinite mercy and goodness. It was the summit of wickedness in the people to forsake their God, when he had treated them with so much benignity and kindness. But wonderful was the patience of God, when he ceased not to love a people, whom he had found to be so perverse, that they could not be turned by any acts of kindness nor retained by any favors.

With regard to the flagons of grapes we may observe, that this strange disposition is ever dominant in the superstitious, and that is, that they wander here and there after their own devices, and have nothing fixed in them. Lest, then, such charms deceive us, let us learn to cleave firmly and constantly to the word of the Lord. Indeed the Papists of this day boast of their ancientness, when they would create an ill-will towards us; as though the religion we follow were new and lately invented: but we see how modern their superstitions are; for a passion for them bubbles up continually and they have nothing that remains constant: and no wonder, because the eternal truth of God is regarded by them as of no value. If, then, we desire to restrain this depraved lust, which the Prophet condemns in the Israelites, let us so adhere to the word of the Lord, that no novelty may captivate us and lead us astray. It now follows —

Hosea 3:2-5

2. So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer of barley, and an half homer of barley:

2. Et acquisivi eam mihi quindecim argenteis et uno homer (vertunt, corum, Graeci interpretes; uno coro) hordei et dimidio coro hordei.

3. And I said unto her, Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.

3. Et dixi ad eam, Diebus multis sedebis mihi, non scortaberis et non eris viro (hoc est, manebis vidua vel coelebs) et ego etiam ad te (nempe, respiciam; vel, tibi spondeo me fore maritum, ubi expertus fuero tuam resipiscentiam: alii vertunt, Et ego ad te non accedam; sed videtur hoc esse nimis coactum: ideo magis arridet Hieronymi interpretatio, Ego te expectabo.)

4. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without

an ephod, and without teraphim:

4. Quia diebus multis sedebunt filii Israel sine rege, et sine principe, et sine sacrificio, et sine statua, et sine ephod, et sine theraphim.

5. Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.

5. Postea convertentur (vel, redibunt) filii Israel et quaerent Jehovam Deum suum, et David regem suum, et timebunt ad Jehovam et ad bonitatem ejus in extermitate dierum.

These verses have been read together, for in these four the Prophet explains the vision presented to him. He says, first, that he had done what had been enjoined him by God; which was conveyed to him by a vision, or in a typical form, that by such an exhibition he might impress the minds of the people: *I bought*, he says, a wife for fifteen silverings, and for a corus of barley and half a corus; that is, for a corus [12] and a half. He tells us in this verse that he had bought the wife whom he was to take for a small price. By the *fifteen* silverings and the corus and half of barley is set forth, I have no doubt, her abject and mean condition. Servants, we know, were valued at thirty shekels of silver when hurt by an ox, (Exodus 21:32.) But the Prophet gives her for his wife fifteen silvering; which seemed a contemptible gift. But then the Lord shows, that though he would but scantily support his people in exile, they would still be dear to him, as when a husband loves his wife though he does not indulge her, when that would be inexpedient: overmuch indulgence, as it is well known, has indeed often corrupted those who have gone astray. When a husband immediately pardons an adulterous wife, and receives her with a smiling countenance, and fawningly humbles himself by laying aside his own right and authority, he acts foolishly, and by his levity ruins his wife: but when a husband forgives his wife, and yet strictly confines her within the range of duty, and restrains his own feelings, such a moderate course is very beneficial and shows no common prudence in the husband; who, though he is not cruel, is yet not carried away by foolish love. This, then is what the Prophet means, when he says, that he had given for his wife fifteen silverings and a corus and half of barley. Respectable women did not, indeed, live on barley. The Prophets then, gave to his wife, not wheat-flour, nor the fine flour of wheat, but black bread and coarse food; yea, he gave her barley as her allowance, and in a small quantity, that his wife might have but a scanty living. We now then understand the Prophet's meaning.

Some elicit a contrary sense, that the Lord would splendidly and sumptuously support the wife who had been an adulteress; but this view by no means harmonizes with the Prophet's design, as we have already seen. Besides, the words themselves lead us another way. Jerome, as his practice is, refines in allegorizing. He says, that the people were bought for fifteen silverings, because they came out of Egypt on the fifteenth day of the month;

[12] A Hebrew measure, containing 30 bushels, the load of a camel. —Ed.

and then he says, that as the Hebrew homer contains thirty bushels, they were bought for a corus and half, which is forty-five bushels. because the law was promulgated forty-five days after. But these are puerile trifles. Let then the simple view which I have given be sufficient for us, — that God, though he favored her, not immediately with the honor of a wife and liberal support, yet ceased not to love her. Thus we see the minds of the faithful were sustained to bear patiently their calamities; for it is an untold consolation to know that God loves us. If a testimony respecting his love moderates not our sorrows, we are very ill-natured and ungrateful.

The Prophet then more clearly proves in these words, that God loved his people, though he seemed to be alienated from them. He might have wholly destroyed them: he yet supplied them with food in their exile. The people indeed lived in the greatest straits; and all delicacies were no doubt taken from them, and their fare was very sordid and very scanty: but the Prophet forbids them to measure God's favor by the smallness of what was given them; for though God would not immediately receive into favor a wife who had been an adulteress, yet he wished her to continue his wife.

Hence he adds, *I said to her, For many days shalt thou tarry for me, and thou shalt not become wanton, and thou shalt not be for any man,* that is, 'Thou shalt remain a widow; for it is for this reason that I still retain thee, to find out whether thou wilt sincerely repent. I would not indeed be too easy towards thee, lest I should by indulgence corrupt thee: I shall see what thy conduct will be: you must in the meantime continue a widow.' This, then was God's small favor which remained for the people, even a sort of widowhood. God might, indeed, as we have said, have utterly destroyed his people: but he mitigated his wrath and only punished them with exile, and in the meantime, proved that he was not forgetful of his banished people. Though then he only bestowed some scanty allowance, he yet did not wholly deprive them of food, nor suffer them to perish through want. This treatment then in reality is set forth by this representation, that the Prophet had bidden his wife to remain single.

He says, *And I also shall be for thee:* why does he say, *I also?* A wife, already joined to her husband, has no right to pledge her faith to another. Then the Prophet shows that Israel was held bound by the Lord, that they might not seek another connection, for his faith was pledged to them. Hence he says, I also shall be for thee; that is, 'I pledge my faith to thee, or, I subscribe myself as thy husband: but another time must be looked for; I yet defer my favor, and suspend it until thou givest proof of true repentance.' "I also", he says, "shall be for thee"; that is, 'Thou shalt not be a widow in vain, if thou complainest that wrong is done to thee, because I forbid thee to marry any one else, I also bind myself in turn to thee.' Now then is evident the mutual compact between God and his people, so that the people, though a state of widowhood be full of sorrows ought not yet to succumb to grief, but to keep themselves exclusively for God, till the time of their full and

complete deliverance, because he says, that he will remain true to his pledge. "I will then be thine: though at present, I admit thee not into the honor of wives, I will not yet wholly repudiate thee."

But how does this view harmonize with the first prediction, according to which God seems to have divorced his people? Their concurrence may be easily explained. The Prophet indeed said, that the body of the people would be alienated from God: but here he addresses the faithful only. Lest then the minds of those who were healable should despond, the Prophet sets before them this comfort which I have mentioned, — that though they were to continue, as it were, single, yet the Lord would remain, as it were, bound to them, so as not to adopt another people and reject them. But we shall presently see that this prediction regards in common the Gentiles as well as the Jews and Israelites.

He afterwards adds, *For many days shall the children of Israel abide* He says, for many days, that they might prepare themselves for long endurance, and be not dispirited through weariness, though the Lord should not soon free them from their calamities. "Though then your exile should be long, still cherish," he says, "strong hope in your hearts; for so long a trial must necessarily be made of your repentance; as you have very often pretended to return to the Lord, and soon after your hypocrisy was discovered; and then ye became hardened in your wilful obstinacy: it is therefore necessary that the Lord should subdue you by a long chastisement." Hence he says, *The children of Israel shall abide without a king and without a prince*

But it may still be further asked, What is the number of the days of which the Prophet speaks, for the definite number is not stated here; and we know that the exile appointed for the Jews was seventy years? (Jeremiah 29:10.) But the Prophet seems here to extend his prediction farther, even to the time of Christ. To this I answer, that here he refers simply to the seventy years; though, at the same time, we must remember that those who returned not from exile were supported by this promise, and hoped in the promised Mediator: but the Prophet goes not beyond that number, afterwards prefixed by Jeremiah. It is not to be wondered at, that the Prophet had not computed the years and days; for the time of the captivity, that is, of the last captivity, was not yet come. Shortly after, indeed, four tribes were led away, and then the ten, and the whole kingdom of Israel was destroyed: but the last ruin of the whole people was not yet so near. It was therefore not necessary to compute then the years; but he speaks of a long time indefinitely, and speaks of the children of Israel and says, *They shall abide without a king and without a prince:* and inasmuch as they placed their trust in their king, and thought themselves happy in having this one distinction, a powerful king, he says, They shall abide without a king, without a prince. He now explains their widowhood without similitudes: hence he says, They shall be without a *king* and a *prince,* that is, there shall be among them no kind of civil government; they shall be like a mutilated body without a head; and so it happened to

them in their miserable dispersion.

And without a sacrifice, he says, and without a statue. The Hebrews take {מצבה}, *metsabe,* often in a bad sense, though it means generally a statue, as a monument over a grave is called {מצבה}, *metsabe,*: but the Prophet seems to speak here of idols, for he afterwards adds, {תרפים} "teraphim"; and teraphim were no doubt images, (Genesis 31:19-30,) which the superstitious used while worshipping their fictitious gods, as we read in many places. The king of Babylon is said to have consulted the teraphim; and it is said that Rachel stole the teraphim, and shortly after Laban calls the teraphim his gods. But the Hebrews talk idly when they say that these images were made of a constellation, and that they afterwards uttered words: but all this has been invented, and we know what liberty they take in devising fables. The meaning is, that God would take away from the people of Israel all civil order, and then all sacred rites and ceremonies, that they might abide as a widow, and at the same time know, that they were not utterly rejected by God without hope of reconciliation.

It is asked, why "ephod" is mentioned; for the priesthood continued among the tribe of Judah, and the ephod, it is well known, was a part of the sacerdotal dress. To this I answer, that when Jeroboam introduced false worship, he employed this artifice — to make religion among the Israelites nearly like true religion in its outward form: for it seems to have been his purpose that it should vary as little as possible from the legitimate worship of God: hence he said,

'It is grievous and troublesome to you to go up to Jerusalem; then let us worship God here,' (1 Kings 12:28.)

But he pretended to change nothing; he would not appear to be an apostate, departing from the only true God. What then? "God may be worshipped without trouble by us here; for I will build temples in several places, and also erect altars: what hinders that sacrifices should not be offered to God in many places?" There is therefore no doubt but that he made his altars according to the form of the true altar, and also added the ephod and various ceremonies, that the Israelites might think that they still continued in the true worship of God.

But it follows, *Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king.* Here the Prophet shows by the fruit of their chastisement, that the Israelites had no reason to murmur or clamour against God, as though he treated them with too much severity; for if he had stretched out his hand to them immediately, there would have been in them no repentance: but when thoroughly cleansed by long correction, they would then truly and sincerely confess their God. We then see that this comfort is set forth as arising from the fruit of chastisement, that the Israelites might patiently bear the temporary wrath of God. *Afterwards*, he says, *they shall return*; as though he said, "They are now led away headlong into their impiety, and they can by no means be restrained except by this

long endurance of evils."

They shall therefore *return, and then will they seek Jehovah their God.* The name of the only true God is set here in opposition, as before, to all Baalim. The Israelites, indeed, professed to worship God; but Baalim, we know, were at the same time in high esteem among them, who were so many gods, and had crept into the place of God, and extinguished his pure worship: hence the Prophet says not simply, They shall seek God, but they shall "seek Jehovah their God". And there is here an implied reproof in the word {אלהים} "Elohehem"; for it intimates that they were drawn aside into ungodly superstitions, that they were without the true God, that no knowledge of him existed among them; though God had offered himself to them, yea, had familiarly held intercourse with them, and brought them up as it were in his bosom, as a father his own children. Hence the Prophet indirectly upbraids them for this great wickedness when he says, *They shall seek their God.* And who is this God? He is even Jehovah. They had hitherto formed for themselves vain gods: and though, he says, they had been deluded by their own devices, they shall now know the only true God, who from the beginning revealed himself to them even as their God. He afterwards adds a second clause respecting King David: but I cannot now finish the subject.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou often dost justly hide thy face from us, so that on every side we see nothing but evidences of thy dreadful judgment, — O grant, that we, with minds raised above the scene of this world, may at the same time cherish the hope which thou constantly settest before us, so that we may feel fully persuaded that we are loved by thee, however severely thou mayest chastise us and may this consolation so support and sustain our souls, that patiently enduring whatever chastisements thou mayest lay upon us, we may ever hold fast the reconciliation which thou hast promised to us in Christ thy Son. Amen.

Lecture Ninth

We have now to consider the second clause, respecting King David. The Prophet tells us, that when the Israelites shall be moved with the desire of seeking God, they shall also seek David their king. They had, as it is well known, departed from their allegiance to him; though God had set David over the whole people for this end, — that they might all be happy under his power and dominion, and remain safe and secure, as though they beheld God with their own eyes; for David was, as it were, the angel of God. Then the revolt of the people, or of the ten tribes, was like a renunciation of the living God. The Lord said to Samuel,

'Thee have they not despised, but rather me,'

(1 Samuel 8:7:)

this must have been much more the case with regard to David, whom Samuel, by God's command, had anointed, and whom the Lord had honored with so many bright commendations; they could not have cast away his yoke,

without openly rejecting, as it were, God himself. Hence Hosea, speaking of the people's repentance, does not, without reasons distinctly mention this, that they shall return to David their king: for they could not sincerely and from the heart seek God, without subjecting themselves to that lawful authority to which they had been bound, not by men, nor by chance, but by God's command.

It is indeed true that David was then dead; but Hosea sets forth here, in the person of one man, that everlasting kingdom, which the Jews knew would endure as the sun and moon: for well known to them all was this remarkable promise,

'As long as the sun and moon shall shine in heaven, they shall be faithful witnesses to me, that the throne of David shall continue,' (Psalm 72:5,18.)

Hence, after the death of David, the Prophet shows here that his kingdom would be forever, for he survived in his children; and, as it evidently appears, they commonly called their Messiah the son of David. We must now of necessity come to Christ: for Israel could not seek their king, David, who had been long dead; but were to seek that King whom God had promised from the posterity of David. This prophecy, then, no doubt extends to Christ: and it is evident that the only hope of the people being gathered was this, that God had testified that he would give a Redeemer.

We now then see what the Prophet had in view: the Israelites had become degenerate; and, by their perfidy, they ceased to be the true and genuine people of God, as long as they continued alienated from the family of David. The Prophet, speaking of their full restoration, now joins David with God; for they could not be restored to the body of the Church, without uniting with the Jews in honoring one and the same head. But we must, at the same time, remember, that the king, whom the Prophet mentions, is not David, who had been long dead, but his son, to whom the perpetuity of his kingdom had been promised.

This doctrine is especially useful to us; for it shows that God is not to be sought except in Christ the mediator. Whosoever, then, forsakes Christ, forsakes God himself; for as John says,

'He who has not the Son, has not the Father,'
(1 John 2:23.)

And the thing itself proves this; for God dwells in light inaccessible; how great, then is the distance between us and him? Except Christ, then, presents himself to us as a middle person, how can we come to God? But then only we begin really to seek God, when we turn our eyes to Christ, who willingly offers himself to us. This is the only way of seeking God aright.

Some, with more refinement, contend, that Christ is Jehovah, because the Prophet says, that he is to be sought not otherwise than as God is. By the word, seeking, the Prophet indeed means, that the Israelites had no other way of being safe and secure than by fleeing under the guardianship and protection of their legitimate king, whom they knew to have been divinely

ordained for them. This, then, would not be sufficient to confute the Jews. I take the passage in a simpler way, as meaning, that they would seek their God in the person of the king, whose hand and efforts God intended to employ in the preservation of the people.

It further follows, *And they shall fear Jehovah and his goodness in the last day".* The verb {פחד}, *peched,* means sometimes; to dread, to be frightened as they are who are so terrified as to lose all courage. But in this place it is to be taken in a good sense, to fear, as it appears evident from the context. Then he says, *They shall fear God and his goodness.* The Israelites had before shaken off the yoke of God: for it was a proof of wanton contempt in them to build a new temple; to devise, at their own will, a new religion; and, in a word, to allow themselves an unbridled licentiousness. Hence he says, They shall hereafter begin to fear God, and shall continue in his service.

And he adds, *and his goodness*; by which he means that God would not be dreaded by them, but that he would sweetly allure them to himself, that they might obey him spontaneously and freely, and even joyfully: and doubtless God does then only make us really to fear him, when he gives us a taste of his goodness. For God's majesty strikes terror into us; and we, in the meantime, seek hiding places; and were it possible for us to withdraw from him, each of us would do so gladly; but it is not to worship God with due honor, when we flee away from him. It is then a sense of his goodness that leads us reverentially to fear him. 'With thee,' says David, 'is forgiveness, that thou mayest be feared,' (Psalm 130:4:) for except men know God to be ready to be at peace with them, and feel assured that he will be propitious to them, no one will seek him, no one will fear him, for without knowing this, we could not but wish his glory to be abolished and extinguished, and that he should be without authority, lest he should become our judge. But every one who has tasted of God's goodness, so orders himself as to obey God.

What the Prophet then means when he says, *They shall then fear God*, is this, that they shall understand that they were miserable as long as they were alienated from him, and that true happiness is to submit to his authority.

But further, this goodness is to be referred to Christ. Some take {טובו} *thubu,* for glory, as in Exodus 33 [Ex 32:19]; but the connection of this passage requires the word to be taken in its proper sense. And God's goodness, we know, is so exhibited to us in Christ, that not a particle of it is to be sought for anywhere else: for from this fountain must we draw whatever refers to our salvation and happiness of life. Let us then know that God cannot from the heart be worshipped by us, except when we behold him in the person of his Son, and know him to be a kind Father to us: hence John says,

'He who honors not the Son, honors not the Father,'
(John 5:23.)

Lastly, he adds, *In the extremity of days*; for the Prophet wished again to remind the Israelites of what he had said before, — that they had need of long affliction, by which God would by degrees reform them. He then shows

that their perverseness was such, that they would not soon be brought into a right mind; but that this would be *in the extremity of days*. At the same time he relieves the minds of the godly, that they might not, through weariness, grow faint: for though they were not at first to taste of God's goodness, the Prophet reminds them that there was no reason to despair, because the Lord would manifest his goodness in the extremity of days. We may add, that this extremity of days had its beginning at the return of the people. When liberty was granted to the Jews to return to their own country, it was the extremity or fulness of days, of which the Prophet speaks. But a continued series from the people's return to the coming of Christ, must at the same time be understood; for the Lord then performed more fully what he declares here by his Prophet. Hence everywhere in Scripture, especially in the New Testament, the manifestation of Christ is placed in the last times. This chapter is now explained. The fourth now follows.

Hosea 4

Chapter 4

Hosea 4:1-2

1. Hear the word of the LORD, ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

1. Audite verbum Jehova, filii Israel, quia lis Jehovae cum incolis terrae; quia nulla fides, (aut, veritas, nulla fidelitas,) et nulla beneficientia, etnulla cognito Dei in terra.

2. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood.

2. Maledicere, et mentiri, et occidere, et furari, et adulterium committere perruperunt, et sanguines sanguinibus fuerunt continui.

This is a new discourse by the Prophet, separate from his former discourses. We must bear in mind that the Prophets did not literally write what they delivered to the people, nor did they treat only once of those things which are now extant with us; but we have in their books collected summaries and heads of those matters which they were wont to address to the people. Hosea, no doubt, very often descanted on the exile and the restoration of the people, forasmuch as he dwelt much on all the things which we have hitherto noticed. Indeed, the slowness and dullness of the people were such, that the same things were repeated daily. But it was enough for the Prophets to make and to write down a brief summary of what they taught in their discourses.

Hosea now relates how vehemently he reproved the people, because every kind of corruption so commonly prevailed, that there was no sound part in the whole community. We hence see what the Prophet treats of now; and this ought to be observed, for hypocrites wish ever to be flattered; and when

the mercy of God is offered to them, they seek to be freed from every fear. It is therefore a bitter thing to them, when threatening are mingled, when God sharply chides them. "What! we heard yesterday a discourse on God's mercy, and now he fulminates against us. He is then changeable; if he were consistent, would not his manner of teaching be alike and the same today?" But men must be often awakened, for forgetfulness of God often creeps over them; they indulge themselves, and nothing is more difficult than to lead them to God; nay, when they have made some advances, they soon turn aside to some other course.

We hence see that men cannot be taught, except God reproves their sins by his word; and then, lest they despond, gives them a hope of mercy; and except he again returns to reproofs and threatening. This is the mode of address which we find in all the Prophets.

I now come to the Prophet's words: *Hear*, he says, *the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel, the Lord has a dispute, etc.* The Prophet, by saying that the Lord had a dispute with the inhabitants of the land, intimates that men in vain flatter themselves, when they have God against them, and that they shall soon find him to be their Judge, except they in time anticipate his vengeance. But he also reminds the Israelites that God had a dispute with them, that they might not have to feel the severity of justice, but reconcile themselves to God, while a seasonable opportunity was given them. Then the Prophet's introduction had this object in view — to make the Israelites to know that God would be adverse to them, except they sought, without delay, to regain his favor. The Lord then, since he declared that he would contend with them, shows that he was not willing to do so. for had God determined to punish the people, what need was there of this warning? Could he not instantly execute judgment on them? Since, then, the Prophet was sent to the children of Israel to warn them of a great and fatal danger, God had still a regard for their safety: and doubtless this warning prevailed with many; for those who were alarmed by this denunciation humbled themselves before God, and hardened not themselves in wickedness: and the reprobate, though not amended, were yet rendered twice less excusable.

The same is the case among us, whenever God threatens us with judgment: they who are not altogether intractable or unhealable, confess their guilt, and deprecate God's wrath; and others, though they harden their hearts in wickedness, cannot yet quench the power of truth; for the Lord takes from them every pretext for ignorance, and conscience wounds them more deeply, after they have been thus warned

We now then understand what the Prophet meant by saying, that God had a dispute with the inhabitants of the land. But that the Prophet's intention may be more clear to us, we must bear in mind, that he and other faithful teachers were wearied with crying, and that in the meantime no fruit appeared. He saw that his warnings were heedlessly despised, and that hence his last resort was to summon men to God's tribunal. We also

are constrained, when we prevail nothing, to follow the same course: "God will judge you; for no one will bear to be judged by his word: whatever we announce to you in his name, is counted a matter of sport: he himself at length will show that he has to do with you." In a similar strain does Zechariah speak,

'They shall look on him whom they have pierced,'
(Zechariah 12:10:)

and to the same purpose does Isaiah say, that the Spirit of the Lord was made sad.

'Is it not enough,' he says, 'that ye should be vexatious to men, except ye be so also to my God?' (Isaiah 7:13.)

The Prophet joined himself with God; for the ungodly king Ahab, by tempting God, did at the same time trifle with his Prophets.

There is then here an implied contrast between the dispute which God announces respecting the Israelites, and the daily strifes he had with them by his Prophets. For this reason also the Lord said,

'My Spirit shall no more strive with man, for he is flesh,'
(Genesis 6:3.)

God indeed says there, that he had waited in vain for men to return to the right way; for they were refractory beyond any hope of repentance: he therefore declared, that he would presently punish them. So also in this place, ' "The Lord has a trial at law"; he will now himself plead his own cause: he has hitherto long exercised his Prophets in contending with you; yea, he has wearied them with much and continual labour; ye remain ever like yourselves; he will therefore begin now to plead effectually his own cause with you: he will no more speak to you by the mouth, but by his power, show himself a judge.' The Prophet, however, designedly laid down the word, *dispute,* that the Israelites might know that God would severely treat them, not without cause, nor unjustly, as though he said, "God will so punish you as to show at the same time that he will do so for the best reason: ye elude all threatenings; ye think that you can make yourselves safe by your shifts: there are no evasions by which you can possibly hope to attain any thing; for God will at length uncover all your wickedness." In short, the Prophet here joins punishment with God's justice, or he points out by one word, a real (so to speak) or an effectual contention, by which the Lord not only reproves men in words, but also visits with judgment their sins.

It follows, *Because there is no truth*, no kindness, no knowledge of God. The dispute, he said, was to be with the inhabitants of the land: by *the inhabitants of the land,* he means the whole body of the people; as though he said, "Not a few men have become corrupt, but all kinds of wickedness prevail everywhere." And for the same reason he adds, that there was no truth", etc. *in the land;* as though he said, "They who sin hide not themselves now in lurking-places; they seek no recesses, like those who are ashamed; but so much licentiousness is everywhere dominant, that the whole land is filled with

the contempt of God and with crimes." This was a severe reproof to proud men. How much the Israelites flattered themselves, we know; it was therefore necessary for the Prophet to speak thus sharply to a refractory people; for a gentle and kind warning proves effectual only to the meek and teachable. When the world grows hardened against God, such a rigorous treatment as the words of the Prophet disclose must be used. Let those then, to whom is intrusted the charge of teaching, see that they do not gently warn men, when hardened in their vices; but let them follow this vehemence of the Prophet.

We said at the beginning, that the Prophet had a good reason for being so warm in his indignation: he was not at the moment foolishly carried away by the heat of zeal; but he knew that he had to do with men so perverse, that they could not be handled in any other way. The Prophet now reproves not only one kind of evil, but brings together every sort of crimes; as though he said, that the Israelites were in every way corrupt and perverted. He says first, that there was among them no faithfulness, and no kindness. He speaks here of their contempt of the second table of the law; for by this the impiety of men is sooner found out, that is, when an examination is made of their life: for hypocrites vauntingly profess the name of God, and confidently (*plenis buccis* — with full cheeks) arrogate faith to themselves; and then they cover their vices with the external show of divine worship, and frigid acts of devotion: nay, the very thing mentioned by Jeremiah is too commonly the case, that

'the house of God is made a den of thieves,'
(Jeremiah 7:11.)

Hence the Prophets, that they might drag the ungodly to the light, examine their conduct according to the duties of love: "Ye are right worshipers of God, ye are most holy; but in the meantime, where is truth, where is mutual faithfulness, where is kindness? If ye are not men, how can ye be angels? Ye are given to avarice, ye are perfidious, ye are cruel: what more can be said of you, except that each of you condemns all the rest before God, and that your life is also condemned by all?'

By saying that *truth* or *faithfulness* was extinct, he makes them to be like foxes, who are ever deceitful: by saying that there was *no kindness,* he accuses them of cruelty, as though he said, that they were like lions and wild beasts. But the fountain of all these vices he points out in the third clause, when he says, that they had *no knowledge of God:* and the knowledge of God he takes for the fear of God which proceeds from the knowledge of him; as though he said, "In a word, men go on as licentiously, as if they did not think that there is a God in heaven, as if all religion was effaced from their hearts." For as long as any knowledge of God remains in us, it is like a bridle to restrain us: but when men become wanton, and allow themselves every liberty, it is certain that they have forgotten God, and that there is in them now no knowledge of God. Hence the complaints in the Psalms,

'The ungodly have said in their heart, There is no God,'

(Psalm 14:1:)

'Impiety speaks in my heart, There is no God.' Men cannot run headlong into brutal stupidity, while a spark of the true knowledge of God shines or twinkles in their minds. We now then perceive the real meaning of the Prophet.

But after having said that they were full of perfidiousness and cruelty, he adds, *By cursing, and lying, and killing, etc.*, {אלה}, *ale,* means to swear: some explain it in this place as signifying to forswear; and others read the two together, {וכחש} {אלה}, *ale ucachesh,* to swear and lie, that is to deceive by swearing. But as {אלה} "alah" means often to curse, the Prophet here, I doubt not, condemns the practice of cursing, which was become frequent and common among the people.

But he enumerates particulars in order more effectually to check the fierceness of the people; for the wicked, we know, do not easily bend their neck: they first murmur, then they clamour against wholesome instruction, and at last they rage with open fury, and break out into violence, when they cannot otherwise stop the progress of sound doctrine. How ever this may be, we see that they are not easily led to own their sins. This is the reason why the Prophet shows here, by stating particulars, in how many ways they provoked God's wrath: 'Lo,' he says 'cursings, lyings, murder, thefts, adulteries, abound among you.' And the Prophet seems here to allude to the precepts of the law; as though he said, "If any one compares your life with the law of God, he will find that you avowedly and designedly lead such a life, as proves that you fight against God, that you violate every part of his law."

But it must be here observed, that he speaks not of such thieves or murderers as are led in our day to the gallows, or are otherwise punished. On the contrary, he calls them thieves and murderers and adulterers, who were in high esteem, and eminent in honor and wealth, and who, in short, were alone illustrious among the people of Israel: such did the Prophet brand with these disgraceful names, calling them murderers and thieves. So also does Isaiah speak of them, 'Thy princes are robbers and companions of thieves,' (Isaiah 1:23.) And we already reminded you, that the Prophet addresses not his discourses to few men, but to the whole people; for all, from the least to the greatest, had fallen away.

He afterwards says, *They have broken out.* The expression no doubt is to be taken metaphorically, as though he said, "There are now no bonds, no barriers." For the people so raged against God, that no modesty, no shame on account of the law, no religion, no fear, prevailed among them, or checked their intractable spirit. Hence *they broke out.* By the word, breaking out, the Prophet sets forth the furious wantonness seen in the reprobate; when freed from the fear of God, they abandon themselves to what is sinful, without any moderation, without any restraint.

And to the same purpose he subjoins, *Bloods are contiguous to bloods.* By bloods he means all the worst crimes: and he says that bloods were close to

bloods, because they joined crimes together, and as Isaiah says, that iniquity was as it were a train; so our Prophet says here, that such was the common liberty they took to sin, that wherever he turned his eyes, he could see no part free from wickedness. Then bloods are contiguous to bloods, that is, everywhere is seen the horrible spectacle of crimes. This is the meaning. It now follows —

Hosea 4:3

3. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

3. Propterea Ingebit (vel, succidetur; {עמל} enim utrunque significat) omnis habitans in ea, in bestia agri, in volucre coeli atque etaim piscibus maris collingentur omnes, vel, tollentur e medio.)

The Prophet now expresses more clearly the dispute which he mentions in the first verse; and it now evidently appears, that it was not a judgment expressed in words, for God had in vain tried to bring the people to the right way by threats and reproofs: he had contended enough with then; they remained refractory; hence he adds, "Now mourn shall the whole land"; that is, God has now resolved to execute his judgment: there is therefore no use for you any more to contrive any evasion, as you have been hitherto wont to do; for God stretches forth his hand for your ultimate destruction. Mourn, therefore, shall the land, and *cut off shall be every one that dwells in it*, as I prefer to render it; unless the Prophet, it may be, means, that though God should for a time suspend the last judgment, yet the Israelites would gain nothing, seeing that they would, by continual languor, pine away. But as he mentions mourning in the first place, the former meaning, that God would destroy all the inhabitants, seems more appropriate. He adds, *gathered shall they be all*, or *destroyed*, (for either may suit the place,) *from the beast of the field, and the bird of heaven, to the fishes of the sea.* The Prophet here enlarges on the greatness of God's wrath; for he includes even the innocent beasts and the birds of heaven, yea, the fishes of the sea. When Godly vengeance extends to brute animals, what will become of men?

But some one may here object and say, that it is unworthy of God to be angry with miserable creatures, which deserve no such treatment: for why should God be angry with fishes and beasts? But an answer may be easily given: As beasts, and birds, and fishes, and, in a word, all other things, have been created for the use of men, it is no wonder that God should extend the tokens of his curse to all creatures, above and below, when his purpose is to punish men. We seek, indeed, for the most part, some vain comforts to delight us, or to moderate our sorrows when God shows himself angry with us: but when God curses innocent animals for our sake, we then dread the more, except, indeed, we be under the influence of extreme stupor.

We now then understand why God here denounces destruction on brute animals as well as on birds and fishes of the sea; it is, that men may know

themselves to be deprived of all his gifts; as when a person, in order to expose a wicked man to shame, pulls down his house and burns his whole furniture: so also does God do, who has adorned the world with so much and such varied wealth for our sake, when he reduces all things to a waste: He thereby shows how grievously offended he is with us, and thus constrains us to become humble. This then is the Prophet's meaning.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are at this day as guilty before thee as the Israelites of old were, who were so rebellious against thy Prophets, and that as thou hast often tried sweetly to allure us to thyself without any success, and as we have not hitherto ceased, by our continual obstinacy, to provoke thy wrath, — O grant, that being moved at least by the warnings thou givest us, we may prostrate ourselves before thy face, and not wait until thou puttest forth thy hand to destroy us, but, on the contrary, strive to anticipate thy judgment; and that being at the same time surely convinced that thou art ready to be reconciled to us in Christ, we may flee to Him as our Mediator; and that relying on his intercession, we may not doubt but that thou art ready to give us pardon, until having at length put away all sins, we come to that blessed state of glory which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy Son. Amen.

Lecture Tenth

Hosea 4:4

4. Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for thy people are as they that strive with the priest.

4. Caeterum, vir no objurget et non corripiat virum: quia populus tuus tanquam objurgatores sacerdotis. [13]

The Prophet here deplores the extreme wickedness of the people, that they would bear no admonitions, like those who, being past hope, reject every advice, admit no physicians, and dislike all remedies: and it is a proof of irreclaimable wickedness, when men close their ears and harden their hearts against all salutary counsels. Hence the Prophet intimates, that, together with their great and many corruptions, there was such waywardness, that no one dared to reprove the public vices.

He adds this reason, *For the people are as chiders of the priest*, or, *they really contend with the priest*: for some take {כ}, *caph,* in this place, not as expressive of likeness, but as explaining and affirming what is said, 'They altogether strive with the priest.' But I prefer the former sense, which is, that the Prophet calls all the people the censors of their pastors: and we see that froward men become thus insolent when they are reproved; for instantly such an objection as this is made by them, "Am I to be treated like a child? Have I not attained sufficient knowledge to understand how I ought to live?"

[13] Amidst the variety of expositions given of this clause, the one adopted by Calvin, and substantially in our own version, is evidently the best. Newcome's version seems wide of the mark. Horsley's rendering agrees materially with our own: — 'For thy people are exactly like this: who will contend with the priest.'

We daily meet with many such men, who proudly boast of their knowledge, as though they were superior to all Prophets and teachers. And no doubt the ungodly make a show of wit and acuteness in opposing sound doctrine: and then it appears that they have learnt more than what one would have thought, — for what end? only that they may contend with God.

Let us now return to the Prophet's words. *But*, he says: {אך}, *ak* is not to be taken here as in many places for "verily:" but it denotes exception, "In the meantime". *But*, or, *in the meantime*, *let no one chide and reprove another*. In a word, the Prophet complains, that while all kinds of wickedness abounded among the people, there was no liberty to teach and to admonish, but that all were so refractory, that they would not bear to hear the word; and that as soon as any one touched their vices, there were great doctors, as they say, ready to reply.

And he enlarges on the subject by saying, that they *were as chiders of the priest;* for he declares, that they who, with impunity, conducted themselves so wantonly against God, were not yet content in being so wayward as to repel all reproofs, but also willfully rose up against their own teachers: and, as I have already said, common observation sufficiently proves, that all profane despisers of God are inflated with such confidence, that they dare to attack others. Some conjecture, in this instance, that the priest was so base, as to become liable to universal reprobation; but this conjecture is of no weight, and frigid: for the Prophet here did not draw his pen against a single individual, but, on the contrary, sharply reproved, as we have said, the perverseness of the people, that no one would hearken to a reprover. Let us then know that their diseases were then incurable, when the people became hardened against salutary counsels, and could not bear to be any more reproved. It follows —

Hosea 4:5

5. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother.

5. Et corrues interdin et corruet etiam Propheta tecum nocte, et abolebo matrem tuam.

The copulative is to be taken here for an illative, *Fall, therefore, shalt thou*. Here God denounces vengeance on refractory men; as though he said, "As ye pay no regard to my authority, when by words I reprove you, I will not now deal with you in this way; but I will visit you for this contempt of my word." And thus God is wont to do: he first tries men, or he makes the trial, whether they can be brought to repentance; he severely reproves them, and expostulates with them: but having tried all means by words, he then comes to the last remedy, by exercising his power; for, as it has been said, he deigns no longer to contend with men. Hence the Lord, when he saw that his Prophets were despised, and that their whole teaching was a matter of sport, determined, as it appears from this passage, that the people should shortly be destroyed.

Some render {היום}, *eium*, to-day, and think that a short time is denoted: but as the Prophet immediately subjoins, *And fall together shall the Prophet with thee", {לילה}, lile, in the night,* I explain it thus, — that the people would be destroyed together, and then that the Prophets, even those who, in a great measure, brought such vengeance on the people, would be drawn also into the same ruin. Fall shalt thou then in the day, and fall in the night shall the Prophet, that is, "The same destruction shall at the same time include all: but if ruin should not immediately take away the Prophets, they shall not yet escape my hand; they shall follow in their turn." Hence the Prophet joins day and night together in a continued order; as though he said, "I will destroy them all from the first to the last, and no one shall rescue himself from punishment; and if they think that those shall be unpunished who shall be later led to vengeance, they are mistaken; for as the night follows the day, so also some will draw others after them into the same ruin." Yet at the same time the Prophet, I doubt not, means by this metaphor, *the day*, that tranquil and joyous time during which the people indulged their pride. He then means that the punishment he predicted would be sudden: for except the ungodly see the hand of God near, they ever, as it has been observed before, laugh to scorn all threatening. God then says that he would punish the people *in the day*, even at mid-day, while the sun was shining; and that when the dusk should come, the Prophets would also follow in their turn.

It is evident enough that Hosea speaks not here of God's true and faithful ministers, but of impostors, who deceived the people by their blandishments, as it is usually the case: for as soon as any Prophet sincerely wished to discharge his office for God, there came forth flatterers before the public, — "This man is too rigid, and makes a wrong use of God's name, by denouncing so grievous a punishment; we are God's people." Such, then, were the Prophets, we must remember, who are here referred to; for few were those who then faithfully discharged their office; and there was a great number of those who were indulgent to the people and to their vices.

It is afterwards added, *I will also consume thy mother.* The term, *mother*, is to be taken here for the Church, on account of which the Israelites, we know, were wont to exult against God; as the Papists do at this day, who boast of their mother church, which, as they say, is their shield of Ajax. When any one points out their corruptions, they instantly flee to this protection, — "What! Are we not the Church of God?" Hence when the Prophet saw that the Israelites made a wrong use of this falsely-assumed title, he said, 'I will also destroy your mother,' that is, "This your boasting, and the dignity of Abraham's race, and the sacred name of Church, will not prevent God from taking dreadful vengeance on you all; for he will tear from the roots and abolish the very name of your mother; he will disperse that smoke of which you boast, inasmuch as you hide your crimes under the title of Church." It follows —

Hosea 4:6

6. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.

6. Preriit (perierunt ad verbum: sed quia {עם} estnomen collectivum, ideo promiscuoe conjungitur utrique numero, populus meus absque scientia: quia tu scientiam repulisti, etiam rplellam te: ne sacerdotio fungaris mihi: et quia oblitus es legis Dei tui, obliviscar filiorum tuorum ego quoque.

Here the Prophet distinctly touches on the idleness of the priests, whom the Lord, as it is well known, had set over the people. For though it could not have availed to excuse the people, or to extenuate their fault, that the priests were idle; yet the Prophet justly inveighs against them for not having performed the duty allotted to them by God. But what is said applies not to the priests only; for God, at the same time, indirectly blames the voluntary blindness of the people. For how came it, that pure instruction prevailed not among the Israelites, except that the people especially wished that it should not? Their ignorance, then, as they say, was gross; as is the case with many ungodly men at this day, who not only love darkness, but also draw it around them on every side, that they may have some excuse for their ignorance.

God then does here, in the first place, attack the priests, but he includes also the whole people; for teaching prevailed not, as it ought to have done, among them. The Lord also reproaches the Israelites for their ingratitude; for he had kindled among them the light of celestial wisdom; inasmuch as the law, as it is well known, must have been sufficient to direct men in the right way. It was then as though God himself did shine forth from heaven, when he gave them his law. How, then, did the Israelites perish through ignorance? Even because they closed their eyes against the celestial light, because they deigned not to become teachable, so as to learn the wisdom of the eternal Father. We hence see that the guilt of the people, as it has been said, is not here extenuated, but that God, on the contrary, complains, that they had malignantly suppressed the teaching of the law: for the law was fit to guide them. The people perished without knowledge, because they would perish.

But the Prophet denounces vengeance on the priests, as well as on the whole people, *Because knowledge hast thou rejected*, he says, *I also will thee reject, so that the priesthood thou shalt not discharge for me.* This is specifically addressed to the priests: the Lord accuses them of having rejected knowledge. But knowledge, as Malachi says, was to be sought from their lips, (Malachi 2:7) and Moses also touches on the same point in Deuteronomy 33:10. It was then an extreme wickedness in the priests, as though they wished to subvert God's sacred order, when they sought the honor and the dignity of the office without the office itself: and such is the case with the Papists of the present day; they are satisfied with its dignity and its wealth. Mitred bishops are prelates, are chief priests; they vauntingly boast that they are the heads of the Church, and would be deemed equal with the Apostles:

at the same time, who of them attends to his office? nay, they think that it would be in a manner a disgrace to give attention to their office and to God's call.

We now then see what the Prophet meant by saying, *Because thou hast knowledge rejected, I also will thee reject, so that thou shalt not discharge for me the priesthood.* In a word, he shows that the divorce, which the priests attempted to make, was absurd, and contrary to the nature of things, that it was monstrous, and in short impossible. Why? Because they wished to retain the title and its wealth, they wished to be deemed prelates of the Church, without knowledge: God allows not things joined together by a sacred knot to be thus torn asunder. "Dost thou then," he says, "take to thyself the office without knowledge? Nay, as thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also take to myself the honor of the priesthood, which I previously conferred on thee."

This is a remarkable passage, and by it we can check the furious boasting of the Papists, when they haughtily force upon us their hierarchy and the order, as they call it, of their clergy, that is, of their corrupt dregs: for God declares by his word, that it is impossible that there should be any priest without knowledge. And further, he would not have priests to be endued with knowledge only, and to be as it were mute; for he would have the treasure deposited with them to be communicated to the whole Church. God then, in speaking of sacerdotal knowledge, includes also preaching. Though one indeed be a literate, as there have been some in our age among the bishops and cardinals, — though then there be such he is not yet to be classed among the learned; for, as it has been said, sacerdotal learning is the treasure of the whole Church. When therefore a boast is made of the priesthood, with no regard to the ministration of the word, it is a mere mockery; for teacher and priest are, as they say, almost convertible terms. We now perceive the meaning of the first clause.

It then follows, *Because thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.* Some confine this latter clause to the priests, and think that it forms a part of the same context: but when any one weighs more fully the Prophet's words, he will find that this refers to the body of the people.

This Prophet is in his sentences often concise, and so his transitions are various and obscure: now he speaks in his own person, then he assumes the person of God; now he turns his discourse to the people, then he speaks in the third person; now he reproves the priests, then immediately he addresses the whole people. There seemed to be first a common denunciation, 'Thou shalt fall in the day, the Prophet in the night shall follow, and your mother shall perish.' The Prophet now, I doubt not, confirms the same judgment in other words: and, in the first place, he advances this proposition, that the priests were idle, and that the people quenched the light of celestial instruction; afterwards he denounces on the priests the judgment they deserved, 'I will cast thee away,' he says, 'from the priesthood;' now he comes to all the

Israelites, and says, *Thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.* Now this fault was doubtless what belonged to the whole people; there was no one exempt from this sin; and this forgetfulness was fitly ascribed to the whole people. For how it happened, that the priests had carelessly shaken off from their shoulders the burden of teaching the people? Even because the people were unwilling to have their ears annoyed: for the ungodly complain that God's servants are troublesome, when they daily cry against their vices. Hence the people gladly entered into a truce with their teachers, that they might not perform their office: thus the oblivion of God's law crept in.

As then the Prophet had denounced on the priests their punishment, so he now assures the whole people that God would bring a dreadful judgment on them all, that he would even blot out the whole race of Abraham, *I will forget*, he says, *thy children.* Why was this? The Lord had made a covenant with Abraham, which was to continue, and to be confirmed to his posterity: they departed from the true faith, they became spurious children; then God rightly testifies here, that he had a just cause why he should no longer count this degenerate people among the children of Abraham. How so? "For ye have forgotten my law," he says: "had you remembered the law, I would also have kept my covenant with you: but I will no more remember my covenant, for you have violated it. Your children, therefore, deserve not to be under finch a covenant, inasmuch as ye are such a people." It follows —

Hosea 4:7

7. As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

7. Secundum multiplicari eorum, sic peccaverunt mihi: gloriam eorum in ignominiam mutabo.

Here the Prophet amplifies the wickedness and impiety of the people, by adding this circumstance, that they the more perversely wantoned against God, the more bountiful he was to them, yea, when he poured upon them riches in full exuberance. Such a complaint we have before noticed: but the Prophets, we know, did not speak only once of the same thing; when they saw that they effected nothing, that the contempt of God still prevailed, they found it necessary to repeat often what they had previously said. Here then the Prophet accuses the Israelites of having shamefully abused the indulgence of God, of having allowed themselves greater liberty in sinning, when God so kindly and liberally dealt with them.

Some confine this to the priests, and think the meaning to be, that they sinned more against God since he increased the Levitical tribe and added to their wealth: but the Prophet, I doubt not, meant to include the whole people. He, indeed, in the last verse, separated the crimes of the priests from those of the people, though in the beginning he advanced a general propositions: he now returns to that statement, which is, that all, from the highest to the lowest, acted impiously and wickedly against God. Now we

know that the Israelites had increased in number as well as in wealth; for they were prosperous, as it has been stated, under the second Jeroboam; and thought themselves then extremely happy, because they were filled with every abundance. Hence God shows now that they had become worse and less excusable, for they were grown thus wanton, like a horse well-fed, when he kicks against his own master, — a comparison which even Moses uses in his song, (Deuteronomy 32:15.) We now see what the Prophet means. Hence, when he says {כרובם}, *carubem, according to their multiplying,* I explain this not simply of men nor of wealth, but of every kind of blessing: for the Lord here, in a word, accuses the people of ingratitude, because the more kind and liberal he was to them, the more obstinately bent they were on sinning.

He afterwards subjoins, *Their glory will I turn to shame.* He here denounces God's judgment on proud men, which they feared not: for men, we know, are blinded by prosperity. And it is the worst kind of drunkenness, when we seem to ourselves to be happy; for then we allow ourselves every thing that is contrary to God, and are deaf to all instruction, and are, in short, wholly intractable. But the Prophet says, *I will commute this glory into shame*, which means, "There is no reason for them to trust in themselves, and foolishly to impose on themselves, by fixing their eyes on their present splendor; for it is in my power," the Lord says, "to change their glory." We then see that the Prophet meant here to shake off from the Israelites their vain confidence; for they were wont to set up against God their riches, their glory, their power, their horses and chariots. "This is your glorying; but in my hand and power is adversity and prosperity; yea," the Lord says, "on me alone depends the changing of glory into shame." But at the same time, the Prophet intimates, that it could not be that God would thus prostitute his blessings to unworthy men as to swine: for it is a kind of profanation, when men are thus proud against God, while he bears with them, while he spares them. This combination then applies to all who abuse God's kindness; for the Lord intends not that his favor should be thus profaned. It follows —

Hosea 4:8

8. They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity.

8. Peccatum populi mei comedent et ad iniquitatem eorum tollent animam ejus, (ad verbum, levabunt animam ejus.)

This verse has given occasion to many interpreters to think that all the particulars we have noticed ought to be restricted to the priests alone: but there is no sufficient reason for this. We have already said, that the Prophet is wont frequently to pass from the people to the priests: but as a heavier guilt belonged to the priests, he very often inveighs against them, as he does in this place, *They eat*, he says, *the sin of my people, and lift up to their iniquity his soul*, that is, 'every one lifts up his own soul,' or, 'they lift up the soul of the sinner by iniquity;' for the pronoun applies to the priests as well as to the people. The number is changed: for he says,{יאכלו}, *iacalu*

and {ישאו} *ishau,* [14] in the plural number, *They will eat the sin,* and *will lift up, etc.*, in the third person; and then *his soul* it may be, their own; it is, however, a pronoun in the singular number: hence a change of number is necessary. We are then at liberty to choose [15] , whether the Prophet says this of the people or of the priests: and as we have said, it may apply to both, but in a different sense.

We may understand him as saying, that the priests lifted up their souls to the iniquity of the people, because they anxiously wished the people to be given to many vices, for they hoped thereby to gain much prey, as the case is, when any one expects a reward from robbers: he is glad to hear that they become rich, for he considers their riches to be for his gain. So it was with the priests, who gaped for lucre; they thought that they were going on well, when the people brought many sacrifices. And this is usually the case, when the doctrine of the law is adulterated, and when the ungodly think that this alone remains for them, — to satisfy God with sacrifices, and similar expiations. Then, if we apply the passage to the priests, the lifting up of the soul is the lust for gain. But if we prefer to apply the words to sinners themselves, the sense is, 'Upon their iniquity they lift up their soul,' that is, the guilty raise up themselves by false comforts, and extenuate their vices; or, by their own flatteries, bury and entirely smother every remnant of God's fear. Then, according to this second sense, to lift up the soul is to deceive, and to take away all doubts by vain comforts, or to remove every sorrow, and to erase every guilt by a false notion.

I come now to the meaning of the whole. Though the Prophet here accuses the priests, yet he involves, no doubt, the whole people, and deservedly, in the same guilt: for how was it that the priests expected gain from sacrifices? Even because the doctrine of the law was subverted. God had instituted sacrifices for this end, that whosoever sinned, being reminded of his guilt, might mourn for his sin, and further, that by witnessing that sad spectacle, his conscience might be more wounded: when he saw the innocent animal slain at the altar, he ought to have dreaded God's judgment. Besides, God also intended to exercise the faith of all, in order that they might flee to the expiation which was to be made by the promised Mediator. And at the same time, the penalty which God then laid on sinners, ought to have been as a bridle to restrain them. In a word, the sacrifices had, in every way, this as their object, — to keep the people from being so ready or so prone to sin. But what did the ungodly do? They even mocked God, and thought

[14] These verbs are in the future tense; but the future in Hebrew is often used, as Calvin says in another place, to express a continued act, or an habitual practice.

[15] This choice can hardly be conceded. 'People,' in Hebrew, is in the singular number, and the pronouns referring to people are commonly put in the same number; but not so in our language. 'His' here evidently belongs to the people, and not to the priests, and ought to be rendered 'their,' as in our version. The verse literally translated is as follows, only the future is taken for the present tense: — 'The sin of my people they eat, And to their (own) iniquity they raise up their heart.' To render 'sin,' as Newcome and Horsley do, 'sin-offerings,' is to destroy the whole force of the passage, that through the superstition of the people they gained their living. And 'iniquity' means, no doubt, idolatry, to which the priests raised up the people's heart, or attached them. —Ed.

that they had fully done their duty, when they offered an ox or a lamb; and afterwards they freely indulged themselves in their sins.

So gross a folly has been even laughed to scorn by heathen writers. Even Plato has so spoken of such sacrifices, as to show that those who would by such trifles make a bargain with God, are altogether ungodly: and certainly he so speaks in his second book on the Commonwealth, as though he meant to describe the Papacy. For he speaks of purgatory, he speaks of satisfactions; and every thing the Papists of this day bring forward, Plato in that book distinctly sets forth as being altogether sottish and absurd. But yet in all ages this assurance has prevailed, that men have thought themselves delivered from God's hand, when they offered some sacrifice: it is, as they imagine, a compensation.

Hence the Prophet now complains of this perversion, *They eat*, he says, (for he speaks of a continued act,) *the sins of my people, and to iniquity they lift up the heart of each;* that is, When all sin, one after the other, each one is readily absolved, because he brings a gift to the priests. It is the same thing as though the Prophet said, "There is a collusion between them, between the priests and the people." How so? Because the priests were the associates of robbers, and gladly seized on what was brought: and so they carried on no war, as they ought to have done, with vices, but on the contrary urged only the necessity of sacrifices: and it was enough, if men brought things plentifully to the temple. The people also themselves showed their contempt of God; for they imagined, that provided they made satisfaction by their ceremonial performances, they would be exempt from punishment. Thus then there was an ungodly compact between the priests and the people: the Lord was mocked in the midst of them. We now then understand the real meaning of the Prophet: and thus I prefer the latter exposition as to 'the lifting up of the soul,' which is, that the priests lifted up the soul of each, by relieving their consciences, by soothing words of flattery, and by promising life, as Ezekiel says, to souls doomed to die, (Ezekiel 13:19.) It now follows

Hosea 4:9-10

9. And there shall be, like people, like priest: and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings.

9. Et erit, sicut populus sic erit sacerdos: et visitabo super eum vias ejus et opera ejus rependam ci.

10. For they shall eat, and not have enough: they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase: because they have left off to take heed to the LORD.

10. Comedent enim et non saturabuntur, scortabuntur et non augescent (vel, crescent, id est,

The Prophet here again denounces on both a common punishment, as neither was free from guilt. *As the people*, he says, *so shall be the priest*; that is "I will spare neither the one nor the other; for the priest has abused the honor conferred on him; for though divinely appointed over the Church for

this purpose, to preserve the people in piety and holy life, he has yet broken through and violated every right principle: and then the people themselves wished to have such teachers, that is, such as were mute. I will therefore now" the Lord says, "inflict punishment on them all alike. As the people then, so shall the priest be."

Some go farther, and say, that it means that God would rob the priests of their honor, that they might differ nothing from the people; which is indeed true: but then they think that the Prophet threatens not others as well as the priests; which is not true. For though God, when he punishes the priests and the people for the contempt of his law, blots out the honor of the priesthood, and so abolishes it as to produce an equality between the great and the despised; yet the Prophet declares here, no doubt, that God would become the vindicator of his law against other sinners as well as against the priests. This subject expands wider than what they mean. The rest we must defer till to-morrow.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that, since thou hast hitherto so kindly invited us to thyself, and daily invites us, and often interposes also thy threatening to rouse our inattention, and since we have been inattentive to thy reproofs, as well as to thy paternal kindness, — O grant, that we may not, to the last, proceed in this our wickedness, and thus provoke the vengeance thou here denounces on men past recovery; but that we may anticipate thy wrath by true repentance, and be humbled under thy hand, yea, be thy word, that thou mayest receive us into favor, and nourish us in thy paternal bosom, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Eleventh

One thing escaped me in yesterday's lecture, on which I shall now briefly touch. It may be asked why the Prophet says, that the priest was to be robbed of his honour, who was not a true nor a legitimate priest; for there was among the Israelites, we know, no temple in which God was rightly worshipped. For though it was customary with them to profess the name of the true God, yet we are aware that all their pretenses were vain. Since the lord had chosen one sanctuary only at Jerusalem, it hence follows, that all the priests among the people of Israel were false. It could not then be that God had taken from them their honor. But it is nothing new for God to punish the ungodly, by taking from them what they seem to possess.

The case is the same this day as to the Papacy; for they who vaunt themselves as being clergy and priests are mere apes: (*merae larvae*) as, however, they retain the title, what the Prophet threatened to the false priests of his age may be justly said to them, that their shame shall be made manifest, so that they shall cease to boast of their dignity, by which they now deceive the simple and ignorant.

We now then understand the Prophet's meaning: his meaning is the same as when he said before, "I will draw thee to the desert, and then the ephod

shall cease, and the seraphim shall cease." There was, we know, no ephod which the Lord approved, except that alone which the legitimate priest did wear: but as there was emulation between the Israelites and the Jews, and as they who had departed from the true and pure worship of God, did yet boast that they worshipped the God of Abraham, the Lord here declares, that he would not suffer them to lurk under such masks.

I now return to that passage of the Prophet, in which he says, *They shall eat and shall not be satisfied*, and again, *They shall play the wanton and shall not increase; because Jehovah have they left off to attend to.* The Prophet here again proclaims the judgment which was nigh the Israelites. And first, he says, *They shall eat and shall not be satisfied*; in which he alludes to the last verse. For the priests gaped for gain, and their only care was to satisfy their appetites. Since then their cupidity was insatiable, which was also the cause why they conceded sinful liberty to the people, he now says, *They shall eat and shall not be satisfied.* The Prophet intimates further by these words, that men are not sustained by plenty or abundance of provisions, but rather by the blessing of God: for a person may devour much, yet the quantity, however large, may not satisfy him; and this we find to be often the case as to a voracious appetite; for in such an instance, the staff of bread is broken, that is, the Lord takes away support from bread, so that much eating does not satisfy. And this is the Prophet's meaning, when he says, *They shall eat and shall not be satisfied* The priests thought it a happy time with them, when they gathered great booty from every quarter; God on the contrary declares, that it would be empty and useless to them; for no satisfying effect would follow: however much they might greedily swallow up, they would not yet be satisfied.

He afterwards adds, *They shall play the wanton and shall not increase;* that is, "However much they might give the reins to promiscuous lusts, I will not yet suffer them to propagate: so far shall they be from increasing or generating an offspring by lawful marriages, that were they everywhere to indulge in illicit intercourse, they would still continue barren." The Prophet here, in a word, testifies that the ungodly are deceived, when they think that they can obtain their wishes by wicked and unlawful means; for the Lord will frustrate their desires. The avaricious think, when they have much, that they are sufficiently defended against all want; and when penury presses on all others, they think themselves beyond the reach of danger. But the Lord derides this folly: "Gather, gather great heaps; but I will blow on your riches, that they may vanish, or at least yield you no advantage. So also strive to beget children; though one may marry ten wives, or everywhere play the wanton, he shall still remain childless." Thus we see that a just punishment is inflicted on profane men, when they indulge their own lusts: they indeed promise to themselves a happy issue; but God, on the other hand, pronounces upon them his curse.

He then adds, *They have left Jehovah to attend*, that is that they may not

attend or serve him. Here the Prophet points out the source and the chief cause of all evils, and that is, because the Israelites had forsaken the true God and his worship. Though they indeed retained the name of God, and were wont, even boldly, to set up this plea against the Prophets, that they were the children of Abraham, and the chosen of the supreme God, he yet says that they were apostates. How so? Because whosoever keeps faith with God, keeps himself also under the tuition of his word, and wanders not after his own inventions; but the Israelites indulged themselves in any thing they pleased. Since then it is certain that they had shaken off the yoke of the law, it is no wonder that the Prophet says, that they had departed from the Lord. But we ought to notice the confirmation of this truth, that no one can continue to keep faith with God, except he observes his word and remains under its tuition. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 4:11

11. Whoredom and wine and new wine take away the heart.

11. Scortatio et vinum et mustum auterent cor (alli verunt, occupant cor.)

The verb {לקח} *lakech,* means to take away; and this sense is also admissible that wine and wantonness take possession of the heart; but I take its simpler meaning, to take away. But it is not a general truth as most imagine, who regard it a proverbial saying, that wantonness and wine deprive men of their right mind and understanding: on the contrary, it is to be restricted, I doubt not, to the Israelites; as though the Prophet had said, that they were without a right mind, and like brute animals, because drunkenness and fornication had infatuated or fascinated them. But we may take both in a metaphorical sense; as fornication may be superstition, and so also drunkenness: yet it seems more suitable to the context to consider, that the Prophet here reproaches the Israelites for having petulantly cast aside every instruction through being too much given to their pleasures and too much cloyed. Since then the Israelites had been enriched with great plenty, God had given way to abominable indulgences, the Prophet says, that they were without sense: and this is commonly the case with such men. I will not therefore treat here more at large of drunkenness and fornication.

It is indeed true, that when any one becomes addicted to wantonness, he loses both modesty and a right mind, and also that wine is as it were poisonous, for it is, as one has said, a mixed poison: and the earth, when it sees its own blood drank up intemperately, takes its revenge on men. These things are true; but let us see what the Prophet meant.

Now, as I have said, he simply directs his discourse to the Israelites, and says, that they were sottish and senseless, because the Lord had dealt too liberally with them. For, as I have said, the kingdom of Israel was then very opulent, and full of all kinds of luxury. The Prophet then touches now distinctly on this very thing: “How comes it that ye are now so senseless, that there is not a particle of right understanding among you? Even because ye are given to excesses, because there is among you too large an abundance

of all good things: hence it is, that all indulge their own lusts; and these take away your heart." In short, God means here that the Israelites abused his blessings, and that excesses blinded them. This is the meaning. Let us now go on —

Hosea 4:12

12. My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God.

12. Populus meus in ligno suo interrogat (vel, lignum suum sonsulit) et baculus ejus respondit ei (ad verbum, respondebit; sed significat actum continuum:)quia spiritus fornicationum decepit, et fornicati sunt a Deo suo (a subtus Deo suo, hoc est, ne amplius subjecti sint Deo vel pareant.)

The Prophet calls here the Israelites the people of God, not to honor them, but rather to increase their sin; for the more heinous was the perfidy of the people, that having been chosen, they had afterwards forsaken their heavenly Father. Hence *My people*: there is here an implied comparison between all other nations and the seed of Abraham, whom God had adopted; "This is, forsooth! the people whom I designed to be sacred to myself, whom of all nations in the world I have taken to myself: they are my heritage. Now this people, who ought to be mine, consult their own wood, and their staff answers them!" We hence see that it was a grievous and severe reprobation when the Lord reminded them of the invaluable kindness with which he had favored the children of Abraham.

So at this day our guilt will be more grievous, if we continue not in the pure worship of God, since God has called us to himself and designed us to be his peculiar flock. The same thing that the Prophet brought against the Israelites may be also brought against the Papists; for as soon as infants are born among them, the Lord signs them with the sacred symbol of baptism; they are therefore in some sense (*aliqua ex parte*) the people of God. We see, at the same time, how gross and abominable are the superstitions which prevail among them: there are none more stupid than they are. Even the Turks and the Saracenes are wise when compared with them. How great, then, and how shameful is this baseness, that the Papists, who boast themselves to be the people of God, should go astray after their own mad follies!

But the Prophet says the Israelites "consulted" their own wood, or inquired of wood. He no doubt accuses them here of having transferred the glory of the only true God to their own idols, or fictitious gods. They consult, he says, their own wood, and the *staff* answers them. He seems, in the second clauses to allude to the blind: as when a blind man asks his staff, so he says the Israelites asked counsel of their wood and staff. Some think that superstitions then practiced are here pointed out. The augurs we know used a staff; and it is probable that diviners in the East employed also a staff, or some such thing, in performing their incantations. [16] Others explain these

[16] This was probably similar to divination by arrows, mentioned in Ezekiel 21:21. There is

words allegorically, as though wood was false religion, and staff the ungodly prophets. But I am inclined to hold to simplicity. It then seems to me more probable, that the Israelites, as I have already stated, are here condemned for consulting wood or dead idols, instead of the only true God; and that it was the same thing as if a blind man was to ask counsel of his staff, though the staff be without any reason or sense. A staff is indeed useful, but for a different purpose. And thus the Prophet not only contemptuously, but also ironically, exposes to scorn the folly of those who consult their gods of wood and stone; for to do so will no more avail them than if one had a staff for his counselor.

He then subjoins, *for the spirit of fornication has deceived them* Here again the Prophet aggravates their guilt, inasmuch as no common blame was to be ascribed to the Israelites; for they were, he says, wholly given to fornication *The spirit*, then, *of fornication deceived them*: it was the same as if one inflamed with lust ran headlong into evil; as we see to be the case with brutal men when carried away by a blind and shameful passion; for then every distinction between right and wrong disappears from their eyes — no choice is made, no shame is felt. As then such heat of lust is wont sometimes to seize men, that they distinguish nothing, so the Prophet says with the view of shaming the people the more, that they were like those given to fornication, who no longer exercise any judgment, who are restrained by no shame. *The spirit*, then, *of fornication has deceived them:* but as this similitude often meets us, I shall not dwell upon it.

They have played the wanton, he says, *that they may not obey the Lord.* He does not say simply, 'from their God,' but 'from under' {מתחת}, *metachet, They have* then *played the wanton, that they might no more obey God,* or *continue under his government.* We may hence learn what is our spiritual chastity, even when God rules us by his word, when we go not here and there and rashly follow our own superstitions. When we abide then under the government of our God, and with fixed eyes look on him, then we chastely preserve our faithfulness to him. But when we follow idols, we then play the wanton and depart from God. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 4:13-14

13. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks and poplars and elms, because the shadow thereof is good: therefore your daughters shall commit whoredom, and your spouses shall commit adultery.

13. Super capita montium sacrificabunt (id est, sacrificant) et super colles adolent suffitum, sub quercu et sub plantano et sub tilia (alii {אלה} vertunt, Terebinthum: sed eho non laboro,) quia bona umbra ejus: propterea filiae vestrae scortabuntur, et nurus vestra adulterae erunt.

a practice of this kind still among the Arabs, as Adam Clarke mentions in his comment on this verse. They take three arrows without head, and write onone, Command me, Lord; on the other, Forbid me, Lord; and the third is left a blank. These are put in a bag, and one is drawn. If the first is drawn, they do what they intend; if the second, they abstain for a year; if the third, they draw again. — Ed.

14. I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery: for themselves are separated with whores, and they sacrifice with harlots: therefore the people that doth not understand shall fall.

14. Non visitabo super filias vestras, quia scortatae sint, et super nurus vestra, quia adulteria commiserint: nam ipsi cum meretricibus dividunt se (separant se cum meretricibus,) et cum scortis sacrificant: et populus non intelligens (non intelligit, ad verbum; sed debet verti, Populus qui non intelligit) corruet (alii vertunt, erit perversus, {לבט}.)

The Prophet shows here more clearly what was the fornication for which he had before condemned the people, — that they worshipped God under trees and on high places. This then is explanatory, for the Prophet defines what he before understood by the word, fornication; and this explanation was especially useful, nay, necessary. For men, we know, will not easily give way, particularly when they can adduce some color for their sins, as is the case with the superstitious: when the Lord condemns their perverted and vicious modes of worship, they instantly cry out, and boldly contend and say, "What! is this to be counted fornication, when we worship God?" For whatever they do from inconsiderate zeal is, they think, free from every blame. So the Papists of this day fix it as a matter beyond dispute that all their modes of worship are approved by God: for though nothing is grounded on his word, yet good intention (as they say) is to them more than a sufficient excuse. Hence they dare proudly to clamour against God, whenever he condemns their corruptions and abuses. Such presumption has doubtless prevailed from the beginning.

The Prophet, therefore, deemed it needful openly and distinctly to show to the Israelites, that though they thought themselves to be worshipping God with pious zeal and good intention, they were yet committing fornication. "It is fornication," he says, "when ye sacrifice under trees." "What! has it not ever been a commendable service to offer sacrifices and to burn incense to God?" Such being the design of the Israelites, what was the reason that God was so angry with them? We may suppose them to have fallen into a mistake; yet why did not God bear with this foolish intention, when it was covered, as it has been stated, with honest and specious zeal? But God here sharply reproves the Israelites, however much they pretended a great zeal, and however much they covered their superstitions with the false title of God's worship: "It is nothing else," he says, "but fornication."

On tops of mountains, he says, *they sacrifice, and on hills they burn incense, under the oak and the poplar and the teil-tree, etc.* It seemed apparently a laudable thing in the Israelites to build altars in many places; for frequent attendance at the temples might have stirred them up the more in God's worship. Such is the plea of the Papists for filling their temples with pictures; they say, "We are everywhere reminded of God wherever we turn our eyes; and this is very profitable." So also it might have seemed to

the Israelites a pious work, to set up God's worship on hills and on tops of mountains and under every tall tree. But God repudiated the whole; he would not be in this manner worshipped: nay, we see that he was grievously displeased. He says, that the faith pledged to him was thus violated; he says, that the people basely committed fornication. Though the Prophet's doctrine is at this day by no means plausible in the world, so that hardly one in ten embraces it; we shall yet contend in vain with the Spirit of God: nothing then is better than to hear our judge; and he pronounces all fictitious modes of worship, however much adorned by a specious guise, to be adulteries and whoredoms.

And we hence learn that good intention, with which the Papists so much please themselves, is the mother of all wantonness and of all filthiness. How so? Because it is a high offense against heaven to depart from the word of the Lord: for God had commanded sacrifices and incense to be nowhere offered to him but at Jerusalem. The Israelites transgressed this command. But obedience to God, as it is said in 1 Samuel 15, [17] is of more value with him than all sacrifices.

The Prophet also distinctly excludes a device in which the ungodly and hypocrites take great delight: *good,* he says, *was its shade*; that is, they pleased themselves with such devices. So Paul says that there is a show of wisdom in the inventions and ordinances of men, (Colossians 2:23.) Hence, when men undertake voluntary acts of worship, — which the Greeks call {εθελοθρησκείας} superstitions, being nothing else than will-worship, — when men undertake this or that to do honor to God, there appears to them a show of wisdom, but before God it is abomination only. At this practice the Prophet evidently glances, when he says that the shade of the poplar, or of the oak, or of teil-tree, was good; for the ungodly and the hypocrites imagined their worship to be approved of God, and that they surpassed the Jews, who worshipped God only in one place: "Our land is full of altars, and memorials of God present themselves everywhere." But when they thought that they had gained the highest glory by their many altars, the Prophet says, that the shade indeed was good, but that it only pleased wantons, who would not acknowledge their baseness.

He afterwards adds, *Therefore your daughters shall play the wanton, and your daughters-in-law shall become adulteresses: I will not visit your daughters and daughters-in-law* Some explain this passage as though the Prophet said, "While the parents were absent, their daughters and daughters-in-law played the wanton." The case is the same at this day; for there is no greater liberty in licentiousness than what prevails during vowed pilgrimages: for when any one wishes to indulge freely in wantonness, she makes a vow to undertake a pilgrimage: an adulterer is ready at hand who offers himself a companion. And again, when the husband is so foolish as to run here and there, he at the same time gives to his wife the opportunity of being licen-

[17] 1 Samuel 15:22. — fj.

tious. And we know further, that when many women meet at unusual hours in churches, and have their private masses, there are there hidden corners, where they perpetrate all kinds of licentiousness. We know, indeed, that this is very common. But the Prophet's meaning is another: for God here denounces the punishment of which Paul speaks in the Romans [18] when he says, 'As men have transferred the glory of God to dead things, so God also gave them up to a reprobate mind,' that they might discern nothing, and abandon themselves to every thing shameful, and even prostitute their own bodies.

Let us then know, that when just and due honor is not rendered to God, this vengeance deservedly follows, that men become covered with infamy. Why so? Because nothing is more equitable than that God should vindicate his own glory, when men corrupt and adulterate it: for why should then any honor remain to them? And why, on the contrary, should not God sink them at once in some extreme baseness? Let us then know, that this is a just punishment, when adulteries prevail, and when vagrant lusts promiscuously follow.

He then who worships not God, shall have at home an adulterous wife, and filthy strumpets as his daughters, boldly playing the wanton, and he shall have also adulterous daughters-in-law: not that the Prophet speaks only of what would take place; but he shows that such would be the vengeance that God would take: 'Your daughters therefore shall play the wanton, and your daughters-in-law shall be adulteresses;' and *I will not punish your daughters and your daughters-in-law;* that is, "I will not correct them for their scandalous conduct; for I wish them to be exposed to infamy." For this truth must ever stand firm,

'Him who honors me, I will honor: and him who despises my name, I will make contemptible and ignominious,'
(1 Samuel 2:30.)

God then declares that he will not visit these crimes, because he designed in this way to punish the ungodly, by whom his own worship had been corrupted.

He says, *Because they with strumpets separate themselves.* Some explain this verb {פדר}, *pered,* as meaning, "They divide husbands from their wives:" but the Prophet, no doubt, means, that they separated themselves from God, in the same manner as a wife does, when she leaves her husband and gives herself up to an adulterer. The Prophet then uses the word allegorically, or at least metaphorically: and a reason is given, which they do not understand who take this passage as referring literally to adulteries; and their mistake is sufficiently proved to be so by the next clause, 'and with strumpets they sacrifice.' The separation then of which he speaks is this, that they sacrificed with strumpets; which they could not do without violating their faith pledged to God. We now apprehend the Prophet's real meaning: '*I will not punish,*'

[18] Romans 1:28. — fj.

he says, 'wantonness and adulteries in your families.' Why? "Because I would have you to be made infamous, for ye have first played the wanton."

But there is a change of person; and this ought to be observed: for he ought to have carried on his discourse throughout in the second person, and to have said, "Because *ye* have separated with strumpets, and accompany harlots;" this is the way in which he ought to have spoken: but through excess, as it were, of indignation, he makes a change in his address, 'They,' he says, 'have played the wanton,' as though he deemed them unworthy of being spoken to. They have then played the wanton with strumpets. By "strumpets", he doubtless understands the corruptions by which God's worship had been perverted, even through wantonness: "they sacrifice", he says, "with strumpets", that is, they forsake the true God, and resort to whatever pollutions they please; and this is to play the wanton, as when a husband, leaving his wife, or when a wife, leaving her husband, abandon themselves to filthy lust. But it is nothing strange or unwonted for sins to be punished by other sins. What Paul teaches ought especially to be borne in mind, that God, as the avenger of his own glory, gives men up to a reprobate mind, and suffers them to be covered with many most disgraceful things; for he cannot bear with them, when they turn his glory to shame and his truth to a lie.

He afterwards adds, *And the people, not understanding, shall stumble.* They who take the verb {לבט}, *labeth,* as meaning, "to be perverted," understand it here in the sense of being "perplexed:" nor is this sense inappropriate. *The people* then *shall not understand and be perplexed;* that is, They shall not know the right way. But the word means also "to stumble," and still oftener "to fall;" and since this is the more received sense, I am disposed to embrace it: *The people* then, *not understanding, shall stumble*

The Prophet here teaches, that the pretence of ignorance is of no weight before God, though hypocrites are wont to flee to this at last. When they find themselves without any excuse they run to this asylum, — "But I thought that I was doing right; I am deceived: but be it so, it is a pardonable mistake." The Prophet here declares these excuses to be vain and fallacious; for the people, who understand not, shall stumble and that deservedly: for how came this ignorance to be in the people of Israel, but that they, as it has been before said, willfully closed their eyes against the light? When, therefore, men thus willfully determine to be blind, it is no wonder that the Lord delivers them up to final destruction. But if they now flatter themselves by pretending, as I have already said, a mistake, the Lord will shake off this false confidence, and does now shake it off by his word. What then ought we to do? To learn knowledge from his word; for this is our wisdom and our understanding, as Moses says, in the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. [19]

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as we are so disposed and inclined

[19] Deuteronomy 4:6. — fj.

to all kinds of errors, to so many and so various forms of superstitions, and as Satan also ceases not to lay in wait for us, and spreads before us his many snares, — O grant, that we may be so preserved in obedience to thee by the teaching of thy word, that we may never turn here and there, either to the right hand or to the left, but continue in that pure worship, which thou hast prescribed, so that we may plainly testify that thou art indeed our Father by continuing under the protection of thy only-begotten Son, whom thou hast given to be our pastor and ruler to the end. Amen.

Lecture Twelfth

Hosea 4:15

15. Though thou, Israel, play the harlot, yet let not Judah offend; and come not ye unto Gilgal, neither go ye up to Bethaven, nor swear, The Lord liveth.

15. Si scortaris tu Israel, ne offendat Jehudah; ne veniatis in Gilgal, et me ascendatis Beth-aven, et ne juretis, Vivit Jehova.

The Prophet here complains that Judah also was infected with superstitions, though the Lord had hitherto wonderfully kept them from pollutions of this kind. He compares Israel with Judah, as though he said, "It is no wonder that Israel plays the wanton; they had for a long time shaken off the yoke; their defection is well known: but it is not to be endured, that Judah also should begin to fall away into the same abominations." We now then perceive the object of the comparison. From the time that Jeroboam led after him the ten tribes, the worship of God, we know, was corrupted; for the Israelites were forbidden to ascend to Jerusalem, and to offer sacrifices there to God according to the law. Altars were at the same time built, which were nothing but perversions of divine worship. This state of things had now continued for many years. The Prophet therefore says, that Israel was like a filthy strumpet, void of all shame; nor was this to be wondered at, for they had cast away the fear of God: but that Judah also should forsake God's pure worship as well as Israel, — this the Prophet deplores, *If then thou Israel playest the wanton, let not Judah at least offend*

We here see first, how difficult it is for those to continue untouched without any stain, who come in contact with pollutions and defilements. This is the case with any one that is living among Papists; he can hardly keep himself entire for the Lord; for vicinity, as we find, brings contagion. The Israelites were separated from the Jews, and yet we see that the Jews were corrupted by their diseases and vices. There is, indeed, nothing we are so disposed to do as to forsake true religion; inasmuch as there is naturally in us a perverse lust for mixing with it some false and ungodly forms of worship; and every one in this respect is a teacher to himself: what then is likely to take place, when Satan on the other hand stimulates us? Let all then who are neighbors to idolaters beware, lest they contract any of their pollutions.

We further see, that the guilt of those who have been rightly taught is not to be extenuated when they associate with the blind and the unbelieving.

Though the Israelites boasted of the name of God, they were yet then alienated from pure doctrine, and had been long sunk in the darkness of errors. There was no religion among them; nay, they had hardly a single pure spark of divine light. The Prophet now brings this charge against the Jews, that they differed not from the Israelites, and yet God had to that time carried before them the torch of light; for he suffered not sound doctrine to be extinguished at Jerusalem, nor throughout the whole of Judea. The Jews, by not profiting through this singular kindness of God, were doubly guilty. This is the reason why the Prophet now says, *Though Israel is become wanton, yet let not Judah offend*

Come ye not to Gilgal, he says, *and ascend not into Beth- aven.* Here again he points out the superstitions by which the Israelites had vitiated the pure worship of God; they had built altars for themselves in Bethel and Gilgal, where they pretended to worship God.

Gilgal, we know, was a celebrated place; for after passing through Jordan, they built there a pillar as a memorial of that miracle; and the people no doubt ever remembered so remarkable an instance of divine favor: and the place itself retained among the people its fame and honorable distinction. This in itself deserved no blame: but as men commonly pervert by abuse every good thing, so Jeroboam, or one of his successors, built a temple in Gilgal; for the minds almost of all were already possessed with some reverence for the place. Had there been no distinction belonging to the place, he could not have so easily inveigled the minds of the people; but as a notion already prevailed among them that the place was holy on account of the miraculous passing over of the people, Jeroboam found it easier to introduce there his perverted worship: for when one imagines that the place itself pleases God, he is already captivated by his own deceptions. The same also must be said of Bethel: its name was given it, we know, by the holy father Jacob, because God appeared there to him.

'Terrible,' he said, 'is this place; it is the gate of heaven,'
(Genesis 28:17.)

He hence called it Bethel, which means the house of God. Since Jacob sacrificed there to God, posterity thought this still allowable: for hypocrites weigh not what God enjoins, but catch only at the Fathers' examples, and follow as their rule whatever they hear to have been done by the Fathers.

As then foolish men are content with bare examples, and attend not to what God requires, so the Prophet distinctly inveighs here against both places, even Bethel and Gilgal. "*Come not",* he says, *to Gilgal, and ascend not into Beth-aven* But we must observe the change of name made by the Prophet; for he calls not the place by its honorable name, Bethel, but calls it the house of iniquity. It is indeed true that God revealed himself there to his servant Jacob; but he intended not the place to be permanently fixed for himself, he intended not that there should be a perpetual altar there: the vision was only for a time. Had the people been confirmed in their faith,

whenever the name of the place was heard, it would have been a commendable thing; but they departed from the true faith, for they despised the sure command of God, and preferred what had been done by an individual, and were indeed influenced by a foolish zeal. It is no wonder then that the Prophet turns praise into blame, and allows not the place to be, as formerly, the House of God, but the house of iniquity. We now see the Prophet's real meaning.

I return to the reproof he gives to the Jews: he condemns them for leaving the legitimate altar and running to profane places, and coveting those strange modes of worship which had been invented by the will or fancy of men. "What have you to do," he says, "with Gilgal or Bethel? Has not God appointed a sanctuary for you at Jerusalem? Why do ye not worship there, where he himself invites you?" We hence see that a comparison is to be understood here between Gilgal and Bethel on the one hand, and the temple, built by God's command on mount Zion, in Jerusalem, on the other. Moreover, this reproof applies to many in our day. So to those who sagaciously consider the state of things in our age, the Papists appear to be like the Israelites; for their apostasy is notorious enough: there is nothing sound among them; the whole of their religion is rotten; every thing is depraved. But as the Lord has chosen us peculiarly to himself, we must beware, lest they should draw us to themselves, and entangle us: for, as we have said, we must ever fear contagion; inasmuch as nothing is more easy than to become infected with their vices, since our nature is to vices ever inclined.

We are further reminded how foolish and frivolous is the excuse of those who, being satisfied with the examples of the Fathers, pass by the word of God, and think themselves released from every command, when they follow the holy Fathers. Jacob was indeed, among others, worthy of imitation; and yet we learn from this place, that the pretence that his posterity made for worshipping God in Bethel was of no avail. Let us then know that we cannot be certain of being right, except when we obey the Lord's command, and attempt nothing according to men's fancy, but follow only what he bids. It must also be observed, that a fault is not extenuated when things, now perverted, have proceeded-from a good and approved origin. As for instance the Papists, when their superstitions are condemned, ever set up this shield, "O! this has arisen from a good source." But what sort of thing is it? If indeed we judge of it by what it is now, we clearly see it to be an impious abomination, which they excuse by the plea that it had a good and holy beginning.

Thus in baptism we see how various and how many deprivations they have mixed together. Baptism has indeed its origin in the institution of Christ: but no permission has been given to men to deface it by so many additions. The origin then of baptism affords the Papists no excuse, but on the contrary renders double their sin; for they have, by a profane audacity, contaminated what the Son of God has appointed. But there is in their

mass a much greater abomination: for the mass, as we know, is in no respect the same with the holy supper of our Lord. There are at least some things remaining in baptism; but the mass is in nothing like Christ's holy supper: and yet the Papists boast that the mass is the supper. Be it so, that it had crept in, and that through the craft of Satan, and also through the wickedness or depravity of men: but whatever may have been its beginning, it does not wipe away the extreme infamy that belongs to the mass: for, as it is well known, they abolish by it the only true sacrifice of Christ; they ascribe to their own devices the expiation which was made by the death of the Son of God. And here we have not only to contend with the Papists, but also with those wicked triflers, who proudly call themselves Nicodemians. For these indeed deny that they come to the mass, because they have any regard for the Papistic figment; but because they say that there is set forth a commemoration of Christ's supper and of his death. Since Bethel was formerly turned into Beth-aven, what else at this day is the mass? Let us then ever take heed, that whatever the Lord has instituted may remain in its own purity, and not degenerate; otherwise we shall be guilty, as it has been said, of the impious audacity of those who have changed the truth into a lie. We now understand the design of what the Prophet teaches, and to what purposes it may be applied.

He at last subjoins, *And swear not, Jehovah liveth* The Prophet seems here to condemn what in itself was right: for to swear is to profess religion, and to testify our profession of it; particularly when men swear honestly. But as this formula, which the Prophet mentions, was faultless, why did God forbid to swear by his name, and even in a holy manner? Because he would reign alone, and could not bear to be connected with idols; for

"what concord,' says Paul, 'has Christ with Belial? How can light agree with darkness?' (2 Corinthians 6:15:)

so God would allow of no concord with idols. This is expressed more fully by another Prophet, Zephaniah, when he says,

'I will destroy those who swear by the living God,
and swear by their king,' (Zephaniah 1:5.)

God indeed expressly commands the faithful to swear by his name alone in Deuteronomy 6 [20] and in other places: and further, when the true profession of religion is referred to, this formula is laid down,

'They shall swear, The Lord liveth,' (Jeremiah 4:2.)

But when men associated the name of God with their own perverted devices, it was by no means to be endured. The Prophet then now condemns this perfidy, *Swear not, Jehovah liveth;* as though he said, "How dare these men take God's name, when they abandon themselves to idols? for God allows his name only to his own people." The faithful indeed take God's name in oaths as it were by his leave. Except the Lord had granted this right, it would have certainly been a sacrilege. But we borrow God's name

[20] Deuteronomy 6:13. — fj.

by his permission: and it is right to do so, when we keep faith with him, when we continue in his service; but when we worship false gods, then we have nothing to do with him, and he takes away the privilege which he has given us. Then he says, 'Ye shall not henceforth blend the name of the only true God with idols.' For this he cannot endure, as he declares also in Ezekial,

Go ye, serve your idols; I reject all your worship.'

[Eze 20:39]

The Lord was thus grievously offended, even when sacrifices were offered to him. Why so? Because it was a kind of pollution, when the Jews professed to worship him, and then went after their ungodly superstitions. We now then perceive the meaning of this verse. It follows —

Hosea 4:16

16. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer: now the Lord will feed them as a lamb in a large place.

16. Quia sicut juvenca indomita, indomitus Israel: nunc pascet Jehova quasi agnum tenerum (nam {כבש} proprie significat, Agnum tenerum; hoc est, qui adhuc est anniculus: {איל} autem vocant arietem qui annum unum excessit) in loco spatioso.

The Prophet compares Israel here to an untamable heifer. Some render it, "A straying heifer", and we may render it, "A wanton heifer." But to others a defection seems to have been more especially intended, because they had receded or departed from God: but this comparison is not so apposite. They render it, "As a backsliding," or "receding heifer:" but I prefer to view the word as meaning, one that is petulant or lascivious: and the punishment which is subjoined, *The Lord will now feed them as a tender lamb in a spacious place,* best agrees with this view, as we shall immediately see.

It must, in the first place, be understood, that Israel is compared to a heifer, and indeed to one that is wanton, which cannot remain quiet in the stall nor be accustomed to the yoke: it is hence subjoined, *The Lord will now feed them as a lamb in a spacious place* The meaning of this clause may be twofold; the first is, that the Lord would leave them in their luxuries to gorge themselves according to their lust, and to indulge themselves in their gormandizing; and it is a dreadful punishment, when the Lord allays not the intemperateness of men, but suffers them to wanton without any limits or moderation. Hence some give this meaning to the passage, *God will now feed them as a lamb*, that is, like a sheep void of understanding, and in a large place, even in a most fruitful field, capable of supplying food to satiety. But it seems to me that the Prophet meant another thing, even this, that the Lord would so scatter Israel, that they might be as a lamb in a spacious place. It is what is peculiar to sheep, we know, that they continue under the shepherd's care: and a sheep, when driven into solitude, shows itself, by its bleating, to be timid, and to be as it were seeking its shepherd and its flock. In short, a sheep is not a solitary animal; and it is almost a part of their food to sheep and lambs to feed together, and also under the eye of

him under whose care they are. Now there seems to be here a most striking change of figure: *They are*, says the Prophet, *like unnamable heifers*, for they are so wanton that no field can satisfy their wantonness, as when a heifer would occupy the whole land. "Such then," he says, "and so outrageous is the disobedience of this people, that they can no longer endure, except a spacious place be given to each of them. I will therefore give them a spacious place: but for this end, that each of them may be like a lamb, who looks around and sees no flock to which it may join itself."

This happened when the land was stripped of its inhabitants; for then a small number only dwelt in it. Four tribes, as stated before, were first drawn away; and then they began to be like lambs in a spacious place; for God terrified them with the dread of enemies. The remaining part of the people was afterwards either dispersed or led into exile. They were, when in exile, like lambs, and those in a wide place. For though they lived in cottages, and their condition was in every way confined, yet they were in a place like the desert; for one hardly dared look on another, and waste and solitude met their eyes wherever they turned them. We see then what the Prophet meant by saying, *They are like an untamable* or *a wanton heifer:* "I will tame them, and make them like lambs; and when scattered, they will fear as in a wilderness, for there will be no flock to which they can come." Let us proceed —

Hosea 4:17

17. Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

17. Adjunxit se (vel, associavit) idolis Ephraim: dimitte eum.

As if wearied, God here bids his Prophet to rest; as though he said, "Since I prevail nothing with this people, they must be given up; cease from thy work." God had set Hosea over the Israelites for this end, to lead them to repentance, if they could by any means be reformed: the duty of the Prophet, enjoined by God, was, to bring back miserable and straying men from their error, and to restore them again to the obedience of pure faith. He now saw that the Prophet's labour was in vain, without any success. Hence he was, as I have said, wearied, and bids the Prophet to desist: *Leave them,* he says; that is, "There is no use for thee to weary thyself any more; I dismiss thee from thy labour, and will not have thee to take any more trouble; for they are wholly incurable." For by saying that they had joined themselves to idols, he means, that they could not be drawn from that perverseness in which they had grown hardened; as though he said, "This is an alliance that cannot be broken." And he alludes to the marriage which he had before mentioned: for the Israelites, we know, had been joined to God, for he had adopted them to be a holy people to himself; they afterwards adopted impious forms of worship. But yet there was a hope of recovery, until they became wholly attached to their idols, and clave so fast to them, that they could not be drawn away. This alliance the Prophet points out when he says, *They are joined to idols*

But he mentions the tribe of Ephraim, for the kings, (I mean, of Israel,) we know, sprang from that tribe; and at the same time he reproaches that tribe for having abused God's blessing. We know that Ephraim was blessed by holy Jacob in preference to his elder brother; and yet there was no reason why Jacob put aside the first-born and preferred the younger, except that God in this case manifested his own good pleasure. The ingratitude of Ephraim was therefore less excusable, when he not only fell away from the pure worship of God, but polluted also the whole land; for it was Jeroboam who introduced ungodly superstitions; he therefore was the source of all the evil. This is the reason why the Prophet now expressly mentions Ephraim: though it is a form of speaking, commonly used by all the Prophets, to designate Israel, by taking a part for the whole, by the name of Ephraim.

But this passage is worthy of being noticed, that we may attend to God's reproofs, and not remain torpid when he rouses us; for we ought ever to fear, lest he should suddenly reject us, when he is wearied with our perverseness, or when he conceives such a displeasure as not to deign to speak to us any more. It follows —

Hosea 4:18

18. Their drink is sour: they have committed whoredom continually: her rulers with shame do love, Give ye.

18. Putruit potus eorum; scortando scortati sunt: dilexerunt, Afferte, turpiter (vel, ignominiam {קלון}) principes ejus.

The Prophet, using a metaphor, says here first, that their drink had become putrid; which means, that they had so intemperately given themselves up to every kind of wickedness, that all things among them had become fetid. And the Prophet alludes to shameful and beastly excess: for the drunken are so addicted to wine, that they emit a disgusting smell, and are never satisfied with drinking, until by spewing, they throw up the excessive draughts they have taken. The Prophet then had this in view. He speaks not, however, of the drinking of wine, this is certain: but by drunkenness, on the contrary, he means that unbridled licentiousness, which then prevailed among the people. Since then they allowed themselves every thing they pleased without shame, they seemed like drunken men, insatiable, who, when wholly given to wine, think it their highest delight ever to have wine on the palate, or to fill copiously the throat, or to glut their stomach: when drunken men do these things, then they send forth the offensive smell of wine. This then is what the Prophet means, when he says, *Putrid has become their drink;* that is, the people observe no moderation in sinning; they offend not God now, in the common and usual manner, but are wholly like beastly men, who are nothing ashamed, constantly to belch and to spew, so that they offend by their fetid smell all who meet them. Such are this people.

He afterwards adds, *By wantoning they have become wanton* This is another comparison. The Prophet, we know, has hitherto been speaking of wantonness in a metaphorical sense, signifying thereby, that Israel perfidi-

ously abandoned themselves to idols, and thus violated their faith pledged to the true God. He now follows the same metaphor here, 'By wantoning they have become wanton.' Hence he reproaches and represents them as infamous on two accounts, — because they cast aside every shame, like the drunken who are so delighted with wine, that through excess they send forth its offensive smell, — and because they were like wantons.

At last he says, *Her princes have shamefully loved, Bring ye* Here, in a peculiar way, the Prophet shows that the great sinned with extreme licentiousness; for they were given to bribery: and the eyes of the wise, we know, are blinded, and the hearts of the just are perverted, by gifts. But the Prophet designedly made this addition, that we might know that there were then none among the people who attempted to apply a remedy to the many prevailing vices; for even the rulers coveted gain; no one remembered for what purpose he had been called. Hence it happened that every one indulged himself with impunity in whatever pleased him. How so? Because there were no censors of public morals. Here we see in what a wretched state the people are, when there are none to exercise discipline, when even the judges gape for gain, and care for nothing but for gifts and riches; for then what the Prophet describes here as to the people of Israel must happen. *Her princes,* then, *have loved, Bring ye.*

Respecting the word {קלון}, *kolun,* we must shortly say, that Hosea does not simply allude to any kinds of gifts, but to such gifts as proved that there was a public sale of justice; as though he said, "Now the judges, when they say, Bring ye, when they love, Bring ye, make no distinction whatever between right and wrong, and think all this lawful; for the people are become insensible to such a disgraceful conduct: hence they basely and shamefully seek gain."

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast at this time deigned in thy mercy to gather us to thy Church, and to enclose us within the boundaries of thy word, by which thou preserves us in the true and right worship of thy majesty, — O grant, that we may continue contented in this obedience to thee: and though Satan may, in many ways, attempt to draw us here and there, and we be also ourselves, by nature, inclined to evil, O grant, that being confirmed in faith, and united to thee by that sacred bond, we may yet constantly abide under the guidance of thy word, and thus cleave to Christ thy only-begotten Son, who has joined us for ever to himself, that we may never by any means turn aside from thee, but be, on the contrary, confirmed in the faith of his gospel, until at length he will receive us all into his kingdom. Amen.

Lecture Thirteenth

Hosea 4:19

19. The wind hath bound her up in her wings, [21] and they shall be

[21] Newcome's version of this sentence is far-fetched, — 'A wind shall distress her in her

ashamed because of their sacrifices.

19. Ligavit ventus eam in alis suis, et pudefient a sacrificiis suis (vel, ligavit ventum in alis suis: ambigua enim est locutio apud Hebraeos: atque utrobis modolegas, genus verbi relativis non convenit, quae foeminina sunt; sed frequenter occurrunt ejusmodi exempla: libera igitur erit optio.)

If this rendering be approved, *The wind hath bound her in its wings*, the meaning is, that a sudden storm would sweep away the people, and thus would they be made ashamed of their sacrifices. So the past tense is to be taken for the future. We may indeed read the words in the past tense, as though the Prophet was speaking of what had already taken place. The wind, then, has already swept away the people; by which he intimates, that they seemed to have struck long and deep roots in their superstitions, but that the Lord had already given them up to the wind, that it might hold them tied in its wings. And wings, we know, is elsewhere ascribed to the wind, Psalm 104:3. And thus the verse will be throughout a denunciation of vengeance.

The other similitude or metaphor is the most appropriate, and harmonizes better with the subject; for were not men to support their minds with vain confidence, they could never with so much audacity despise God's word. Hence they are said to tie the wind in their wings; being unmindful of their own condition, they attempt as by means of the wind to fly; but when they proudly raise up themselves, they have no support but the wind. Let us now proceed —

borders. Horsley's is the same with ours, only expressed in the present tense, — 'The wind binds her up in its wings.'

Hosea 5

Chapter 5

Hosea 5:1

1. Hear ye this, O priests; and hearken, ye house of Israel; and give ye ear, O house of the king; for judgment is toward you, because ye have been a snare on Mizpah, and a net spread upon Tabor.

1. Audite hoc sacerdotes, et attendite domus, et domus regis auscultate, quia vobis judicam (hoc est, judicium in vos dirigitur) nam laqueus fuistis (hoc est, tanquam laqueus, sabaudienda est {כ}, nota similitudinis et addenda ad nomen {פח}, fuistis ergo tanquam laques) in Mizpah, et rete expansum super Tabor.

The Prophet here again preaches against the whole people: but he mainly directs his discourse to the priests and the rulers; for they were the source of the prevailing evils: the priests, intent on gain, neglected the worship of God; and the chief men, as we have seen, were become in every way corrupt. Hence the Prophet here especially inveighs against these orders, and at the same time, records some vices which then prevailed among the people, and that through the fault of the priests and rulers. But before I pursue farther the subject of the Prophets something must be said of the words.

When he says, *To you is judgment*, some explain it, "It is your duty to do judgment," to maintain government, that every one may discharge his own office; for judgment is taken for rectitude; the word {משפט}, *mesgepheth,* means a right order of things. Hence they think that the priests and rulers are here condemned for discharging so badly their office, because they had no care for what was right. But this sense is too strained. The Prophet, therefore, I doubt not, summons here the priests and the king's counselors to God's tribunal, that they might give an answer there; for the contempt of God, we know, prevailed among the great; they were secure, as though

exempt from judgment, as though released from laws and all order. *To you*, then *is judgment;* that is, God addresses you by name, and declares that he will be your avenger, though ye heedlessly despise his judgment.

Some again take {מצפה}, *metsephe,* for a beacon, and thus translate, "Ye have been a snare instead of a beacon." But this mistake is refuted by the second clause, for the Prophet adds immediately, *a net expanded over Tabor:* and it is well known that Mizpah and Tabor were high mountains, and for their height celebrated and renowned; we also know that hunting was common on these mountains. The Prophet, then, no doubt means here, that both the priests and the king's counselors were like snares and nets: "As fowlers and hunters were wont to spread their nets and snares on mount Mizpah and on Tabor; so the people also have been ensnared by you." This is the plain meaning of the words. Some conjecture, that robbers were there located by the kings of Israel to intercept the Israelites, when they found any ascending into Jerusalem, as we now see everywhere persons lying in wait, that no one from the Papacy may come over to us. But this conjecture is too far fetched. I have already explained the Prophet's meaning: he makes use, as we have said, of a similitude.

Let us now return to what he teaches: *Hear this,* he says, *ye Priests, and attend, ye house of Israel, and give ear, ye house of the king* The Prophet, indeed, includes the whole people in the second clause, but turns his discourse expressly to the priests and the king's counselors; which ought to be specially noticed; for it is indeed, as we shall hereafter see, the general subject of this chapter. He did not without reason attack the princes, because the main fault was in them; nor the priests, because they were dumb dogs, and had also led away the people from God's pure worship into false superstitions; and so great was their avidity for filthy lucre that they perverted the law and every thing that was before pure among the people. It is no wonder then that the Prophet, while treating a general subject, suitable to all orders indiscriminately, should yet denounce judgment on the priests and the king's counselors. With regard to these counselors, they, in order to confirm the kingdom, had also approved of false and spurious forms of worship, as it has been before stated; and they had also followed other vices; for the Prophet, I doubt not, condemns here other corruptions besides superstitions, and those which we know everywhere prevailed among the people, and of which something has been already said.

And to show his earnestness, he uses three sentences: *Ye priests, hear this;* then, *house of Israel, attend;* and in the third place, *house of the king, give ear;* as though he said, "In vain do they seek subterfuges, for the Lord will execute on them the judgment he now declares:" and yet he gives them opportunity and time for repentance, inasmuch as he bids them to attend to this denunciation.

Now this passage teaches, that even kings are not exempted from the duty of learning what is commonly taught, if they wish to be counted members of

the Church; for the Lord would have all, without exception, to be ruled by his word; and he takes this as a proof of men's obedience, their submission to his word. And as kings think themselves separated from the general class of men, the Prophet here shows that he was sent to the king and his counselors. The same reason holds good as to priests; for as the dignity of their order is the highest, so this impiety has prevailed in all ages, that the priests think themselves at liberty to do what they please. The Prophet therefore shows, that they are not raised up so much on high, but that the Lord shines eminently above their heads with his word. Let us know, lastly, that in the Church the word of God so possesses the highest rank, that neither priests, nor kings, nor their counselors, can claim a privilege to themselves, as though their conduct was not to be subject to God's word.

This then is a remarkable passage for establishing the word of God: and thus we see how abominable is the boast of the Papal clergy of this day; for they spread before us the mask of the priesthood, when the word of God is brought forward, as though they would outshine by the splendor of their dignity the whole Law, all the Prophets, and the very Gospel. But the Lord here upholds his word against all degrees of men, and shows that both kings and priests must be brought down from their eminence, that they may obey the word. Yea, we must bear in mind what I have before said, that though the whole people had sinned, yet kings and priests are here in a special manner reproved, because they deserved a heavier punishment, inasmuch as by their depraved examples they had corrupted the whole people.

When he compares them to snares and nets, I do not then confine this to one thing; but as the contagion among the whole people had proceeded from the priests and the king's counselors, and also from the king himself, the Prophet compares them, not without reason, to snares; not only because they were the authors of superstitions, but also because they perverted judgment and all equity. Let us go on —

Hosea 5:2

2. And the revolters are profound to make slaughter, though I have been a rebuker of them all.

2. Et jugulando declinantes profundaverunt: [22] ego autem correctio illis omnibus.

The verb {שחט}, *shecheth,* means, to kill, to sacrifice; and this place is usually explained of sacrifices; and this opinion I do not reject. But though the Prophet spake of sacrifices, he no doubt called sacrificing, in contempt, killing: as though one should call the temple, the shambles, and the killing of victims, slaughtering, so also the Prophet says, *In sacrificing and killing, they, having turned aside, have become deeply fixed;* that is, By turning aside

[22] Respecting this clause, Poole says, locus obscurissimus — a most obscure place. But of all the explanations given, the one offered by Calvin seems the best. Horsley's version seems fanciful, — 'Prickers have made deep slaughter.' By 'Prickers' he means attendants on the chase. Newcome's version seems more probable, — 'And the revolters have made deep the slaughter of victims;' that is, multiplied their sacrifices; but this comports not well with the clause which follows. —Ed.

to their own sacrificing, they have completely hardened their hearts, so that their depravity is incurable. For by saying that they had gone deep, the meaning is, that they were so addicted to their own superstitions, that they could not be restored to a sound mind, however often admonished by the Prophets. Yet this verb has another meaning in Scripture, even this, that men flatter themselves with their own counsels, and think that by twining together reasons of their own, they can deceive God: and this metaphor the Prophets employ with regard to profane despisers of God, whom they call {לצים}, *latism*, mockers: for these, while they deceive men, think that they have nothing to do with God. The same we see at this day: courtiers and proud men of the same character, flatter themselves with their own deceptions, and complacently laugh at our simplicity; because they think that wisdom was born with them, and that it is enclosed as it were within their brains. But I know not whether this idea is suitable to this passage. That simpler meaning which I have already stated, I prefer, and that is, that the Israelites were so obstinate in their superstitions, that they perversely despised all counsels, all admonitions, yea, that they petulantly resisted every instruction.

But each word must be noticed: *turning aside in sacrificing*, he says, "they became deep". By saying, that they had turned aside in sacrificing, he no doubt makes a distinction between false and strange forms of worship and the true worship of God, prescribed in the law. The frequency of sacrificing could not indeed have been condemned in itself either as to the Israelites or the Jews; but they turned aside, that is, departed from what the law prescribes. Hence the more zealously they engaged in sacrificing, and the more victims they offered to God, the more they provoked God's vengeance against themselves. We then see that the Prophet points out here as by the finger the sin he reproved in the people of Israel, and that was, — they sacrificed not according to God's command and according to the ritual of the law, but turned aside and followed their own devices. Hence it is, that in contempt and in scorn he calls their sacrificing, killing, or cutting the throat: "they are," he says "executioners," or, "they are butchers. What is it to me, that they bring their victims with great pomp and show? That they use so many ceremonies? I repudiate," the Lord says, "the whole of this; it is profane butchering; these slaughterings have nothing in common with the worship which I approve."

That our sacrifices then may please God, they must be according to the rule of his word; for 'obedience,' as it has been said already, 'is better than all sacrifices,' (1 Samuel 15:22.) But when men retake themselves to false forms of worship or such as are invented, nothing then is holy or acceptable to God, but an abominable filth. And further, the Prophet, as I have said, not only accuses the people of having turned aside to perverted forms of worship, but also of having become obstinately fixed in them. They have become deep, he says, in their superstitions: as he said before, that they

were fast joined to their idols, that they could not be torn away from them; so also he says now, that they were deeply rooted in their iniquity.

It follows, *And I have been*, or *will be*, *a correction to them all* Some think that the Prophet in the person of God threatens the Israelites, that God declares that he himself would become the avenger, because the people had so stubbornly followed wicked superstitions, — "I sit as a judge in heaven, nor will I suffer you to fall away with impunity, since you are become so hardened in your wickedness." But they are more correct who think that their sin was more increased by this circumstance, that God by his Prophets had not ceased to recall the Israelites to a sound mind, since they might not have been wholly irreclaimable: I have been to them a correction; that is, "They cannot excuse themselves and say, that they had fallen through error and ignorance; for there has been in them a wilful obstinacy, as I have not ceased to show them the right way by my Prophets. *I have,* then, *been a correction to them;* but I could not bend them, so indomitable has been that stubbornness, or rather madness, with which they were inflamed towards their idols." It is now seen which of the two views I deem the most correct.

But I will adduce a third: God may be thought to be here complaining that he had been an object of dislike to the Israelites, as though he said, "When I sent my Prophets, they could not bear to be admonished, because my word was too bitter for them." Reproofs are not easily endured by men. We indeed know, that those who are ill at ease with themselves, are yet not willing to hear any reproof: every one who deceives himself, wishes to be deceived by others. As then the ears of men are so tender and delicate, that they will patiently receive no reproof, this meaning seems not inappropriate, *I have been to them all a correction,* that is, "My doctrine has been by them rejected because it had in it too much asperity." But the other explanation, which I have mentioned as the second, has been more approved: I was, however, unwilling to omit what seems to me to be no less suitable.

We may now choose or receive either of these two expositions, — either that the Lord here takes away from the Israelites the excuse of error, because he had continued to reprove their vices by his Prophets, — or that he expostulates with the Israelites for having rejected his word on the ground that it was too rigid and severe: yet this main thing will still remain the same, that the people of Israel were not only apostates, having fallen away from the lawful worship of God into their own superstitions but were also contumacious and refractory in their wickedness, so that they would receive no instruction, no salutary counsels. Let us proceed —

Hosea 5:3

3. I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me: for now, O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.

3. Ego cognovi Ephraim, et Israel non esta absconditus a me: quia tu scortatus es Ephraim, pollutus est Israel.

God shows here that he is not pacified by the vain excuses which hyp-

ocrites allege, and by which they think that the judgment of God himself can be turned away. We see what great dullness there is in many, when God reproves them, and brings to light their vices; for they defend themselves with vain and frivolous excuses, and think that they thus put a restraint on God, so that he dares not urge them any more. In this way hypocrites elude every truth. But God here testifies, that men are greatly deceived when they thus judge, by their own perception, of that celestial tribunal to which they are summoned; *I*, he says, *know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me* There is to be understood an implied contrast, as though he said, that they were ignorant of themselves; for they covered their vices, as I have said, with frivolous excuses. God testifies that his eyes were not dazzled with such fine pretenses. "How much soever, then, Ephraim and Israel may excuse themselves, they shall not escape my judgment: vain and absurd are these shifts which they use; I indeed am not ignorant."

Let us then learn not to belie, by our own notions, the judgment of God; and when he reproves us by his word, let us not delude ourselves by our own fancies; for they who harden themselves in such a state of security gain nothing. God sees more keenly than men. Let use then, beware of spreading a veil over our sins, for God's eyes penetrate through all such excuses.

That he names Ephraim particularly, was not done, we know, without reason. From that tribe sprang the first Jeroboam: it was therefore by way of honor that the name of Ephraim was given to the ten tribes. But the Prophet names Ephraim here, who thought themselves superior to the other tribes, by way of reproach: *I know them, and Israel is not hid from me* He afterwards expresses what he knew of the people, which was, that *Ephraim was wanton,* and that *Israel was polluted;* as though he said "Contend as you please; but you will do so without profit: I have indeed my ears stunned by your lies; but after you have adduced everything, after you have sedulously pleaded your own cause, and have omitted nothing which may serve for an excuse, the fact still will be, that you are wantons and polluted." In short, the Prophet confirms in this second clause what I have before stated, that men, when they flatter themselves, deceive themselves; for God in the meantime condemns them, and allows no disguise of this kind. Israel and Ephraim gloried, then, in their superstitions, as though they held God bound to them: "This is wantonness," he says, "This is pollution." The Prophet indeed does here cut off the handle from all those self-deceptions which men use as reasons, when they defend fictitious forms of worship; for God from on high proclaims, that all are polluted who turn aside from his word.

Hosea 5:4

4. They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God: for the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them, and they have not known the Lord

4. Non adjicient studia sua, ut convertanur ad Deum suum: quia spiritus fornicationum in medio ipsorum, et Jehovam non noverunt.

Some translate thus, "their inclinations allow them not to turn them-

selves;" and this meaning is probable, that is, that they were so much given to their own superstitions, that they were not now free, or at liberty, to return to the right way; as though the Prophet said, "They are entirely enslaved by their own diabolical inventions, that their inclinations will not allow them to repent." But the former meaning (it is also more generally approved) seems more adapted to the context. *They will not apply,* he says, *their endeavors to turn to their God* Here God declares that it was all over with the people, and that no hope whatever remained: as he said before, "Leave them, why shouldest thou do anything more? for they will not receive wholesome instruction; as they are entirely given up to destruction, there is now no reason for thee to be solicitous about their salvation, for that would be useless;" — so also he says in this place, *They will not apply their endeavors to turn to their God*

If the Prophet speaks here in his own person, the meaning is, "Why do I weary myself? God has indeed commanded me to reprove this people; but I find that my labour is in vain; for I have to do with brute animals, or with stones rather than with men; there is in them no reason, no discernment; for the devil has fascinated their minds: never, then, will they apply their endeavors to turn to their God." If we prefer to view the sentence as spoken in the person of God, still the doctrine will remain nearly the same: God here declares that the people were incurable. *Never*, then, *will they apply their endeavors.* How so? For they are sunk, as it were, into a deep gulf, and their obstinacy is like the abyss. Inasmuch, then, as they are thus fixed in their superstitions, they will never *apply their endeavors to turn to their God*

But God in the meantime not only shows here, that there was no more any remedy for the diseases of the people; but he also gravely and severely reprobates their iniquity, because they thought not of seeking reconciliation with their God; as though he said, "What, then, do I require of these wretched men, but to return to their God? This they ought to have done of their own accord; but now, when they are admonished, they care not; on the contrary, they fiercely resist wholesome instruction. Is not this a strange and monstrous madness?" We hence see that there is an important meaning in the words, *They will not apply their endeavors to return to their God;* for the Prophet might have simply said, "to return to Jehovah," or "to God;" but he says, *to their God,* and he says so, because God had made himself familiarly known to them, nay, brought them up in his own bosom, as though they were his children and he their Father: they had forsaken him and had become apostates; and when the Lord would now reprove this perfidy, was it not strange that the people should close their ears and harden their hearts against every instruction? We hence see how sharp this reproof is.

And he says, *Because the spirit of wantonness is in the midst of them;* that is, they are so pleased with their own filthiness, that there is no shame, no fear. But the reason of this comparison, which I have before explained,

must be borne in mind. As a wife, though not faithful to her husband, yet retains still some modesty, as long as she continues at home, and while she is in any place classed with faithful and chaste women; but when she once enters a brothel, and openly prostitutes herself to all, when she knows that her baseness is universally known, she then throws off every shame, and entirely forgets her own character: so also the Prophet says, that *the spirit of wantonness was in the midst* of the people of Israel; as though he said, "The Israelites are so imbrued with their superstitions, that they cannot now be touched or moved by any reverence for God; they cannot be restored to the right way, for the devil has demented them, and having cast off every shame, they are like abominable strumpets."

And he afterwards adds, *Jehovah they have not known* By this sentence the Prophet extenuates not the sin of the people, but, on the contrary, amplifies their ingratitude, because they had forgotten their God, who had so indulgently treated them. As they had been redeemed by God's hand, as the teaching of the law had continued among them, as they had been preserved to that day through God's constant kindness, it was truly an evidence of monstrous ignorance, that they could in an instant adopt ungodly forms of worship, and embrace those corruptions which they knew were condemned in the law. It was surely an inexcusable wickedness in the people thus to withdraw themselves from their God. This is the reason why the Prophet now says, that *they knew not Jehovah.* But if they were asked the cause, they could not have said that they had no light; for God had made known to them the way of salvation. Hence, that they knew not Jehovah, was to be imputed to their perverseness; for, closing their eyes, they knowingly and willfully ran headlong after those wicked devices, which they knew, as it had been stated before, to be condemned by God.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou continues daily to exhort us, and though thou sees us often turning aside from the right course, thou yet ceases not to stretch forth thy hand to us, and also to rouse us by reproofs, that we may repent, — O grant, that we may not be permitted to reject thy word with such perverseness as thou condemnest here in thine ancient people by the mouth of thy Prophet; but rule us by thy Spirit, that we may meekly and obediently submit to thee, and with such teachableness, that if we have not hitherto been willing to become wise, we may not at least be incurable, but suffer thee to heal our diseases, so that we may truly repent, and be so wholly given to obey thee, as never to attempt any thing beyond the rule of thy word, and without that wisdom which thou hast revealed to us, not only by Moses and thy Prophets, but also by thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Fourteenth

Hosea 5:5

5. And the pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel

and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.

5. Et respondebit (vel, testificabitur superbia Israel ad faciem ejus: Israel ergo et Ephraim concident in sua iniquitate; concidet etiam Jehudah cum ipsis.

The Prophet having condemned the Israelites on two accounts — for having departed from the true God — and for having obstinately refused every instruction, now adds, that God's vengeance was nigh at hand. "Testify then shall the pride of Israel in his face"; that is, Israel shall find what it is thus to resist God and his Prophets. The Prophet no doubt applies the word, pride, to their contempt of instruction, because they were so swollen with vain confidence, as to think that wrong was done them whenever the Prophets reproved them. It must at the same time be observed, that they were thus refractory, because they were like persons inebriated with their own pleasures; for we know that while men enjoy prosperity, they are more insolent, according to that old proverb, "Satiety begets ferocity."

Some think that the verb {ענה}, *one,* means here "to be humbled;" and this sense is not unsuitable: "The pride of Israel shall then be humbled before his face." But another exposition has been most approved; I am therefore inclined to embrace it, and that is, that God needed no other witness to convict Israel than their own pride; and we know that when any one becomes hardened, he thinks that there is to be no judgment, and has no thought of rendering an account to God, for his pride takes away every fear. For this reason the Prophet says, "God will convict you, because ye have been hitherto so proud, that he could effect nothing by his warnings."

But he adds, *Israel and Ephraim shall fall in their iniquity* He pursues the same subject, which is, that they in vain promised impunity to themselves, for the Lord had now resolved to punish them. He adds, *Judah also shall fall with them* The Prophet may seem to contradict himself; for when he before threatened the people of Israel, he spoke of the safety of Judah, — 'Judah shall be saved by his God, not by the sword, nor by the bow.' Since then the Prophet had before distinguished or made a difference between the ten tribes and the kingdom of Judah, how is it that he now puts them all together without any distinction? To this I answer, that the Prophet speaks here not of those Jews who continued in true and pure religion, but of those who had with the Israelites alienated themselves from the only true God, and joined in their superstitions. He then refers here to the degenerate and not to the faithful Jews; for to all who worshipped God aright, salvation had been already promised. But as many as had abandoned themselves to the common superstitions, he declares that a common punishment was nigh them all. *The Jews then shall fall together,* that is, "As many of the Jews as have followed impious forms of worship and other deprivations, shall not escape God's judgment." We now then perceive the true meaning of the Prophet. It now follows —

Hosea 5:6

6. They shall go with their flocks and with their herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find him; he hath withdrawn himself from them.

6. Cum ovibus suis et cum armentis suis ibunt ad quaerendum Jehovam, et non invenient: subduxit se ab illis.

The Prophet here laughs to scorn the hypocrisy of the people, because they thought they had ready at hand a way of dealing with God, which was, to pacify him with their sacrifices. He therefore shows that neither the Israelites nor the Jews would gain any thing by accumulating burnt-offerings, for they could not in this way return into favor with God. He thereby intimates that God requires true repentance, and that he will not be reconciled to men, except from the heart they seek him and consecrate themselves to his service; and not because they offer brute beasts. The faithful, no doubt, expiated their sins at that time by sacrifices, but only typically: for they knew for what end and purpose God had made the law concerning sacrifices, and that was, that the sinner, being reminded by the sight of the victim, might confess himself to be worthy of eternal death, and thus flee to God's mercy and look to Christ and his sacrifice; for in him, and nowhere else, is to be found true and effectual expiation. For this end then had God instituted sacrifices: so the faithful, while offering sacrifices, did not suppose any satisfaction to be done by the external work, nor even imagined it to be the price of redemption; but they exercised themselves in these rites in faith and repentance.

The Prophet now, by implication, sets oxen, and rams, and lambs, in opposition to spiritual sacrifices; for a contrast is to be understood in the words, *They shall come with their sheep, etc.* What bring they to God's presence? They bring, he says, only their rams, they bring oxen; but God commands what is far different: he commands men to consecrate themselves to him, and that in a spiritual manner, and as to external rites, to refer them to Christ, and to the true expiation, which was yet hid in hope. Since then the Israelites brought only their oxen and lambs to God, they in vain expected him to be propitious to them; for he is not pacified by such trifles; inasmuch as every one who separates the outward sacrifice from its design, brings nothing but what is profane. Indeed, the true and lawful consecration is by the word; and by the word we are guided to faith in Christ, we are guided to repentance: when these are neglected and disregarded, and men securely trust in their sacrifices, they do nothing but mock God. We hence see that the Prophet exposes not here without reason this folly of the Israelites, that they sought God *with their flocks and their herds*

And he says, *They shall come,* or *shall go*, *to seek God* By this sentence he intimates that hypocrites sedulously labour to reconcile God to themselves; and we even see with what zeal they weary themselves; and of this there is a remarkable instance at this day in the Papists; for they spare no diligence, when they seek to pacify God. But the Prophet says that this labour is vain and foolish. "Let them go," he says, that is, "Let them weary themselves;

but they shall do so without profit, for they shall not find God." But when he says, that *they would come to seek Jehovah,* he is not to be understood as saying, that they would really do so; for hypocrites turn aside from God by circuitous courses and windings, rather than seek access to him. But yet they propose it as their final intention, as they speak, to seek God: they do not indeed come afterwards to him; nay, they dread his face, and shun it as much as they can; and yet when one asks them what they intend by sacrificing and by performing other rites, the answer is ready on their lips, "We worship God," that is, "We desire to worship him." Since then hypocrites are wont to boast of this, the Prophet speaks by way of concession, and says, *They shall come to seek God, but shall not find him*

The Papists of this day pursue a similar course, when they go round their altars, when they gad away to perform vowed pilgrimages, when they whisper their prayers, when they hear and buy masses; for to what purpose are all these things, but by interposing these veils to escape God's judgment? They know themselves to be exposed to his judgment; their conscience forces them to pacify God: but what do they in the meantime? "I will find out a way in which God will not pursue me: let this then be the price of redemption, let this be a compensation." In a word, we see that the Papists mock God with their ceremonies, that they have nothing else in view but to seek hiding-places: and hence the Lord by his Prophet complains, that his temple was like a den of robbers, (Jeremiah 7:11:) for men securely sin, when they publicly offer such expiations. Nay, the Papists, when they mutter their prayers, say that the final intention is pleasing to God, though they may wander in their thoughts: for if, when they begin to pray, it should come to their minds, that God is prayed to, though they may not attend to their prayers, though they may pollute themselves with many depraved lusts yet, if with the mouth they utter prayers, they maintain that the final intention pleases God. — Why? Because their design is to seek God. This is, indeed, extremely sottish and puerile: but, as I have already said, the Prophet does not press this point, but concedes to the Israelites what they pretended, "Ye seek God; but yet ye run not in the right way; and these circuitous courses will not lead you to God." How so? "For ye recede farther from him." So Isaiah says, 'She will greatly weary herself in her ways:' but in the meantime she followed not the right way, but, on the contrary, turned aside after various errors, and thus receded from the Lord, and came not to him.

By saying, that *God had removed* or *separated himself from them,* he intimates that he is not propitious but to the faithful, who think not so grossly of him, as to seek to feed him with the flesh of oxen or other sacrifices, or to pacify him with disagreeable odour; but who seek him spiritually and from the heart, who bring true repentance. It now follows —

Hosea 5:7

7. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord: for they have begotten strange children: now shall a month devour them with their portions.

7. Contra Jehovam (vel, cum Jehova) perfide egerunt: quia filios alienos genuerunt: nunc vorabit eos mensis cum portionibus suis.

He says that *they had acted perfidiously with God,* for they had violated his covenant. We must bear in mind what I have said before of the mutual faith which God stipulates with us, when he binds himself to us. God then covenants with us on this condition, that he will be our Father and Husband; but he requires from us such obedience as a son ought to render to his father; he requires from us that chastity which a wife owes to her husband. The Prophet now charges the people with unfaithfulness, because they had despised the true God, and prostituted themselves to idols.

And he also aggravates this crime by saying, that they had *begotten strange children:* for he intimates, that their condition had become so vitiated, that there remained no better hope as to their posterity. Some explain the words, that they had begotten strange children, in this way, — that they had taken wives from heathen nations, contrary to the law. But this sense is very frigid. Others understand, that they had begotten spurious children, because they brought up their children badly, having, from their infancy, attached them to depraved superstitions. This is indeed true, but the prophet, as I have already said, looked further; he meant that the Israelites had not only become alienated from God, but had also taken away every hope as to the future. It may indeed be, and it sometimes happens, that men for a time abandon themselves to many vices, and afterwards return to the right way; but when corruption has so prevailed that the children are infected with the same vices, and impiety itself takes full possession of them, then the state of things is past recovery. We now then see that the Prophet means, that the Israelites were not only covenant-breakers with respect to God, but that they had also led their children into the same perfidy, so that there was no hope of repentance.

He therefore subjoins the punishment, *Devour them shall a month together with their portions* [23] Some restrict the word, month, to the times of the new moon, or to the new moons; and these days, we know, were festivals among the Jews: but this seems too far-fetched and strained. The Prophet therefore, I doubt not, takes here a month for a short time; and so the Hebrew scholars explain it, and yet they do not sufficiently unfold this form of speaking. Now, the Prophets are wont to use various figures, when they intend to mark out a short time. Isaiah says, 'Yet for three years, as the time of a hireling:' for hirelings were wont to hire themselves for three years; hence he says, This is the time fixed by the Lord as the appointed day. Contracts, also, we know, were then monthly, as they are at this day yearly, both with reference to the interest of money and other exchanges. Since, then, they usually made agreements for single months, the Prophet here, I have no doubt, takes a month metaphorically for a certain and fixed time. I do not

[23] "With their portions," i.e., their allotments: they shall be totally dispossessed of their country; and the boundaries of the separate allotments of the several tribes shall be confounded and obliterated. —Bp. Horsley

therefore agree with the Hebrew scholars, who say that only a short time is expressed by the Prophet, but he expresses not only a short, but also a fixed time; and he did this that the Israelites might not vainly look for any deferring or respite, for hypocrites ever procrastinate and extend time by vain delusions. The Prophet therefore says here, *A month shall devour them,* which means, "Vengeance is now suspended over their heads, and this they shall not escape."

And he says, "with their portions". He intimates here, no doubt, that though they then overflowed with abundance, yet nothing would be a help to them to keep them from being destroyed, for the hand of God was against them. We indeed know, that as long as men are well furnished with provisions and protection, they are not very solicitous about their state, but heedlessly despise whatever dangers there may be in the world: therefore the Prophet says, that though they were opulent and well supplied, though they possessed every kind of defense, yet nothing would avail for their safety, but a month should devour them, together with all their wealth. It follows —

Hosea 5:8

8. Blow ye the cornet in Gibeah, and the trumpet in Ramah: cry aloud at Bethaven, after thee, O Benjamin.

8. Clangite cornu in Gibeah, canite tuba in Ramah, buccinate etiam in Beth-aven, post te Benjamin.

The Prophet speaks here more emphatically, and there is in these words a certain lively representation; for the Prophet assumes here the character of a herald, or he introduces heralds who declare and proclaim war. The truth itself ought indeed to storm not only our ears, but also our hearts, and be more powerful than any trumpet: but we yet see how unconcerned we are. Hence the Lord is constrained here to clothe his servant with the character of a herald, or at least he bids his servant to send forth heralds to proclaim war everywhere throughout the whole kingdom of Israel. This was not, properly speaking, the office of a Prophet; but we see that Ezekiel was ordered by the Lord to besiege Jerusalem for a time, — and why? Because his whole teaching, after the Jews had been a thousand times threatened, became frigid: God then added visions, which more effectually roused torpid men. So also does Hosea in this place, *Shout with the trumpet in Gibeah, blow the cornet in Ramah, and sound the horn in Beth-aven;* for God, as we have said, is pursuing Israel, and will not suffer them to rest; so that the Israelites might know that God threatens not in vain, that his reproofs are not bugbears, but that he deals in earnest when he reproves the ungodly, and that execution, as they say, will follow what he teaches. In the same manner does Paul also say,

'Vengeance is prepared by us, and is in readiness against all those who extol themselves against the greatness of Christ, how great soever they may be,'
(2 Corinthians 10:5,6.)

As, then, the ungodly are wont to make this objection, that the Prophets preach nothing but words, Hosea here testifies that he did not in vain terrify men, but that the effect, as they say, would immediately follow, unless they reconciled themselves to God.

Now, as we perceive the Prophet's purpose, let us take care to receive by faith that peace which the Lord daily proclaims to us by his messengers. For what is the Gospel but what Paul declares it to be?

'We discharge the office of ambassadors,' he says, 'for Christ, that ye may be reconciled to God, and in Christ's name we exhort you to return into favor with God,'
(2 Corinthians 5:20.)

We then see that all the ministers of the Gospel are God's heralds, who invite us to peace, and promise that God is ready to grant us pardon, if with the heart we seek him. But if we receive not this message and this embassy, there will remain for us the dreadful judgment, of which the Prophet now speaks, and our impiety will procure for us this awful doom. As though God then were now declaring war against all the ungodly and the despisers of his grace, the Prophet says that they shall find that God is armed for vengeance.

Moreover, the Prophet doubtless has here mentioned *Gibeah, Ramah,* and "Beth-aven", because in these places great assemblies usually met; and it may be also that they were strong fortresses. Since then the Israelites thought themselves unconquerable, because they had invincible strongholds against their enemies, the Prophet here expressly declares war against them. Everywhere then sound ye the trumpet, or blow the horn, or blow the cornet, especially in the chief places of the kingdom.

After thee, O Benjamin. Benjamin is here to be taken, by a figure of speech, for the whole of Israel, because he was a brother of Joseph by the same mother: the tribe of Benjamin is therefore everywhere joined with Ephraim. It is at the same time certain, that the Prophet confines not here his address to one tribe, but includes, under one tribe or one part, the whole kingdom of Israel. It follows —

Hosea 5:9

9. Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke: among the tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall surely be.

9. Ephraim in vastitatem erit in die correctionis: in tribibus Israel docui veritatem (intelligere feci, ad verbum.)

Here the Prophet asserts, without any figure, that their chastisement would not be slight or paternal, but that God would punish the Israelites as they deserved, that he would reduce them to nothing. God, we know, sometimes spares the ungodly, while he chastises them: signs of his wrath daily appear through the whole world; but at the same time they are moderate punishments which God inflicts on men; and he in a manner invites them to repentance, when he thus mercifully chastises their sins. But the Prophet says here, that God would no longer act in this manner; for he would destroy

and wholly blot out the whole kingdom of Israel. They had been already often warned, not only in words, but also in deeds and had often felt the wrath of God; but they still persisted in their course. And now, as God saw that they were wholly stupid, he says, *Now, in the day of correction, Ephraim shall be for desolation;* as though he said, "I will not correct Israel as heretofore, for they have been before in various ways chastised, but have not repented; I will therefore now lay aside those paternal corrections which I have hitherto used, for I have in vain applied such remedies: I will then henceforth so correct Israel, that they shall be entirely destroyed." We now comprehend the Prophet's meaning.

But this is a remarkable passage; for men are always slow and dilatory; even when God pricks them, as it were, with goads, they remain slothful in their sins. God adds corrections, one after the other; and when he sees men continuing as it were out of their senses, he then testifies that it is no time for reproof, but that final destruction is at hand. We hence see that every hope is here cut off from the Israelites, that they might not think that they would be punished in the usual way for their sins; for as soon as the Lord would begin to reprehend them, he would destroy and blot out their names: *Israel* then *shall be for desolation in the day of correction*

He then adds, *through the tribes of Israel I have made known the truth.* Some regard this sentence as spoken in the person of God, and refer it to the first covenant which God made with the whole people; and so consider this to be the sense, "I do not now of a sudden proceed to take vengeance on the Israelites; for I have begotten this people, nourished them, brought them up to manhood. Since this is the case, there is now no reason for them to complain, that I am too precipitant in taking vengeance." This is one meaning: but I rather incline to their opinion, who regard this as spoken in the person of the Prophet; I do not yet follow altogether their opinion, for they suppose that the fault of the people in being unteachable is alone set forth: *I have made known the truth through the tribes of Israel,* as though the Prophet had said, "This people is unworthy that God should chastise them in a paternal manner, for they have hardened themselves in their wickedness; and though they have been more than sufficiently taught their duty, they have yet openly despised God, and have done this, not through ignorance, but through perverseness: since then the people of Israel have blinded and demented themselves, as it were, willfully, what now remains, but that God will bring them to desolation?" So they expound this place. But it seems to me that a protestation is what suits this passage: *I have made known the truth through the tribes of Israel,* as though he said, "This is fixed and ratified, which I now declare, and it shall certainly be; let then no one seek any escape for himself, for God threatens not now, as often before, for the purpose of recalling men to repentance, but declares what he will do."

That this may be better understood, the mode of speaking in familiar use among all the Prophets is to be noticed: they often threaten, and then give

hope of pardon, and promise salvation, so that they seem to exhibit some sort of contradiction: for after having fulminated against the people, they come at once to preach grace, they offer salvation, they testify that God will be propitious. At first sight the Prophets seem not to be consistent with themselves. But the solution is easy, for they threatened vengeance to men under condition; afterwards, when they saw some fruit, they then set forth the mercy of God, and began to be heralds of peace, to reconcile men to God, and make an agreement between them. Thus our Prophet often threatened the Israelites; and had they repented, the hope of salvation would not have been cut off from them. But after he had found them to be so obstinate that they would not receive any instruction, he then said, *I have announced the truth through the tribes of Israel,* that is, God does not now say, "Except ye repent, you are lost;" but he speaks positively; because he sees that the well known doctrine has been despised: this then is the truth. It is the same as if he said, "This is the last denunciation, which shall be fixed and unalterable."

And Jeremiah also speaks in the same manner: his book is full of various threatenings; and yet they are conditional threatening. But after God had taken the matter in hand, he began to act in a different way: "I now call you no more to repentance, I contend not with you, I do not now set forth God as a judge, that ye may flee to him for mercy; all these things are come to an end; what remains now", he says, "is the last command, to show that you are now past hope." This is the true and real meaning of the Prophet here; and whosoever will consider the whole context, will easily perceive that this was the Prophet's intention. He had said before, "Ephraim shall be for desolation in the day of correction," that is, "The Lord will no longer reprove Ephraim as heretofore, but will entirely destroy him:" then he adds, *I have promulgated or published the truth through the tribes of Israel:* "Now," he says, "know ye that vengeance will come shortly, and that it is ratified before God; know also that I speak authoritatively, as if the hand of God were now stretched forth before your eyes." Now follows —

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are already by nature the children of wrath, and yet thou hast deigned to receive us into favour, and hast set before us a sacred pledge of thy favor in thine only-begotten Son, and that as we have not yet ceased often to provoke thy wrath against us, and also to fall away by shameful perfidy from the covenant thou hast made with us, — O grant, that being at least touched by thy admonitions, we may not harden our hearts in wickedness, but be pliant and teachable, and thus endeavor to return unto favor with thee, that through the interceding sacrifice of thy Son, we may find thee a propitious Father, and be for the future so wholly devoted to thee, that those who shall follow and survive us may be confirmed in the worship of thy majesty, and in true religion, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Fifteenth

Hosea 5:10

10. The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.

10. Fuerunt principes Jehudah, quasi transferentes terminum (vel potest omitti {כ}, nota similitudinis, et saepe etiam ita sumitur; Fuerunt igitur principes Jehudah transferentes terminum:) super eos effundam quasi aquas furorem meum (vel, indignationis meae.)

Here the Prophet transfers the blame of all the evils which then reigned in the tribe of Judah to their princes. He says, that the people had fallen away and departed from God through their fault, and he uses a most fit similitude. We know that there is nothing certain in the possessions of men, except the boundaries of fields be fixed; for no one can otherwise keep his own. But by the metaphor of boundaries in fields, the Prophet refers to the whole political order. The meaning is, that all things were now in a state of disorder and confusion among the Jews; because their leaders who ought to have ruled the people and kept them in obedience, had destroyed the whole order of things. We now then understand what the Prophet had really in view.

But it must be observed that the tribe of Judah had been hitherto kept separate, as it were by limits, as God's heritage; for Israel had become alienated. The possession of God had been diminished by the defection of Jeroboam; and he retained only one tribe and a half in his service. The Prophet says now, that the Jews had mixed with the Israelites, and had thus become themselves alienated from the Lord; for the princes themselves had taken away the boundaries, that is, they had, through indolence and other vices, destroyed all reverence for God, all care for religion, and also every concern for what was just and right: he therefore severely threatens them, "I will pour out", he says, "my wrath upon them like waters".

By this metaphor, he means that God would deal much more severely with them than with the common people: "I," he says, "will with full force pour forth upon them my fury, as if it were the deluge of antiquity." The meaning is, "I will overwhelm them in my vengeance, because they have done more evil by their bad examples, than if they had been private individuals." We hence see that the corruption of the people is imputed to the princes, and therefore God's more dreadful vengeance is denounced on them.

But we must bear in mind what I have before said, that the Prophet gives here metaphorically the name of boundaries to the lawful worship of God, and to whatever he had enjoined on the people, that they might be his certain possession, as fields among men are usually separated by bounds that every one may keep his own. It follows. —

Hosea 5:11

11. Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment, because he willingly walked after the commandment.

11. Praedae expositus est Ephrain (vel, direptus est; {עשק} significat

diripere et praedari,) fractus judicio: quia volens ambulavit post mandata.

Here again the Prophet shows that the vengeance of God would be just against Israel, because they willingly followed the impious edicts of their king. The people might indeed have appeared to be excusable, since religion had not been changed by their voice, or by public consent, or by any contrivance of the many, but by the tyrannical will of the king alone: Jeroboam was not induced by superstition, but by subtile wickedness, to erect altars elsewhere, and not at Jerusalem. The people then might have appeared to be without blame; for the king alone devised this artifices to secure himself from danger. But the Prophet shows that all were implicated in the same guilt before God, because the people adopted with alacrity the impious forms of worship which the king had commanded. He therefore says, that *Ephraim is exposed to plunder, that he is broken by judgment,* (or, "shall be broken," for the words may be rendered in the future tense.) That the people then were thus torn, and were also to bear in future far more grievous things, was not, as he says, because they had to suffer all these things undeservedly, for they were not innocent. — How so? Because they willingly followed the commands of their king; for the king did not force them to forsake the doctrine of the law, but every one went voluntarily after impious superstitions. Since then they willingly obeyed their king, they could not now excuse themselves, they could not object that this was done by one man, and that they were not admitted to consult with him. Their promptitude proved them to be perfidious.

Some render {הואיל}, *evail,* to begin," and {יאל}, *ial,* is often taken in this sense: but as it oftener signifies, "to be willing," the Prophet no doubt means here, that the Israelites had not been compelled by force and fear to go astray after superstitions; but that they were prompt and ready to obey, for there was in them no fear of God, no religion. If any one should now ask, whether they are excusable, who are tyrannically drawn away into superstitions, as we see to be done under the Papacy, the answer is ready, that those are not here absolved who regarded men more than God: nor is terror, as we know, a sufficient excuse, when we prefer our own life to the glory of God, and when, anxious to provide for ourselves and to avoid the cross, we deny God, or turn aside from making a confession of the right and pure faith: but the fault is rendered double, when men easily comply with any thing commanded by tyrants; for they show, that they were already fully inclined to despise God and to deny true religion. Hence the impiety of Jeroboam discovered the common ungodliness and wickedness of the whole people; for as soon as he raised his finger and bid them to worship God corruptly, all joyfully followed the impious edict. There was an occasion then offered to them; but the evil dwelt before in their hearts; for they were not so inclined and prompt to obey God. We now then see what the Prophet had in view.

He says that God would justly punish all the Israelites, yea, even all the common people; for though Jeroboam alone had commanded them to worship God corruptly, yet all of them willingly embraced what he wished

to be done: and thus it became manifest that they had in them no fear of God. We now see how vain is the excuse of those who say that they ought to obey kings, and at the same time forsake the word of God: for what does the Prophet reprove here, but that the Israelites had been too submissive to their king? "But this in itself was worthy of praise." True, when the king commanded nothing contrary to God's word; but when he perverted God's worship, when he set up corrupt superstitions, then the people ought to have firmly resisted him: but as they were too pliant, nay, willingly allowed themselves to be drawn away from the true worship of God, the Prophet says here, that they had no reason to complain, that they were too sharply and too severely chastised by the Lord. It follows —

Hosea 5:12

12. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness.

12. Et ego tanquam tinea ipsi Ephraim, et tanquam putredo (vel, caries; quanquam alii vertunt, Teredinem, qui est etiam vermiculus, qui nascitur in lignis) domui Jehudah.

God now denounces punishment in common on the two kingdoms; but he speaks not as before, he says not that his fury would be like a deluge, to overwhelm and drown the people. What then? He compares himself to little worms which gnaw wood and consume cloths; or he compares himself to rottenness; for, as we have said, the second word is to be so taken, as {רקב}, *rekob,* is properly rottenness, and is derived from {רקב}, *rekab,* to rot;" it is then rottenness or putrescence. But as I have said, some would render it, "a grub;" and there is a probable reason for this, because he first mentioned moth; and these two, moth and grub [24] , would be more suitable to each other, than moth and rottenness. However, the meaning of the Prophet is by no means obscure, and that is, that the Lord would by a slow corrosion consume both the people; that though he would not by one onset destroy them, yet they would pine away until they became wholly rotten. This is the meaning.

But we must observe why the Prophet used this metaphor. It was, that the Israelites and the Jews might understand, that though the Lord would in some measure withhold his hand from resting heavily upon them, and that though he would spare them, yet they would not be safe, because they would by little and little feel a slow decay, that would consume them. And the Lord meant in this way to turn the people to repentance; but he effected nothing: for such was their hardness, that they felt not this slow decay; as those who are stupid are not moved, except they feel a most grievous pain; they think that they are doing well, and they struggle against their own disease: many such we see. Hence the Prophet here reminds them, that though the Lord should not openly fulminate against the Israelites and the Jews, they yet in

[24] "That it signifies some kind of worm or maggot I have no doubt, because the rule of the parallelism demands some gnawing insect, that may correspond with {,{עש the moth." --- By. Horsley

vain flattered themselves, because the Lord would be to them a moth and a worm; that is, that however gradually he might consume them, they would yet be greatly deceived, if they did not perceive that they had to do with him.

The chief instruction is, that God does not always punish men in the same way; for he deals with them differently, either to promote their salvation, or to render them in this way more inexcusable. Hence God sometimes pours forth his severity, and at another time he slowly chastises us. But whatever may be the way, we are reminded that we ought not to sleep, whenever the Lord awakens us; nor should we wait until he appears as a lion or a bear, until he devours us, until he rages against us in dreadful fury. We are then reminded that there is no reason why we should wait for this; but that when God consumes us by degrees, it ought instantly to occur to us, that though the moth and the worm are but very small insects, hardly seen by the eyes, yet a hard and firm tree is consumed by these little worms, or by its own cariousness; and that cloths are consumed with putridity, when once the moth enters into them; we see valuable furniture perishing. Since it is so, there is no reason for men to be secure when God shows any sign of his wrath, though he pours not forth his horrible vengeance, but is as a hidden putrefaction. We now perceive what Hosea means in this verse. It now follows —

Hosea 5:13

13. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb: yet could he not heal you, nor cure you of your wound.

13. Et vidit Ephraim dolorem suum (morbum suum potius,) et Jehudah vulnus suum: profectus wst Ephraim ad Assur, et misit ad regem Jareb: ipse tamen non potuit mederi vobis, et non sanabit a vobis vulnus (dicunt Hebraei, sanare ab aliquo vulnus pro auferre vulnus: potius Latine dicendum est, non sanabit vos a plaga.)

Here the Lord complains that he had in vain chastised the Israelites by the usual means, for they thought that they had remedies ready for themselves, and turned their minds to vain hopes. This is usually done by most men; for when the Lord deals mildly with us, we perceive not his hand, but think that what evils happen to us come by chance. Then, as if we had nothing to do with God, we seek remedies, and turn our minds and thoughts to other quarters. This then is what God now reproves in the Jews and the Israelites: *Ephraim,* he says, *saw his disease, and Judah his wound* What then did he do? *Ephraim went to Assyria,* he says, *and sent to king Jareb,* that is, "They returned not to me, but thought that they had remedies in their own hand; and thus vain became the labour which I have taken to correct them." This is the meaning.

He says that *Ephraim had seen his disease, and Judah his wound:* but it is not right so to take this, as if they well considered the causes of these; for

the ungodly are blind to the causes of evils, and only attend to their present grief. They are like intemperate men, who, when disease seizes them, feel heat, feel pain in the head, and other symptoms, at the same time there is no concern for the disease, neither do they inquire how they procured these pains for themselves, that they might seek fit remedies.

So *Ephraim knew his disease*, but at the same time overlooked the cause of his disease, and was only affected by his present pain. So also *Judah knew his wound;* but he understood not that he was struck and wounded by the hand of God; but was only affected with his pain, like brute beasts who feel the stroke and sigh, while they have, in the meantime, neither reason nor judgment to understand whence, or for what cause the evil has come to them. In a word, the Prophet here condemns this brutish stupidity in both people; for they did not so far profit under God's rod as to return to him, but, on the contrary, they sought other remedies; because stupor had taken such hold on their minds, that they did not consider that they were chastised by God, and that this was done for just reasons. As then no such thing came to their mind, but they only felt themselves ill and grieved as brutes do, they went to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jareb.

The Prophet seems here to inveigh only against the ten tribes; but though he expressly speaks of the kingdom of Israel, there is no doubt but that he accused also the Jews in common with them. Why then does he name only Ephraim? [25] Even because the beginning of this evil commenced in the kingdom of Israel: for they were the first who went to the king of Assur, that they might, by his help, resist their neighbors, the Syrians: the Jews afterwards followed their example. Since then the Israelites afforded a precedent to the Jews to send for aids of this kind, the Prophet expressly confines his discourse to them. But there is no doubt, as I have already said, but that the accusation was common.

We now perceive what the Prophet meant: *Ephraim,* he says, *saw his disease, and Judah his wound;* that is, "Though I have, like a moth and a worm, consumed the kingdom of Israel as well as the kingdom of Judah, and they have felt themselves to be, as it were, decaying, and though their disease ought to have led them to repentance, they have yet turned their thoughts elsewhere; they have even supposed that they could be made whole by seeking a remedy either from the Assyrians or some others: thus it happened that they hastened to Assyria, and sought help from king Jareb." We then see, in short, that the stupidity and hardness of the people are here reproved, because they were not turned by these evils to repentance.

Some think Jareb to have been a city in Assyria; but there is no ground for this conjecture. Others suppose that Jareb was a neighboring king to the

[25] Horsley thought that there is a word left out before "sent," and supposed it to be "Judah," that the two parts of the verse might correspond, as Judah as well as Ephraim is mentioned in the former part of the verse. Had he well weighed the reason here given by Calvin, he would not have thought such an addition necessary. Conjectural emendations for the most part arise from the same cause, — from not understanding the design and purpose of the sacred writer. — Ed.

Assyrian, and was sent to when the Assyrian, from a friend and a confederate, became an enemy, and invaded the kingdom of Israel; but this conjecture also has no solid grounds. It may have been the proper name of a man, and I prefer so to take it. For it seemed not necessary for the Prophet to speak here of many auxiliaries; but after the manner of the Hebrews, he repeats the same thing twice. Some render it, "to revenge;" because they sent for that king, even the Assyrian, as a revenger. But this exposition also is forced. More simple appears to me what I have already said, that they sent for the Assyrian, that is, for king Jareb.

Then it follows, *Yet could he not heal you, nor will he cure you of your wound* Here God declares that whatever the Israelites might seek would be in vain. "Ye think," he says, "that you can escape my hand by these remedies; but your folly will at length betray itself, for he will avail you nothing; that is, king Jareb will not heal you." In this clause the Prophet shows, that unless we immediately return to God, when he warns us by his scourges, it will be in vain for us to look here and there for remedies: for in this world many allurements come in our way; but when we hope for any relief, the Lord will at length show that we have been deluded. There is, then, but one remedy, — to go directly to God; and this is what the Prophet means, and this is the application of the present doctrine. He had said before that Ephraim had felt his disease and Judah his wounds; that is, "I have led them thus far, that they have acknowledged themselves to be ill; but they have not gone on as they ought to have done, so as to return to me: on the contrary, they have turned aside to king Jareb and to other delusions." Then it follows, "But these remedies have turned ant rather for harm to you; they certainly have not profited you." A confirmation of this sentence follows —

Hosea 5:14

14. For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall rescue him

14. Quia ego tanquam leo ipsi Ephraim, et tanquam leunculus domui Jehudah: ego, ego rapiam, et abibo; tollam et nemo eripiet.

As I have said, the Prophet confirms this truth, that Israel had recourse in vain to false physicians, when they left God. How so? Because the whole world, were it to favor us, could not yet help us, against the will of God and his opposing power. But God here declares that he would be adverse to the Israelites; as though he said, "Provide human aids as much as you please; but will the Assyrian be superior to me in power? Can he hinder me from pursuing you as I have determined?" Thus God shows that he would deal in a new and different manner with the Israelites and the Jews: "I will not," he says, "be any longer like a moth and a worm; I shall come like a lion to you, with an open mouth to devour you: now let the Assyrian king come forth, when I shall thus go armed against you; can he put any hindrance in my way, that I should not execute my vengeance, as it shall seem good to

me?" We now then perceive the design of the Prophet.

He had said, that God would punish the Israelites and the Jews, by consuming them by degrees, that there might be more time for repentance: but he says that this would be useless, for they would not think that it was done seriously. They would therefore deceive themselves with vain fallacies. What would then at last remain? Even this, "I will," he says, "put on a new form and go to battle: I will be to you *as a lion and a young lion;* I will rage against you as a fierce wild beast: your grievance shall not now be from moths and worms; but you shall have an open and dreadful contest with the lion and the young lion. What then will the Assyrian king avail you?" And this place teaches, that men, when they attempt to oppose vain helps to the wrath of God, gain only this, that they more and more provoke and inflame his wrath against themselves. After God has first gnawed, he will at length devour; after he has pricked, he will deeply wound; after he has struck, he will wholly destroy. All this we bring on ourselves by our perverse attempts, when we try to seek escapes for ourselves. Except, then, we would willingly kindle God's displeasure, that he may appear as a lion and rage against us with the whole force of his wrath, let us take heed, that we deceive not ourselves by vain reliefs.

He therefore says, *I, I will take away,* or, "tear," or, "tear in pieces;" for {שרף}, *shereph,* properly means this, and it agrees better with the rest of the context. "I will then, as lions and young lions are wont to do, tear in pieces, limb from limb, the whole people." Then he says, I will *go away* as a lion, who, after he has enjoyed his prey, departs a conqueror with more courage being not put to flight, for he is moved by no fear. So also the Prophet says, "Let the Assyrian king come, he will not constrain me to retreat, nor will he rescue the spoil from me: and when I shall be satiated with your destruction, I shall not then have any fear on account of the Assyrian king, that I should stealthily flee away, as foxes are wont to do; I will not craftily contend; but I will go forth openly, my violence will be sufficient to put him to flight: I will thus depart of my own accord; for your subsidies will occasion me no fear. *I will take away,* he says, and none shall rescue." We now comprehend the whole meaning of the Prophet.

Hosea 5:15

15. I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

15. Ibo, revertar ad locum meum, donex agnoscant se peccasse (ad verbum est, peccare,) et quaerant faciem meam: ubi fuerit ipsis afflictio, properabunt ad me (vel, me quaerent.)

The word {שחר}, *shicker,* signifies the morning: hence the verb means, "to seek early," or, "to rise early," as men do when they apply themselves diligently to anything: but in many places of Scripture it is taken simply in the sense of seeking; and this simple meaning seems most suitable to this place, *They will seek me in their tribulation* God here declares, that after

having been dreadfully fierce against both the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, he would for a time rest quietly and wait from heaven what they would do. He then adds, "They will at length return to a sane mind: when they shall perceive the finishing part, they will then, having lost their perverseness, acknowledge their sins and be truly humbled." This is the meaning.

The mode of speaking seems apparently strange, when God says, that he will go away; for he neither so hides himself in heaven, that he neglects human affairs, nor withdraws his hand, but that he sustains the world by the continued exercise of his power, nor even takes away his Spirit from men, especially when he would lead them to repentance; for men never of their own accord turn themselves to God, but by his hidden influence. What then does he mean by this, *I will go and return to my place?* Why, indeed, he speaks here of the external state of the people: then the meaning is, "After the two kingdoms shall be cut off, I will then for a time hide my face from both the people; and they will think that I care not for their salvation; they will think that they are far removed from me." We hence see that the Prophet here only refers to what would be the external condition of the people; and then we also see, that these forms of speech are accommodated to the perceptions of men. So God also himself speaks in Isaiah 18, [26] though for a different purpose; yet the Prophet expresses there in reality the same thing; 'I will rest,' he says, 'and I will wait in my tabernacle.' What was that rest of God, and what was his tabernacle? Why, when God exercised his judgments, we are then constrained to feel his presence, and when he kindly favors us and exhibits the kindness of a Father, he then really shows himself propitious to us: but when he neither visits us for our sins, nor gives us tokens of his favor, he seems to withdraw himself from us, and to show no regard for our life. We now then understand that the Prophet speaks of the time of exile; as though he said, "After God shall execute against you his extreme judgment, and ye shall be liken away into exile, God will then forsake you, as if he in no way regarded you, but were unmindful of you; for he will leave you there to rest, even in Chaldea and Assyria; and then he will not send forth any light of salvation. God therefore will be as it were idle in heaven." This is one thing.

But the Prophet shows at the same time the final issue, that is, that they will afterwards return to the Lord; and that this is also the purpose of God he affirms, *Till they acknowledge,* he says, *that they have sinned* For it is the beginning of healing, when men consider the cause of their disease. He had said before that Israel saw his disease, but not in a right way; for the origin of the disease was hid from him, and continued as yet hid. But now the Prophet distinctly shows that it is to seek God, when people acknowledge and confess their sins. This word continually occurs in Scripture when sacrifices are spoken of. Hence men are said then to sin, when they go forth before God, making a true confession, when they acknowledge their guilt and pray

[26] Isaiah 18:4. — fj.

for pardon. So also in this place he says, *Until they confess that they have sinned I will for a time hide myself* And he adds, "They will seek my face". This is the second thing in attaining salvation — to seek the face of God: for we are reconciled to God, we know, by repentance and faith; not that repentance procures pardon for us, but because it is necessarily required; it is a cause, as they say, which is indispensable.

The first step then towards healing, as we have already said, is to be touched with grief, when we perceive that we have provoked the wrath of God, and when thus our sins displease us. But he who is thus become in himself a sinner, that is, who begins to be his own judge, ought afterwards to add this second thing — to seek the face of God, that is, to present himself a suppliant before God, and to ask for pardon; and this arises from faith. It is then to repentance that the word {אשם}, *ahsim,* belongs, which is to "acknowledge sin:" and to "seek the face of God," properly belongs to faith.

Now let us see what is the application of this doctrine as to both people. When the Israelites and the Jews lived in exile, it was of great benefit for them to have this testified, that God was hiding his face for a time, that he might afford them time to repent; this is one thing. Now when men considerately attend to this, that they are to seek God, that they may repent, they are encouraged; and this is the sharpest goad to rouse men, that they may no longer be torpid in their vices: and this is what the Prophet meant. When the Lord shall banish into exile both the Jews and the Israelites, let them not think that though for a time he will seem to cast them away they are wholly deserted; for as yet a convenient time for repentance will be given them. He afterwards describes the way of reconciliations that is, that they shall *acknowledge that they have sinned,* and then that they shall seek the face of God.

And at the same time he makes known the fruit of affliction, and says, *When affliction shall be to them, then they will seek me* The Prophet here shows, that exile, though very bitter to Israel, would yet be useful; as when a physician gives a bitter draughts or is compelled to use strong medicine to cure an inveterate disease; so the Prophet shows that this punishment would be useful to the people, and even pleasant, however bitter it might be for a time. How so? For they will return to the Lord; and he says distinctly, "They will seek me". He includes in this expression both faith and repentance; for he separates not the two clauses as before, but shows generally that the end of affliction would be, that the people would turn themselves to God. With respect to the expression, "to seek early," I have said already that I do not approve of that meaning; for neither the Israelites nor the Jews, sought God early, but were with difficulty at lasts after a long period, and a long series of seventy years, led to repentance. What sort of seeking early was this? I do not then approve of rendering the word, 'They shall seek me early;' but, as I have said the simple idea of "seeking" is more suitable.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we continue to kindle often thy wrath against us by our innumerable sins, — O grant, that when thou warnest and wouldest restore us to the right way, we may at least be pliant, and without delay attend to the scourges of thy hand, and not wait for extreme severity, but timely repent; and that we may truly and from the heart seek thee, let us not put on false repentance, but strive to devote ourselves wholly to thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hosea 6

Chapter 6

Lecture Sixteenth

Hosea 6:1

1. Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

1. Venite et convertamur ad Jehovam, quia ipse rapuit et sanabit nos; percussit et alligabit plagas nostras.

In the last chapter the Prophet said, that the Israelites, after having been subdued by chastisements and judgments, would again turn back from following error to seek God. But as terror drives men away from approaching God, he now adds, that the measure of afflictions would not be such as would discourage their minds and produce despair; but rather inspire them with the assurance, that God would be propitious to them: and that he might set this forth the better, he introduces them as saying, *Come, let us go to the Lord:* and this mode of speaking is very emphatical.

But we must know that the reason here given, why the Israelites could return safely and with sure confidence to God, is, that they would acknowledge it as his office to heal after he has smitten, and to bring a remedy for the wounds which he has inflicted. The Prophet means by these words, that God does not so punish men as to pour forth his wrath upon them for their destruction; but that he intends, on the contrary, to promote their salvation, when he is severe in punishing their sins. We must then remember, as we have before observed, that the beginning of repentance is a sense of God's mercy; that is, when men are persuaded that God is ready to give pardon, they then begin to gather courage to repent; otherwise perverseness will ever increase in them; how much soever their sin may frighten them, they will yet never return to the Lord. And for this purpose I have elsewhere quoted that

remarkable passage in Psalm 130, 'With thee is mercy, that thou mayest be feared;' for it cannot be, that men will obey God with true and sincere heart, except a taste of his goodness allures them, and they can certainly determine, that they shall not return to him in vain, but that he will be ready, as we have said, to pardon them. This is the meaning of the words, when he says, *Come, and let us turn to the Lord; for he has torn and he will heal us;* that is, God has not inflicted on us deadly wounds; but he has smitten, that he might heal.

At the same time, something more is expressed in the Prophet's words, and it is this, that God never so rigidly deals with men, but that he ever leaves room for his grace. For by the word, *torn,* the Prophet alludes to that heavy judgment of which he had before spoken in the person of God: the Lord then made himself to be like a cruel wild beast, "I will be as a lion, I will devour, I will tear, and no one shall take away the prey which I have once seized." God wished then to show that his vengeance would be dreadful against the Israelites. Now, though God should deal very sharply with them, they were not yet to despair of pardon. However, then, we may find God to be for a time like a lion or a bear, yet, as his proper office is to heal after he has torn, to bind the wounds he has inflicted, there is no reason why we should shun his presence. We see that the design of the Prophet's words was to show, that no chastisement is so severe that it ought to break down our spirits, but that we ought, by entertaining hope, to stir up ourselves to repentance. This is the drift of the passage.

It is further needful to observe, that the faithful do here, in the first place, encourage themselves, that they may afterwards lead others with them; for so the words mean. He does not say, "Go, return to Jehovah;" but, *Come, let us return unto Jehovah* We then see that each one begins with himself; and then that they mutually exhort one another; and this is what ought to be done by us: when any one sends his brethren to God, he does not consult his own good, since he ought rather to show the way. Let every one, then, learn to stimulate himself; and then, let him stretch out his hand to others, that they may follow. We are at the same time reminded that we ought to undertake the care of our brethren; for it would be a shame for any one to be content with his own salvation, and so to neglect his brethren. It is then necessary to join together these two things, — To stir up ourselves to repentance, — and then to try to lead others with us. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 6:2

2. After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

2. Vivificabit nos post biduum, die tertio suscitabit nos, et vivemus in conspectu ejus (vel, coram facie ejus.)

This place the Hebrew writers pervert, for they think that they are yet to be redeemed by the coming of the Messiah; and they imagine that this

will be the third day: for God once drew them out of Egypt, this was their first life; then, secondly, he restored them to life when he brought them back from the Babylonish captivity; and when God shall, by the hand of the Messiah, gather them from their dispersion, this, they say, will be the third resurrection. But these are frivolous notions. Not withstanding, this place is usually referred to Christ, as declaring, that God would, after two days, and on the third, raise up his Church; for Christ, we know, did not rise privately for himself, but for his members, inasmuch as he is the first-fruits of them who shall rise. This sense does not seem then unsuitable, that is, that the Prophet here encourages the faithful to entertain hope of salvation, because God would raise up his only-begotten Son, whose resurrection would be the common life of the whole Church.

Yet this sense seems to me rather too refined. We must always mind this, that we fly not in the air. Subtle speculations please at first sight, but afterwards vanish. Let every one, then, who desires to make proficiency in the Scriptures always keep to this rule — to gather from the Prophets and apostles only what is solid.

Let us now see what the Prophet meant. He here adds, I doubt not, a second source of consolation, that is, that if God should not immediately revive his people, there would be no reason for delay to cause weariness, as it is wont to do; for we see that when God suffers us to languish long, our spirits fail; and those who at first seem cheerful and courageous enough, in process of time become faint. As, then, patience is a rare virtue, Hosea here exhorts us patiently to bear delay, when the Lord does not immediately revive us. Thus then did the Israelites say, *After two days will God revive us; on the third day he will raise us up to life*

What did they understand by two days? Even their long affliction; as though they said, "Though the Lord may not deliver us from our miseries the first day, but defer longer our redemption, our hope ought not yet to fail; for God can raise up dead bodies from their graves no less than restore life in a moment." When Daniel meant to show that the affliction of the people would be long, he says,

'After a time, times, and half time,' (Daniel 7:25.)

That mode of speaking is different, but then as to sense it is the same. He says, 'after a time,' that is, after a year; that would be tolerable: but it follows, 'and times,' that is, many years: God afterwards shortens that period, and brings redemption at a time when least expected. Hosea mentions here two years, because God would not afflict his people for one day, but, as we have before seen, subdue them by degrees; for the perverseness of the people had so prevailed, that they could not be soon healed. As when diseases have been striking roots for a long time, they cannot be immediately cured, but there is need of slow and various remedies; and were a physician to attempt immediately to remove a disease which had taken full possession of a man, he certainly would not cure him, but take away his life: so also, when the

Israelites, through their long obstinacy, had become nearly incurable, it was necessary to lead them to repentance by slow punishments. They therefore said, *After two days God will revive us;* and thus they confirmed themselves in the hope of salvation, though it did not immediately appear: though they long remained in darkness, and the exile was long which they had to endure, they yet did not cease to hope: "Well, let the two days pass, and the Lord will revive us."

We see that a consolation is here opposed to the temptations, which take from us the hope of salvation, when God suspends his favor longer than our flesh desires. Martha said to Christ, 'He is now putrid, it is the fourth day.' [27] She thought it absurd to remove the stone from the sepulchre, because now the body of Lazarus was putrified. But Christ in this instance designed to show his own incredible power by restoring a putrid body to life. So the faithful say here, *The Lord will raise us up after two days:* "Though exile seems to be like the sepulchre, where putridity awaits us, yet the Lord will, by his ineffable power, overcome whatever may seem to obstruct our restoration." We now perceive, as I think, the simple and genuine sense of this passage.

But at the same time I do not deny but that God has exhibited a remarkable and a memorable instance of what is here said in his only-begotten Son. As often then as delay begets weariness in us, and when God seems to have thrown aside every care of us, let us flee to Christ; for, as it has been said, His resurrection is a mirror of our life; for we see in that how God is wont to deal with his own people: the Father did not restore life to Christ as soon as he was taken down from the cross; he was deposited in the sepulchre, and he lay there to the third day. When God then intends that we should languish for a time, let us know that we are thus represented in Christ our head, and hence let us gather materials of confidence. We have then in Christ an illustrious proof of this prophecy. But in the first place, let us lay hold on what we have said, that the faithful here obtain hope for themselves, though God extends not immediately his hand to them, but defers for a time his grace of redemption.

Then he adds, *We shall live in his sight,* or *before him.* Here again the faithful strengthen themselves, for God would favor them with his paternal countenance, after he had long turned his back on them, *We shall live before his face* For as long as God cares not for us, a sure destruction awaits us; but as soon as he turns his eyes to us, he inspires life by his look alone. Then the faithful promise this good to themselves that God's face will shine again after long darkness: hence also they gather the hope of life, and at the same time withdraw themselves from all those obstacles which obscure the light of life; for while we run and wander here and there, we cannot lay hold on the life which God promises to us, as the charms of this world are so many veils, which prevent our eyes to see the paternal face of God. We must then

[27] John 11:39. — fj.

remember that this sentence is added, that the faithful, when it pleases God to turn his back on them, may not doubt but that he will again look on them. Let us now go on —

Hosea 6:3

3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.

3. Et cognoscemus et persequemur ad cognitionem Jehovae: sicut aurora dispositus est egressus ejus, et veniet tanquam pluvia nobis, tanquam pluvia serotina pluvia terrae. [28]

In this verse the faithful pursue what we have before considered, making the hope of salvation sure to themselves: nor is it a matter of wonder that the Prophet dwells more fully on this subject; for we know how prone we are to entertain doubt. There is nothing more difficult, especially when God shows to us signs of his wrath, than to recover us, so that we may be really persuaded that he is our physician, when he seems to visit us for our sins. We must then, in this case, earnestly strive, for it cannot be done without labour. Hence the faithful now say, *We shall know, and we shall pursue to know Jehovah.* They show then by these words that they distrust not, but that light would arise after darkness; for this is the meaning of the words: *We shall* then *know,* they say; that is, "Though there is now on every side horrible darkness, yet the Lord will manifest his goodness to us, even though it may not immediately appear." They therefore add, *And we shall pursue after the knowledge of Jehovah.* We now perceive the purport of the words.

Now this passage teaches us, that when God hides his face, we act foolishly if we cherish our unbelief; for we ought, on the contrary, as I have already said, to contend with this destructive disease, inasmuch as Satan seeks nothing else but to sink us in despair. This his device then ought to be understood by us, as Paul reminds us, (2 Corinthians 2:11;) and the Holy Spirit supplies us here with weapons, by which we may repel this temptation of Satan, "What? Thou seest that God is angry with thee; nor is it of any use to thee to attempt to come to him, for every access is shut up." This is what Satan suggests to us, when we are sensible of our sins. What is to be done? The Prophet here propounds a remedy, *We shall know;* "Though now we are sunk in thick darkness, though there never shines on us, no, not even a spark of light, yet we shall know (as Isaiah says, 'I will hope in the Lord, who hides his face from Jacob') [29] that this is the true exercise of our faith, when we lift up our eyes to the light which seems to be extinguished, and

[28] The last clause, word for word, is the following: — "And he shall come as a shower to us, as the crop-rain, irrigating the earth." The reference here seems to be only to "the crop-rain," the rain which ripened the crop. The only difficulty is about the word rendered "irrigating." Its leading idea is, to guide, direct, regulate: and doubtless what regulates and determines the produce of the earth is the rain. It may be rendered "regulating," that is, the fruitfulness of the earth. There is no other construction that suits the place, without supposing something left out, as the preposition {{ל before ``earth.'' ``Which watereth the earth,'' is the version of Newcome. ---Ed.

[29] Isaiah 8:17. — fj.

when in the darkness of death we yet continue to promise to ourselves life, as we are here taught: We shall then *know;* further, *We shall pursue after the knowledge of Jehovah;* though God withdraws his face, and, as it were designedly, doubles the darkness, and all knowledge of his grace be, as it were, extinct, we shall yet *pursue after this knowledge;* that is, no obstacle shall keep us from striving, and our efforts will at length make their way to that grace which seems to be wholly excluded from us."

Some give this rendering, *We shall know, and shall pursue on to know Jehovah,* and explain the passage thus, — that the Israelites had derived no such benefit from the law of Moses, but that they still expected the fuller doctrine, which Christ brought at his coming. They then think that this is a prophecy respecting that doctrine, which is now by the Gospel set forth to us in its full brightness, because God has manifested himself in his Son as in a living image. But this is too refined an exposition; and it is enough for us to keep close to the design of the Prophet. He indeed introduces the godly thus speaking for this reason — because there was need of great and strong effort, that they might rise up to the hope of salvation; for it was not to be the exile of one day, but of seventy years. When therefore so heavy a trial awaited the godly, the Prophet here wished to prepare them for the laborious warfare: *We shall then know, and follow on to know Jehovah*

Then he says, *As the morning shall come to us his going forth,* — a similitude the most appropriate; for here the faithful call to mind the continued succession of days and nights. No wonder that God bids us to hope for his grace, the sight of which is yet hid from us; for except we had learnt by long experience, who could hope for sudden light when the darkness of night prevails? Should we not think that the earth is wholly deprived of light? But seeing that the dawn suddenly shines, and puts an end to the darkness of night, and dispels it, what wonder is it that the Lord should shine forth beyond our expectation? *His going forth* then *shall be like the morning.*

He here calls a new manifestation the going forth of God, that is, when God shows that he regards his people with favor, when he shows that he is mindful of the covenant which he made with Abraham; for as long as the people were exiled from their country, God seemed not, as we have said, to look on them any more; nay, the judgment of the flesh only suggested this, that God was far distant from his people. He then calls it the going forth of God, when God should show himself propitious to the captives, and should wholly restore them; then *the going forth of God shall come, and shall be like the morning* We now then see that he confirms them by the order of nature, as Paul does, when he chides the unbelief of those to whom a future resurrection seemed incredible, because it surpasses the thoughts of the flesh; "O fool!" he says, "does thou not see that what thou sowest first decays and then germinates? God now sets before thee in a decaying seed an emblem of the future resurrection." So also in this place, since light daily rises to us, and the morning shines after the darkness of night, what then will not the

Lord effect by himself, who works so powerfully by material things? When he will put forth his full power, what, think we, will he do? Will he not much more surpass all the thoughts of our flesh? We now then see why this similitude was added.

He afterwards describes to us the effect of this manifestation, *He shall come,* he says, *as the rain to us, as the late rain, a rain to the earth* This comparison shows, that as soon as God will deign to look on his people, his countenance will be like the rain, which irrigates the earth. When the earth is dry after long heat and long drought, it seems to be incapable of producing fruit; but rain restores to it its moisture and vigor. Thus then the Prophet, in the person of the faithful, does here strengthen the hope of a full restoration. *He shall come to us as the rain, as the late rain*

The Hebrews call the late rain {מלקום}, *melakush*, by which the corn was ripened. And it seems that the Prophet meant the vernal rain by the word {גשם}, *geshem,* But the sense is clearly this, that though the Israelites had become so dry that they had no longer any vigor, there would yet be no less virtue in God's grace than in the rain, which fructifies the earth when it seems to be barren. But when at the end he adds, *a rain to the earth,* I doubt not but that he meant seasonable rain, which is pleasant and acceptable to the earth, or which the earth really wants; for a violent shower cannot be called properly a rain to the earth, because it is destructive and hurtful. It follows —

Hosea 6:4

4. O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away.

4. Quid faciam tibi Ephraim? quid faciam tibi Jehudah? Nam bonitas vestra est quasi ros matutinus, quasi nebula mane transiens.

Some so expound this passage as that God would not once irrigate his people, but would continue this favor; as though he said, "He is deceived, who thinks that the redemption, which I bid you to hope from me, will be momentary, for I will, by a continued progress, lead my people to a full fruition of salvation." But this sense is altogether foreign. The Prophet then, no doubt, introduces God here as speaking thus, "What shall I do to you? because ye cannot receive my favor, so great is your depravity." The context seems indeed to be in this way broken off; but we must remember this canon, that whenever the Prophets make known the grace of God, they at the same time add an exception, lest hypocrites falsely apply to themselves what is offered to the faithful alone. The Prophets, we know, never threatened ruin to the people, but that they added some promise, lest the faithful should despair, which must have been the case, except some mitigation had been made known to them. Hence the Prophets do this in common, — they moderate their threatening and severity by adding a hope of God's favor. But at the same time, as hypocrites ever draw to themselves what belongs only

to the faithful, and thus heedlessly deride God, the Prophets add another exception, by which they signify, that God's promise of being gracious and merciful to his people is not to be deemed universal, and as appertaining to all indiscriminately.

I will more fully repeat this again: The Prophets had to do with the whole people; they had to do with the few faithful, for there was a small number of godly people among the Israelites as well as among the Jews. When therefore the Prophets reproved the people, they addressed the whole body: but at the same time, as there was some remnant seed, they mingled, as I have said, consolations, and mingled them, that the elect of God might ever recumb on his mercy, and thus patiently submit to his rod, and continue in his fear, knowing that there is in him a sure salvation. Hence the promises which we see inserted by the Prophets among threats and chidings, ought not to be referred in common to all, or indiscriminately to the people, but only, as we have said, to the faithful, who were then but few in number. This then is the reason why the prophets shook off self-complacencies from the wicked despisers of God, when they added, "Ye ought not to hope any salvation from the promise I set forth to God's children; for God throws not to dogs the bread which he has destined for his children alone." In the same strain we find another Prophet speaking,

'To what end is the day of the Lord to you? It is a day of darkness, and not of light, a day of death, and not of life,' (Amos 5:18.)

For as often as they heard of the covenant which God made with Abraham, that it would not be void, they thus vaunted, "We are now indeed severely treated, but in a little while God will rescue us from our evils; for he is our Father, he has not in vain adopted us, he has not in vain redeemed and chosen our race, we are his peculiar possession and heritage." Thus then the presumptuous flatter themselves; and this indeed they seem to have in common with the faithful; for the faithful also, though in the deepest abyss of death, yet behold the light of life; for by faith, as we have said, they penetrate beyond this world. But at the same time they approach God in real penitence, while the ungodly remain in their perverseness, and vainly flatter themselves, thinking that whatever God promises belongs to them.

Let us now then return to our Prophet. He had said, "In their tribulation they will seek me:" he had afterwards, in the words used by the people, explained how the faithful would turn themselves to God, and what true repentance would bring with it. It now follows, *What shall I do to thee, Ephraim? what shall I do to thee, Judah?* that is, "What shall I do to all of you?" The people was now divided into two kingdoms: the kingdom of Judah had its own name; the ten tribes had, as it has been said, the common name of Israel. Then after the Prophet gave hope of pardon to the children of God, he turns himself to the whole body of the people, which was corrupt, and says, "What shall I do now to you, both Jews and Israelites?" Now God, by these words, intimates that he had tried all remedies, and found

them useless: "What more then," he says, "shall I do to you? Ye are wholly incurable, ye are inexcusable, and altogether past hope; for no means have been omitted by me, by which I could promote your salvation; but I have lost all my labour; as I have effected nothing by punishments and chastisements, as my favor also has had no account among you, what now remains, but that I must wholly cast you away?"

We now then see how varied is the mode of speaking adopted by the Prophets; for they had to do, not with one class of men, but with the children of God, and also with the wicked, who continued obstinately in their vices. Hence then it was, that they changed their language, and so necessarily. Alike is the complaint we read in Isaiah chapter 1, [30] except that there mention is only made of punishments, 'Why should I strike you more? for I have hitherto effected nothing: from the sole of the foot to the top of the head there is no soundness; and yet ye remain like yourselves.' In chapter 5 [31] he speaks of God's favors, 'What could have been done more to my vineyard than what I have done?' In these two places the Prophet shows that the people were so lost, that they could not be brought into a sane mind; for God had in various ways tried to heal them, and their diseases remained incurable.

Let us now return to the words of Hosea, *What shall I do to thee, Ephraim? What shall I do to thee Judah?* "I indeed offer pardon to all, but ye still continue obstinately in your sins; nay, my favor is by you scorned: I do not therefore now contend with you; but declare to you that the door of salvation is closed." Why? "Because I have hitherto in various ways tried in vain to heal you."

He afterwards says that their goodness was like the morning dew, *Your goodness,* he says, is as the dew of the morning." Some take {חסד}, *chesad,* for the kindness which God had exercised towards both the Israelites and the Jews. Then it is, "Your kindness," that is, the mercy which I have hitherto exhibited to you, *is as the morning dew, as the cloud which passes away early in the morning,* that is, "Ye immediately dry up my favor;" and this seems not unsuitable, for we see that the unbelieving by their wickedness absorb the mercy of God, so that it produces no good, as when rain flows over a rock or a stone, while the stone within, on account of its hardness, remains dry. As then the moisture of rain does not penetrate into stones, so also the grace of God is spent in vain and without advantage on the unbelieving.

But the Prophet speaks rather of their goodness, that they made a show of feigned excellency, which vanished like the morning dew; for as soon as the sun rises, it draws the dew upwards, so that it appears no more; the clouds also pass away. The Prophet says that the Jews and the Israelites were like the morning clouds and the dew, because there was in them no solid or inward goodness, but it was only of an evanescent kind; they had,

[30] Isaiah 1:5. — fj.
[31] Isaiah 5:4. — fj.

as they say, only the appearance of goodness.

We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet, that God here complains that he had to do with hypocrites. Faith, we know, is regarded by him; there is nothing that pleases God more than sincerity of heart. We know further, that doctrine is spread in vain, except it be received in a serious manner. Then, as hypocrites transform themselves in various ways, and make a display of some guises of goodness, while they have nothing solid in them, God complains that he loses all his labour: and he says at length that he will no longer spend labour in vain on hypocritical men, who have nothing but falsehood and dissimulation; and this is what he means, when he intimates that he should do nothing more to the Israelites and the Jews.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we do not, by due gratitude, respond to thy favors, and after having tasted of thy mercy, have willingly sought ruin to ourselves, — O grant, that we, being renewed by thy Spirit, may not only remain constant in the fear of thy name, but also advance more and more and be established; that being thus armed with thy invincible power, we may strenuously fight against all the wiles and assaults of Satan, and thus pursue our warfare to the end, — and that being thus sustained by thy mercy, we may ever aspire to that life which is hid for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Seventeenth

Hosea 6:5

5. Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth: and thy judgments are as the light that goeth forth.

5. Propterea secui (vel, excidi) in Prophetis meis, occidi eos in verbis oris mei, et judicia tua [32] lux quae egreditur.

God shows here, by his Prophet, that he was constrained by urgent necessity to deal sharply and roughly with the people. Nothing, we know, is more pleasing to God than to treat us kindly; for there is not found a father in the world who cherishes his children as tenderly: but we, being perverse, suffer him not to follow the inclination of his nature. He is therefore constrained to put on, as it were, a new character, and to chide us severely, according to the way in which he here says, he had treated the Israelites; *I have cut them, he says, by my prophets, and killed them by the words of my mouth*

Some render the words otherwise, as though God had killed the Prophets, meaning thereby the impostors, who corrupted the pure worship of God by their errors. But this view seems not to me in any way suitable; and we know that it was a common mode of speaking among the Hebrews, to express the same thing in two ways. So the Prophet speaks here, *I have cut* or *hewed them by my Prophets, I have killed them by the cords of my mouth.* In the

[32] There is no authority, as Horsley says, for "my," instead of "thy judgments," in our version; for there as no readings in the Hebrew MSS, which favors the change. The Bishop refers to Calvin, and expressly approves of his exposition of this passage. His own version is the following: — "And the precepts given thee were as the onward-going light."

second clause he repeats, I doubt not, what we have already briefly explained, namely, that God had cut or hewed them by his Prophets.

But we must see for what purpose God declares here that he had commanded his Prophets to treat the people roughly. Hypocrites we indeed know, however much in various ways they mock God, are yet tender, and cannot bear any rebuke. Their sins are gross, except when they disguise themselves; but at the same time, when God begins to reprove, they expostulate and say, "What does this mean? God everywhere declares that he is kind and merciful; but he fulminates now against us: this seems not consistent with his nature." Thus then hypocrites would have God to be their batterer. He now answers, that he had been constrained, not only for a just cause, but also necessarily, to kill them, and to make his word by the Prophets like a hammer or an ax. This is the reason, he says, why my Prophets have not endeavored mildly and gently to allure the people. For God kindly and sweetly draws or invites to himself those whom he sees to be teachable; but when he sees so great a perverseness in men, that he cannot bend them by his goodness, he then begins, as we have said, to put on a new character. We now then under stand God's design: that hypocrites might not complain that they had been otherwise treated than what is consistent with God's nature, the Prophet here answers in God's name, "Ye have forced me to this severity; for there was need of a hard wedge, as they say, for a hard knot: *I have* therefore *hewed you by my Prophets, I have hewed you by the words of my mouth;* that is, I have used my word as an ax: for ye were like knotty and tough wood; it was therefore necessary that my word should be to you like an ax: and I have killed you by the words of my mouth; that is my word has not been sweet food to you, as it is wont to be to meek men; but it has been like a two-edged sword; it was therefore necessary to slay you, as ye would not bear me to be a Father to you."

It then follows *Thy judgments are light that goes forth* Some understand by "judgments" prosperity as if God were here reproaching the Israelites, that it was not his fault that he did not win them: "I have not neglected to treat you kindly, and under my protection to defend you; but ye are ungrateful." But this is a strained exposition. The greater part of interpreters explain the passage thus, "That thy judgments might be a light going forth." But I do not see why we should change any thing in the Prophet's words. God then simply intimates here, that he had made known to the Israelites the rule of a religious and holy life, so that they could not pretend ignorance; for the Hebrews often understand "judgments" in the sense of rectitude. I refer this to the instruction given them: *Thy judgments* then, that is, the way of living religiously, was like light; which means this, "I have so warned you, that you have sinned knowingly and willfully. Hence, that you have been so disobedient to me, must be imputed to your perverseness; for when ye were pliant, I certainly did not conceal from you what was right: for as the sun daily shines on the earth, so my teaching, has been to you as the light, to

show to you the way of salvation; but it has been with no profit." We now then understand what the Prophet meant by these words. It follows —

Hosea 6:6-7

6. For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

6. Quia misericordiam volo (vel, quia humanitas placet mihi) et non sacrificuim; et cognitio Dei (placet mihi, subaudiendum est) prae holocaustis.

7. But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.

7. Et ipsi tanquam homines ransgressi sunt pactum; [33] illic perfide egerunt in me (vel, Tanquam hominis pactum transgressi sunt, ut postea videbimus.)

God in this place declares that he desires mercy, and not sacrifices; and he does so to prevent an objections and to anticipate all frivolous pretenses. There is never wanting to hypocrites, we well know, a cover for themselves; and so great is their assurance, that they hesitate not sometimes to contend with God. It is indeed their common practice to maintain that they worship God, provided they offer sacrifices to him, provided they toil in ceremonies, and accumulate many rites. They think then that God is made bound to them, and that they have fully performed their duty. This evil has been common in all ages. The Prophet therefore anticipates this evasion, and says, *Mercy I desire, and not sacrifice;* as though he said, "I know what you are ready to allege, and that you will say, that you offer sacrifices to me, that you perform all the ceremonies; but this excuse is deemed by me frivolous and of no moment." Why? "Because I desire not sacrifices, but mercy and faith." We now understand the main object of this verse.

It is a remarkable passage; the Son of God has twice quoted it. The Pharisees reproached him for his intercourse with men of bad and abandoned life, and he said to them in Matthew [34] 'Mercy I desire, and not sacrifice:' he shows, by this defense, that God is not worshipped by external ceremonies, but when men forgive and bear with one another, and are not above measure rigid. Again, in the Matthew 12, [35] when the Pharisees blamed the disciples for gathering ears of corn, he said 'But rather go and learn what this is, Mercy I desire, and not sacrifice.' Inasmuch as they were so severe against his disciples, Christ shows that those who make holiness to consist in ceremonies are foolish worshipers of God; and that they also blamed their brethren without a cause, and made a crime of what was not in itself sinful, and what could be easily defended by any wise and calm expounder.

But that we may more fully understand this sentence of the Prophet, it must be observed, firsts that the outward worship of God, and all legal ceremonies, are included under the name of sacrifice and burnt-offerings.

[33] "But they, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant." — Newcome. So Horsley renders it, and also Grotius; but the Septuagint, Pagninus, and others, favor our version, and that of Calvin. —Ed.

[34] Matthew 9:13. — fj.

[35] Matthew 12:7. — fj.

These words then comprise a part for the whole. The same may be said of the word {חסד}, *chesad*, which means, mercy or kindness; for the Prophet here, no doubt, sets faith or piety towards God, and love towards neighbors, in opposition to all external ceremonies. "I desire," he says, "mercy;" or, "mercy pleases me more than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God pleases me more than burnt-offerings." The knowledge of God here is doubtless to be taken for faith or piety, because hypocrites suppose that God is rightly worshipped when they use many ceremonies. The Prophet derides all such pomp and empty show, and says, that the worshipping of God is far different; it being only done when he is known. The chief point is, that God desires to be worshipped otherwise than sensual men dream; for they only display their rites, and neglect the spiritual worship of God, which stands in faith and love.

These two clauses ought then to be read conjointly — that kindness pleases God — and that faith pleases God. Faith by itself cannot please God, since it cannot even exist without love to our neighbor; and then, human kindness is not sufficient; for were any one to abstain from doing any injury, and from hurting his brethren in any thing, he might be still a profane man, and a despiser of God; and certainly his kindness would be then of no avail to him. We hence see that these two sentences cannot be separated, and that what the Prophet says is equally the same as if he had connected piety with love. The meaning is, that God values faith and kindness much more than sacrifices and all ceremonies. But when the Prophet says that sacrifice does not please God, he speaks, no doubt, comparatively; for God does not positively repudiate sacrifices enjoined in his own law; but he prefers faith and love to them; as we more clearly learn from the particle {מ}, *mem*, when he says, {מעולות}, *meoulut*, than burnt-offerings." It then appears that God is not inconsistent with himself, as though he rejected sacrifices which he himself had appointed; but that he condemns the preposterous abuse of them, in which hypocrites gloried.

And here two things are to be noticed: God requires not external ceremonies, as if they availed any thing of themselves, but for a different end. Faith of itself pleases God, as also does love; for they are, as they say, of the class of good works: but sacrifices are to be regarded differently; for to kill an ox, or a calf, or a lamb, what is it but to do what the butcher does in his shambles? God then cannot be delighted with the slaughter of beasts; hence sacrifices, as we have said, are of themselves of no account. Faith and love are different. Hence the Lord says, in Jeremiah,

'Have I commanded your fathers, when I brought them out of Egypt,
to offer sacrifices to me?'
[Jeremiah 7:22]

no such thing; 'I never commanded them,' he says, 'but only to hear my voice.' But what does the law in great measure contain except commands about ceremonies? The answer to this is easy, and that is, that sacrifices

never pleased God through their own or intrinsic value, as if they had any worth in them. What then? Even this, that faith and piety are approved, and have ever been the legitimate spiritual worship of God. This is one thing. It is further to be noticed, that when the Prophets reprove hypocrites, they regard what is suitable to them, and do not specifically explain the matters which they handle. Isaiah says in one place, 'He who kills an ox does the same as if he had killed a dog,' and a dog was the highest abomination;

'nay, they who offer sacrifices do the same
as if they had killed men,' (Isaiah 66:3.)

What! to compare sacrifices with murders! This seems very strange; but the Prophet directed his discourse to the ungodly, who then abused the whole outward worship prescribed by the law: no wonder then that he thus spake of sacrifices. In the same manner also ought many other passages to be explained, which frequently occur in the Prophets. We now then see that God does not simply reject sacrifices, as far as he has enjoined them, but only condemns the abuse of them. And hence what I have already said ought to be remembered, that the Prophet here sets external rites in opposition to piety and faith, because hypocrites tear asunder things which are, as it were, inseparable: it is an impious divorce, when any one only obtrudes ceremonies on God, while he himself is void of piety. But as this disease commonly prevails among men, the Prophet adds a contrast between this fictitious worship and true religion. It is also worthy of being observed, that he calls faith the knowledge of God. We then see that faith is not some cold and empty imagination, but that it extends much farther; for it is then that we have faith, when the will of God is made known to us, and we embrace it, so that we worship him as our Father. Hence the knowledge of God is required as necessary to faith. The Papists then talk very childishly about implicit faith: when a man understands nothing, and has not even the least acquaintance with God, they yet say that he is endued with implicit faith. This is a romance more than foolish; for where there is no knowledge of God, there is no religion, piety is extinct and faith is destroyed, as it appears evident from this passage.

God then subjoins a complaint, — *But they like men have transgressed the covenant; there have they dealt treacherously against me.* Here God shows that the Israelites boasted in vain of their sacrifices and of all the pomps of their external worship, for God did not regard these external things, but only wished to exercise the faithful in spiritual worship. Then the import of the whole is this, "My design was, when I appointed the sacrifices and the whole legal worship, to lead you so to myself, that there might be nothing carnal or earthly in your sacrificing; but ye have corrupted the whole law; you have been perverse interpreters; for sacrifices have been nothing else among you but mockery as if it were a satisfaction to me to have an ox or a ram killed. You have then transgressed my covenant; and it is nothing that the people say to me, that they have diligently performed the outward ceremonies, for

such a worship is not in the least valued by me."

And he proceeds still farther and says, *There have they dealt treacherously against me.* He had said before, 'They have transgressed the covenant;' as though he said, "If they wished to keep my covenant, this was the first thing, — to worship me spiritually, even in faith and love; but they, having despised true worship, laid hold only on what was frivolous: they have therefore violated my covenant." But now he adds, that "there" appeared their perfidy; yea, that they were convicted of violating their faith, and shown to be covenant-breakers, by this, — that they abused the sacred marks by which God had sanctioned his covenant, to cover their own perfidy. There is then great importance in the adverb {שם}, *shim*, as if he had said, "In *that* particular you have acted perfidiously:" for the Prophet means, that when hypocrites especially raise their crests, they are convicted of falsehood and perjury. But how? Because they set forth their own ceremonies, as we see them introduced as speaking thus in Isaiah 58, [36] 'Wherefore have we fasted, and thou hast not regarded?' In this passage they accuse God of too much rigor, because they lost all their toil when they worshipped so laboriously, "We have then in vain spent labour and so diligently worshipped him." God answers: 'Who has required this at your hands?' So also in this place the Prophet says, and more sharply, *There have they dealt treacherously against me*: that is, "They think that my mouth would be stopped by this defense only, when they brought forward their sacrifices, and, after their manner, made a great display, as if they were the best observers of religion; but I will show that in this very thing they are covenant-breakers." How? "Because there is no falsehood worse than to turn the truth of God into a lie, and to adulterate his pure doctrine." And this is what all hypocrites do, when they thus turn sacraments into gross abuses and false worship, when they build temples, when they imagine that God is rightly worshipped whenever an ox or a ram is offered. Since then hypocrites so grossly mock God and turn away sacrifices from Christ, they turn away from the doctrine of repentance and faith; in a word, they regard God only as a dead idol. When then they thus deprave the whole worship of God and adulterate it, when they so impiously corrupt the word of God and pervert his institutions, are they not covenant-breakers? *There then they perfidiously acted against me.* This ought to be carefully observed, because it has not been noticed by interpreters.

Some thus render the word {אדם}, *adam*, — "As the covenant of man have they transgressed it," transferring it to the genitive case, "And they have transgressed the covenants as if it was that of man;" that is, as if they had to do with a mortal man, so have they despised and violated my holy covenant; and this exposition is not very unsuitable, except that it somewhat changes the construction; for in this case the Prophet ought to have said, "They have transgressed the covenant as that of a man;" but he says, 'They as a

[36] Isaiah 58:3. — fj.

man,' etc. [37] But this rendering is far from being that of the words as they are, 'They as men have transgressed the covenant.' I therefore interpret the words more simply, as meaning, that they showed themselves to be men in violating the covenant.

And there is here an implied contrast or comparison between God and the Israelites; as though he said, "I have in good faith made a covenant with them, when I instituted a fixed worship; but they have been men towards me; there has been in them nothing but levity and inconstancy." God then shows that there had not been a mutual concord between him and the Israelites, as men never respond to God; for he sincerely calls them to himself, but they act unfaithfully, or when they have given some proof of obedience, they soon turn back again, or despise and openly reject the offered instruction. We then see in what sense the Prophet says that they had transgressed the covenant of God as men.

Others explain the words thus, "They have transgressed as Adam the covenant." But the word, Adam, we know, is taken indefinitely for men. This exposition is frigid and diluted, "They have transgressed as Adam the covenant;" that is, they have followed or imitated the example of their father Adam, who had immediately at the beginning transgressed God's commandment. I do not stop to refute this comment; for we see that it is in itself vapid. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 6:8

8. Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity, and is polluted with blood.

8. Galaad civitas operantium iniquitatem, astuta a sanguine (ad verbum ita est, vel,retenta a sanguine; alii vertunt, supplantata a sanguine; alii, inquinata a sanguine.)

I shall first speak of the subject, and then something shall be added in its place of the words. The Prophet here notices, no doubt, something special against Gilead, which through the imperfection of history is now to us obscure. But in the first place, we must remember, that Gilead was one of the cities of refuge; and the Levites possessed these cities, which were destined for fugitives. If any one killed a man by chance, that the relatives might not take revenge, the Lord provided that he should flee to one of these cities appointed for his safety. He was there safe among the Levites: and the Levites received him under their protection, the matter being previously tried; for a legal hearing of the cause must have preceded as to whether he who had killed a man was innocent. We must then first remember that this city was occupied by the Levites and the priests; and they ought to have been examples to all others; for as Christ calls his disciples the light of the world, so the Lord had chosen the priests for this purpose, that they might carry a torch before all the people. Since then the highest sanctity ought to

[37] The words of the original are these, — {{והמה {כאדם} {עברו} .{ברית} The transposition as proposed above is wholly impossible; no such meaning can be made of the words. The translation preferred by Calvin is the only one that can be admitted. The word {אדם} is commonly taken for men or mankind: the literal rendering is, --- ``But they like men have transgressed the covenant.'' ---Ed.

have shone forth in the priests, it was quite monstrous that they were like robbers, and that the holy city, which was as it were the sanctuary of God, became a den of thieves.

It was then for this reason that the Prophet especially inveighs against the city Gilead, and says *Gilead is a city of the workers of iniquity, and is covered with blood* But if Gilead was so corrupt, what must have been the case with the other cities? It is then the same as if the Prophet had said, "Where shall I begin? If I reprove the people indiscriminately, the priests will then think that they are spared, because they are innocent; yea, that they are wholly without blame: nay," he says, "the priests are the most abandoned, they are even the ringleaders of robbers. Since then so great corruptions prevail among the order of priests, in whom the highest sanctity ought to have shone forth, how great must be the licentiousness of the people in all kinds of wickedness? And then what must be said of other cities, since Gilead is so bad, which God has consecrated for a peculiar purpose, that it might be a sort of sanctuary? Since then Gilead is a den of robbers, what must be the other cities?" We now comprehend the meaning of the Prophet.

"Polluted with blood," {מדם} {עקובה}, *okube medam:* {עקב}, *okob,* in Hebrew, means "to deceive," and also, "to hold" or "retain." {עקב}, *okob,* is the sole of the foot; hence {עקב}, *okob,* signifies "to supplant." And there is no doubt but that "to deceive" is its meaning metaphorically. I will now come to the meaning of the Prophet; he says that the city was {מדם} {עקובה}, *okube, medan*; some say, "deceptive in blood," because they did not openly kill men, but by lying in wait for them; and hence they elicit this sense. But I approve more of what they hold who say, that the city was "full of blood;" not that such is the strict sense of the Hebrew word; but we may properly render it, "occupied by blood." Why so? Because {עקב}, *okob*, as I have said, means sometimes to hold, to stay, and to hinder. We may then properly and fitly say, that Gilead was "occupied" or "possessed by blood." But here follows a clearer and a fuller explanation of this sentence —

Hosea 6:9

9. And as troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent: for they commit lewdness.

9. Et sicut expectant latrones hominum, societas sacerdotum (vel, factio;) in via trucidant consensu, quia cogitationem (aut, scelus) perficiunt.

The Prophet pursues more at large what he had briefly touched; for he does, not now confine himself to the common people, but directs his accusation against the sacerdotal order. "See," he says, "the priests conspire among themselves like robbers, that they may slay wretched men, who may meet them in the way." It is indeed certain that the Prophet speaks not here of open murders; for it is not credible that the priests had proceeded into so great a licentiousness, that Gilead had become a slaughter-house. But the Prophets, we know, are thus wont to speak, whenever they upbraid men with being sanguinary and cruel; they compare them to robbers, and that

justly. Hence he says, *The faction of the priests kill men in the way,* as if they were robbers conspiring together. And then he shows that the priests were so void of every thing like the fear of God, that they perpetrated every kind of cruelty as if they were wholly given to robberies. This is the meaning.

The word {שכמה}, *shicame,* is no doubt taken by the Prophet for "consent." What is meant by {שכם}, *shicam,* is properly the "shoulder;" but it is metaphorically changed into the sense which I have mentioned; as it is in the Zephaniah 3 [38] 'They shall serve the Lord {שכם} {אחד}, *shicam ached*, with one shoulder;' that is, "with one consent." So also in this place, the priests conspire together {שכמה}, *shicame*, with consent." For they who think that the name of a place is intended are much mistaken.

Now in the last clause of the verse it is made evident why the Prophet had said that the priests were like robbers, 'because,' he says, 'they do the thought,' or 'wickedness.' The verb to {זמם}, *zamem* signifies "to think," as it has been already said: hence {זמה}, *zame* is "thought" in general; but is often taken by the Hebrews in a bad sense, for a "bad design," or "wicked trick:" *They do* then *their conceived wickedness* We hence learn that they were not open robbers, and publicly infamous in the sight of men, but that they were robbers before God, because the city was full of wicked devices, which were there concocted; and since they executed their schemes, it is justly said of them by the Prophet, that they imitated the licentiousness of robbers. Let us now go on —

Hosea 6:10-11

10. I have seen an horrible thing in the house of Israel: there is the whoredom of Ephraim, Israel is defiled.

10. In domo Israel vidi flagitium, illic scortatio Ephraim, pollutus est Israel.

11. Also, O Judah, he hath set an harvest for thee, when I returned the captivity of my people.

11. Etiam Jehudah posuit messem (vel, plantam) tibi, dum ego reduco captivitatem populi mei (vel, in reducendo me, ad verbum, captivitatem populi mei.)

Here God declares that he is the fit judge to take cognizance of the vices of Israel; and this he does, that he might cut off the handle of vain excuses, which hypocrites often adduce when they are reproved. Who indeed can at this day persuade the Papists that all their worship is a filthy abomination, a mere profanation? We see how furiously they rise up as soon as any one by a whisper dares to touch their superstitions. Whence this? Because they wish their own will to stand for reason. Why? Good intention, they say, is the judge; as if this good intention were, forsooth, the queen, who ought to rule in heaven and earth, and God were now excluded from all his rights. This fury and this madness, even at this day, possess the Papists; and no wonder, for Satan dementates men, when he leads them to corrupt and degenerated

[38] Zephaniah 3:9. — fj.

forms of worship, and all hypocrites have been thus inebriated from the beginning. This then is the reason why the Prophet now says in the person of God, *I have seen,* or *do see*, *infamy in the kingdom of Israel.* God does here by one word lay prostrate whatever men may set up for themselves, and shows that there remains no more defense for what he declares he does not approve, however much men may value and applaud it. "What! you think this to be my worship; and in your imagination, this is most holy religion, this is the way of salvation, this is extraordinary sanctity; but I on the contrary declare, that it is profanation, that it is turpitude, that it is infamy. Go now," he says, "pass elsewhere your fopperies, with me they are of no value."

We now understand the meaning of the Prophet, when he says*, In the house of Israel have I seen infamy:* and by the house of Israel the Prophet means the whole kingdom of the ten tribes. How so? "Because there is the fornication of Ephraim"; that is, there idolatry reigns, which Jeroboam introduced, and which the other kings of Israel followed.

Thus we see that the Prophet spared neither the king, nor his counselors, nor the princes of the kingdom; and he did not spare before the priests. And this magnanimity becomes all God's servants, so that they cast down every height that rises up against the word of the Lord; as it was said to Ezekiel,

Chide mountains and reprove hills,' (Ezekiel 6:2, 36:1.)

An example of this the Prophet sets before us, when he compares priests to robbers, and then compares royal temples to a brothel. Jeroboam had built a temple in which he thought that God would be in the best manner worshipped; but this, says the Prophet, is a brothel, this is filthy fornication.

Then he adds, *Judah also has set a plantation for thee* That I may finish the chapter, I will briefly notice this verse. Interpreters render it thus, "Also Judah, thou hast set for thyself an harvest:" but the verb, as it is evident, is in the third person; it cannot then be rendered otherwise than, 'Also Judah has set.' They who render it in the second person, "Thou hast set for thyself an harvest," elicit this sense, "Thou also Judah, whom I have chosen for myself, hast set for thyself an harvest, that is, thou hast prepared a miserable harvest for thyself; for thou sowest ungodliness, whose fruit thou shalt hereafter gather:" but this is strained. Now since the word {קצִיר}, *kotsir,* signifies in Hebrew not only "harvest," but also "a plant," it may properly be so taken in this place, *Also Judah, while I was returning the captivity of my people, did set for himself a plant;* that is, he propagated his own impieties. God indeed addresses here the Israelites, and complains of Judah; for the Jews, we know, were retained by the Lord, when the ten tribes separated. This defection of the ten tribes did not cause religion to fail wholly among the whole people. There remained the pure worship of God, at least as to the outward form, at Jerusalem. The Lord then complains not here of Judah without a cause. He had said before, 'Judah shall be saved by his God;' but now he says, 'Judah also has set for himself a plant;' that

is, “superstitions have been long and widely enough springing up among all Israel, they have spread through all the corners of the land: and now Judah also,” he says, “is planting his own shoots, for he draws the Israelites to himself;” there is therefore a new propagation, and this is done, *While I am returning the captivity of my people;* that is, “while I am seeking to restore the scattering of my people.”

In a word, God shows here that there was no part any longer whole. When one undertakes the cure of a diseased body, and when he sees at least some parts whole, he has some hope of applying a remedy; but when not even a finger remains sound, what can the physician do? So also the Lord says in this place, “There was at least some hope of Judah, for some form of my worship remained there, and the purer teaching of the law continued; but now Judah propagates superstitions for Israel; observing that the whole land of Israel is full of superstitions, he takes from thence shoots and slips, and corrupts the remaining portion of the land, which has hitherto remained sacred to me.” We now perceive, as I think, the genuine meaning of the Prophet.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are prone to every kind of wickedness, and are so easily led away to imitate it, when there is any excuse for going astray and any opportunity is offered, — O grant, that being strengthened by the help of thy Spirit, we may continue in purity of faith, and that what we have learnt concerning thee, that thou art a Spirit, may so profit us, that we may worship thee in spirit and with a sincere heart, and never turn aside after the corruptions of the world, nor think that we can deceive thee; but may we so devote our souls and bodies to thee, that our life may in every part of it testify, that we are a pure and holy sacrifice to thee in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Hosea 7

Chapter 7

Lecture Eighteenth

Hosea 7:1

1. When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria: for they commit falsehood; and the thief cometh in, and the troop of robbers spoileth without.

1. Dum medeor Israel, tunc retecta fuit iniquitas Ephraim et malitiae Samariae, quia gesserunt se mendaciter (vel, fallaciter; ad verbum, fecerunt fellaciam;) et fur ingressus est, spoliavit praedo foris.

God, that he might show how corrupt was the state of all the people of Israel, compares himself here to a physician, who, while he wishes to try remedies, acknowledges that there are hid more grievous diseases; which is often the case. When a sick person sends for a physician, his disease will be soon discovered; but it may be that he has for many years labored under other hidden complaints, which do not immediately come to the knowledge of the physician. He may indeed think that the symptoms of the disease are those which proceed from a source more hidden; but on the third or fourth days after having tried some remedies he then knows that there is some hidden malady. God then says, that by applying remedies he had found out how corrupt Israel was, *While I was healing my people,* he says, *then I knew what was the iniquity of Samaria and of all Ephraim.*

By Samaria he means the principal part of the kingdom; for that city, as it is well known, was the capital and the chief seat of government. The Prophet therefore says, that the iniquities of Samaria were then discovered to be, not common, but inveterate diseases. This is the meaning. We now see what God had in view; for the people might deceive themselves, as it often happens, and say, "We are not indeed wholly free from every vice; but

God ought not however to punish us so severely, for what nation is there under the sun which does not labour under the common diseases?" But the Prophet here answers, that the people of Israel were so corrupt, that light remedies would not do for them. God then here undertakes the office of a physician, and says, "I have hitherto wished to heal Israel, and this was my design, when I hewed them by my Prophets, and employed my word as a sword; and afterwards when I added chastisements; but now I have found that their wickedness is greater than can be corrected by such remedies." *The iniquity of Ephraim* then *has been discovered*, he says, *and then I perceived the vices of Samaria*

Now this place teaches, that though the vices of men do not immediately appear, yet they who deceive themselves, and disguise themselves to others, gain nothing, nor are they made free before God, and their fault is not lessened, nor are they absolved from guilt; for at last their hidden vices will come to light: and this especially happens, when the Lord performs the office of a physician towards them; for we see that men then cast out their bitterness, when the Lord seeks to heal their corruptions. Under the papacy, even those who are the worst conceal their own vices. How so? Because God does not try them; there is no teaching that cauterizes or that draws blood. As then the Papists rest quietly in their own dregs, their perverseness does not appear. But in other places, where God puts forth the power of his word, and where he speaks effectually by his servants, there men show what great impiety was before hid in them; for in full rage they rise up against God, and they cannot bear any admonition. As soon then as God begins to do the office of a physician, men then discover their diseases. And this is the reason why the world so much shun the light of heavenly doctrine; for he who does evil hates the light, (John 3:20.) We may also observe the same as to chastisements. When God indulges the wicked, they then with the mouth at least bless him; but when he begins to punish their sins they clamour against him and are angry, and at length show how much fury was before hid in their hearts. We now see what the Prophet here lays to the charge of the people of Israel. It may also be observed at this day through the whole world, that the curing of diseases discovers evils which were before unknown.

But we have said, and this ought to be borne in mind, that Ephraim is here expressly named by the Prophet, and also the city, Samaria, because he wished to intimate that their diseases were inveterate, existing not only in the extreme members, but deeply fixed in the head and bowels, and occupying the vital parts. It then follows, *Because they have acted mendaciously,* or, done falsely. The Prophet signifies by this expression, that there was nothing sound in the whole people, because they were addicted to their own depravities. By the word {שקר}, *shikor*, he means every kind of falseness, that is, that men were thoroughly imbued with depraved lusts, and that there was now remaining in them nothing sound or whole. This then is the main point, that the wickedness of the people was discovered, and that it

could not be cured by moderate severity, because it had penetrated into the very bowels and spread over the whole body.

What follows interpreters are wont to regard as the punishment which God had already inflicted. The Prophet says *The thief has entered in, and the robber has plundered without.* They therefore think that this is to be referred to the manner in which God had already begun by punishment to recall the people to a sound mind; as though he said, "You have been pillaged by thieves as well as harassed by robbers." But I rather think that the Prophet here pursues the same subject, and shows that the people were inwardly and outwardly so infected with vices, that there was now no whole part; and that by mentioning a part for the whole, he here designates every kind of evil, for he specifies two kinds which may stand for all things in general. He therefore says, *The thief has entered in,* that is, stealthily, and does mischief insidiously, or even openly like robbers, who use open violence; which means, that impiety so prevailed, either by frauds or by open war, that they were in every way corrupt. But when he says, that the thief had entered in, he means, that many of the people were like foxes, who craftily do mischief; and when he says, that the robber had plundered abroad, he means that others, like lions, seized openly and without shame on what belonged to others, and thus by open force stripped and plundered the miserable and the poor.

We now apprehend the meaning of the Prophet. Having said that the Israelites and the citizens of Samaria had conducted themselves so deceitfully, he now, by specifying two things, shows how they had departed from all uprightness, and prostituted themselves to every kind of wickedness; because where violence reigned, there also frauds and all kinds of evil reigned. The thief then had entered in, and the robber plundered abroad; that is, they secretly circumvented their neighbors, and also went forth like robbers openly and without any shame. It then follows —

Hosea 7:2

2. And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about; they are before my face.

2. Et non sixerunt in corde suo, omnis malitiae eorum recordatus sum (hoc est, quod recordatus sim omnis malitiae ipsorum:) nunc circumdederunt ipsos facinora eorum, in conspectu meo sunt.

The Prophet shows here that the Israelites had advanced to the highest summit of all wickedness; for they thought that no account was ever to be given by them to God. Hence arises the contempt of God; that is, when men imagine that he is, as it were, sleeping in heaven, and that he rests from every work. They dare not indeed to deny God, and yet they take from him what especially belongs to his divinity, for they exclude him from the office of being a judge. Hence then it is that men allow themselves so much liberty, because they imagine that they have made a truce with God; yea, they think that they can do any thing with impurity, as if they had made a covenant with death and hell, as Isaiah says, (Isaiah 28:15.) Of this

sottishness then does the Prophet here arraign the Israelites, *They have not said,* he says, *in their heart, that I remember all their wickedness;* that is, "They so audaciously mock me, as though I were not the judge of the world; they consider not that all things are in my sight, and that nothing is hid from me. Since then they suppose me to be like a dead idol, they have no fear, nay, they abandon themselves to every wickedness."

He then adds, *Now their wicked deeds have surrounded them, for they are in my sight;* that is, "Though they promise impunity to themselves, and flatter themselves in their hypocrisy, all their works are yet before me; and thus they surround them;" that is, "They shall at last perceive that they are infolded in their own sins, and that no escape will be open to them." We now understand the object of the Prophet; for after having complained of the stupidity of the people, he now says that they thus flattered themselves with no advantage, because God is not in the meantime blind. Though then they think that a veil is drawn over their sins, they are yet mistaken; for all their sins are in my sight, and this they themselves shall at last find out by experience, because their sins will surround or besiege them.

Let us learn from this place, that nothing ought to be more feared than that Satan should so fascinate us as to make us to think that God rests idly in heaven. There is nothing that can stir us up more to repentance, than when we adorn God with his own power, and be persuaded that he is the judge of the world, and also when we walk as in his sight, and know that our sins cannot come to oblivion, except when he buries them by pardon. This then is what the Prophet teaches in the first part of the verse. Now when we imagine that we have peace with God, and with death and hell, as Isaiah says in the place we have quoted, the prophet teaches that God is yet awake, and that his office cannot be taken from him, for he knows whatever is carried on in this world; and that this will at length be made openly known, when our sins shall surround us, as it is also said in Genesis chapter 4, [39] 'Sin will lie down at thy door.' For we may for a time imagine that we have many escapes or at least hiding-places; but God will at length show that all this is in vain, for he will come upon us, and has no need of forces, procured from this or that quarter; we shall have enemies enough in our own vices, for we shall be besieged by them no otherwise than if God were to arm the whole world against us. Let us go on —

Hosea 7:3

3. They make the king glad with their wickedness, and the princes with their lies.

3. In malitia sua exhilarant regem, et in mendaciis suis principes.

The Prophet now arraigns all the citizens of Samaria, and in their persons the whole people, because they rendered obedience to the king by flattery, and to the princes in wicked things, respecting which their own conscience convicted them. He had already in the fifth chapter mentioned the defection

[39] Genesis 4:7. — fj.

of the people in this respect, that they had obeyed the royal edict. It might indeed have appeared a matter worthy of praise, that the people had quietly embraced what the king commanded. This is the case with many at this day, who bring forward a pretext of this kind. Under the papacy they dare not withdraw themselves from their impious superstitions, and they adduce this excuse, that they ought to obey their princes. But, as I have already said, the Prophet has before condemned this sort of obedience, and now he shows that the defection which then reigned through all Israel, ought not to be ascribed to the king or to few men, but that it was a common evil, which involved all in one and the same guilt, without exception. How so? *By their wickedness,* he says, *they have exhilarated the king, and by their lies the princes;* that is, If they wish to cast the blame on their governors, it will be done in vain; for whence came then such a promptitude? As soon as Jeroboam formed the calves, as soon as he built temples, religion instantly collapsed, and whatever was before pure, degenerated; how was the change so sudden? Even because the people had inwardly concocted their wickedness, which, when an occasion was offered, showed itself; for hypocrisy did lie hid in all, and was then discovered. We now perceive what the Prophet had in view.

And this place ought to be carefully noticed: for it often happens that some vice creeps in, which proceeds from one man or from a few; but when all readily embrace what a few introduce, it is quite evident that they have no living root of piety or of the fear of God. They then who are so prone to adopt vices were before hypocrites; and we daily find this to be the case. When pious men have the government of a city, and act prudently, then the whole people will give some hope that they will fear the Lord; and when any king, influenced by a desire of advancing the glory of God, endeavors to preserve all his subjects in the pure worship of God, then the same feeling of piety will be seen in all: but when an ungodly king succeeds him, the greater part will immediately fall back again; and when a magistrate neglects his duty, the greater portion of the people will break out into open impiety. I wish there were no proofs of these things; but throughout the world the Lord has designed that there should exist examples of them.

This purpose of God ought therefore to be noticed; for he accuses the people of having made themselves too obsequious and pliant. When king Jeroboam set up vicious worship, the people immediately offered themselves as ready to obey: hence impiety became quite open. *They* then *delighted the king by their wickedness, and the princes by their lies;* as though he said, "They cannot transfer the blame to the king and princes. Why? Because they delighted them by their wickedness; that is, they haltered the king by their wickedness and delighted the princes by their lies." It follows —

Hosea 7:4

4. They are all adulterers, as an oven heated by the baker, who ceaseth from raising after he hath kneaded the dough, until it be leavened.

4. Omnes adulteri, sicut fornax incensa a pistore, cessabit ab excitando post conspersionem (vel, mixtionem) farinae, sonec fermentetur.

The Prophet pursues the same subject in this verse: he says that they were all adulterers. This similitude has already been often explained. He speaks not here of common fornication, but calls them adulterers, because they had violated their faith pledged to God, because they gave themselves up to filthy superstitions, and also, because they had wholly corrupted themselves, for faith and sincerity of heart constitute spiritual chastity before God. When men become corrupt in their whole life, and degenerate from the pure worship of God, they are justly deemed adulterers. In this sense does the Prophet now say, that they were all adulterers, and thus he confirms what I have said before, that as to the corruptions which then prevailed, it was not few men who had been drawn into them, but that the whole people were implicated in guilt; for they were *all adulterers* To say that they had been deceived by the king, that they had been forced by authority, that they had been compelled by the tyranny of their princes, would have been vain and frivolous, for *all* of them were *adulterers.*

He afterwards compares them to a furnace or an oven, *They are,* he says, *as a furnace or an oven, heated by the baker, who ceases from stirring up until the meal kneaded is well fermented* The Prophet by this similitude shows more clearly, that the people were not corrupted by some outward impulse, but by their own inclination and propensity of mind; yea, by a mad and furious desire of acting wickedly. He had previously said that they had willfully sinned, when they readily embraced the edict of the king; but now he goes still farther and says that they had been set on fire by an inward sinful instinct, and were like a hot oven. Then he adds that this had not been a sudden impulse, as it sometimes happens; but that it had so continued, that they were confirmed in their wickedness. When he says, that adulterers are like a burning oven, he means, that their defection had not only been voluntary, so that the blame was in themselves; but that they had also ardently seized on the occasion of sinning, and had been heated, as an hot oven. The ungodly often restrain their desires, and suppress them when no occasion is presented, but give vent to them when they have the opportunity of sinning with impunity. So God now declares that the people of Israel had not only been prone to defection, but had also greedily desired it, so that their madness was like a burning flame. [40]

But a third thing follows, and that is, that this fire had not been suddenly lighted up, but had been for a long time gathering strength. Hence he says *As an oven heated by the baker, who ceases,* he says, *from stirring up after the shaking or mixing of the meal, until it be fermented* {לום}, *lush,* means "to besprinkle," *empaster* is what they say here. Some foolishly hold that they were like those who sleep and afterwards awake early in the morning. But

[40] "The sensuality here, is that of which sensuality is the constant scriptural type, the absurd and wicked passion of idolatry" Bp. Horsley

the Prophet had a different thing in view, and that was, that by length of time their wickedness had increased, and, as it were, by degrees. He means, in short, that they had not been under a sudden impulse, like men who often break out through want of thought, and immediately repent; and their lust, which had been in a moment set on fire, in a short time abates. The Prophet says, that the frenzy of the people of Israel had been different; for they had been like an oven, which the baker, after having lighted up, allows to grow quite hot even to the highest degree; for he waits while the dough is becoming well fermented. It was not then the intemperance and lust of a few days; but they made their hearts quite hot, as when a baker heats his oven, and puts in a great quantity of fuel, that after a time it may become heated, while the dough is fermenting.

The word {מעיר}, *meoir*, "from stirring up," is to be taken for {מהעיר}, *maeoir;* for what some say, that the baker rested from the city, that is, to manage public affairs, is frigid. Others render it thus, "He rests from the city," so as not to be a citizen, — to what purpose? There is then no doubt but that the Prophet here pursues his own similitudes which he will again shortly repeat. It follows —

Hosea 7:5

5. In the day of our king the princes have made him sick with bottles of wine; he stretched out his hand with scorners.

5. Dies regis nostri, fecerunt principes aegrotare utre vini; ex tendit manum suam ad illusores.

The Prophet here reproves especially the king and his courtiers. He had spoken of the whole people, and showed that the filth of evils was every where diffused: but he now relates how strangely the king and his courtiers ruled. Hence he says, *The day of our king! the princes have made him sick;* that is, so great has been the intemperance of excess, that the king himself became sick through too much drinking, and extended his hand to mockers. In short, the Prophet means, that the members of government in the kingdom of Israel had become so corrupt, that in the hall or palace of the king there was no regard for decency, and no shame.

By "the day of the king," some understand his birth-day; and we know that it has been a very old custom even for the common people to celebrate their birth-day. Others refer it to the day of coronation, which is more probable. Some take it for the very beginning of his reign, which seems strained. *The day of our king!* that is "Our king is now seated on his throne, he has now undertaken the government of the kingdom; let us then feast plentifully, and glut ourselves with eating and drinking." This sense suits well; but I do not know whether it can bear the name of day; he calls it *the day of the king.* I would then rather adopt their opinion, who explain it as the annual day of coronation: *The day* then of our king. There are yet interpreters, who render the sentence thus, "In the day the princes have made the king sick;" but I make this separation in it, *The day of the king!*

the princes have made him sick.

It was not indeed sinful or blamable to celebrate yearly the memory of the coronation; but then the king ought to have stirred up himself and others to give thanks to God; the goodness of the Lord, in preserving the kingdom safe, ought to have been acknowledged at the end of the year; the king ought also to have asked of God the spirit of wisdom and strength for the future, that he might discharge rightly his office. But the Prophet shows here that there was nothing then in a sound state; for they had turned into gross abuse what was in itself, as I have said, useful. The day then of our king — how is it spent? Does the king humbly supplicate pardon before God, if he has done any thing unworthy of his station, if in any thing he has offended? Does he give thanks that God has hitherto sustained him by his support? Does he prepare himself for the future discharge of his duty? No such thing; but the princes indulge excess, and stimulate their king; yea, they so overcome him with immoderate drinking, that they make him sick. This then, he says, is their way of proceeding; nothing royal now appears in the king's palace, or even worthy of men; for they abandon themselves like beasts to drunkenness, and so great intemperance prevails among them, that they ruin the king himself with a bottle of wine.

Some render this, "a flagon;" {חמת}, *chemet,* means properly a bottle; and we know that wine was then preserved in bottles, as the Orientals do to this day. Then *with a bottle of wine,* with immoderate drinking, they made the king sick.

He then says, that the king *stretched forth his hand to scorners;* that is, forgetting himself, he retained no gravity, but became like a buffoon, and indecently mixed with worthless men. For the Prophet, I doubt not, calls those *scorners,* who, having cast away all shame, indulge in buffoonery and wantonness. He therefore says, that the king held forth his hand to scorners, as a proof of friendship. As he was then the companion of buffoons and worthless men, he had cast away from him everything royal which he ought to have had. This is the meaning. The Prophet, therefore, deplores this corruption, that there was no longer any dignity or decency in the king and his princes, being wholly given, as they were, to excess and drunkenness; yea, they turned sacred days into this abuse, when the king ought to have conducted himself in a manner worthy of the rank of the highest honor: he prostituted himself to every kind of wantonness, and his princes were his leaders and encouragers. [41] This so great a depravity the Prophet now deplores. It follows —

Hosea 7:6

6. For they have made ready their heart like an oven, whiles they lie in wait: their baker sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire.

6. Quoniam appropinquare fecerunt (ad verbum; hoc est, aptarunt) instar

[41] Quasi faces, vel stimuli; — "as it were, firebrands, or goads."

fornacis cor suum in fraudibus suis (vel, insidiis;) tota nocte dormiet pistor ipsorum; mane fornax ardebit quasi ignis flammae (hoc est, ignis projciens flammam.)

Here the Prophet says, that the Israelites did secretly, and by hidden means, prepare their hearts for deeds of evil; and he takes up nearly the same similitude as he did a little while before, though for a different purpose; for he says that they had prepared their hearts secretly, as the baker puts fire in the night in his oven, and then rests, and in the morning the oven is well heated, having attained heat sufficient to bake the bread. The oven becomes hot in the morning, though the baker sleeps. How so? Because an abundance of fuel had been put together, so that it is heated by the morning. Hence nocturnal rest does not prevent the fire from making hot the oven, when it has a sufficient quantity of fuel, when the baker has so filled his oven, that the fire cannot be extinguished, nor be gradually smothered. When the baker has thus set in order an heap of wood, he then securely rests, for the fire can continue until the morning. We now then see the design of the Prophet.

They have prepared, he says, *their hearts insidiously;* that is, though they have not at first made evident their wickedness, they have yet previously prepared their hearts, as the oven is lighted up, or as the furnace is heated before the bread is prepared; nay, there is no need of much bustle, — there is no need of much noise when the baker lights up his oven, for he prepares the wood, and then he goes to rest; and, in the meantime, while he sleeps all the night, the fire is burning. So also they, though all do not perceive their wickedness, they have yet, in the meantime, heated their hearts like an oven; that is, evil deeds have, by degrees and during a long period of time, been conceived by them, before they came forth into open acts of wickedness.

We hence see that the similitude of an oven is set forth here by the Prophet in a sense different from what it had been before; and this ought to be noticed, because interpreters heedlessly pass over this wholly, as if the Prophet meant in both places the same thing. But the meaning, as it is evident, is far different. For he intended only, in the first instance, to reprove the mad lust with which they were burning; but he now speaks of their plots and concealed frauds; that is, that the Israelites before openly showed themselves to be ungodly and wicked, but that they were now wicked before God. How so? Because they were now like an oven lighted up in the night; for as the baker, having closed the door of his house, puts in fire, while none perceive that the furnace or the oven is being heated; so also the people fed and nourished their wickedness before God; and afterwards, in course of time, it broke forth openly, whenever an opportunity was offered.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou hast once shone upon us by thy gospel, — O grant, that we may always be guided by this light, and so guided, that all our lusts may be restrained; and may the power of thy Spirit

extinguish in us every sinful fervor, that we may not grow hot with our own perverse desires, but that all these being subdued, we may gather new fervor daily, that we may breathe after thee more and more: nor let the coldness of our flesh ever take possession of us, but may we continually advance in the way of piety, until at length we come to that blessed rest, to which thou invites us, and which has been obtained for us by the blood of thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Nineteenth

Hosea 7:7

7. They are all hot as an oven, and have devoured their judges; all their kings are fallen: there is none among them that calleth unto me.

7. Omnes calent tanquam clibanus, comederunt judices suos: omne reges eorum ceciderunt; nemo in illis clamat ad me.

The Prophet repeats what he had said before, that the Israelites were carried away by a mad zeal into their own superstitions and wicked practices, and could not be allayed or quieted by any remedies; and he shows at the same time that this malady or intemperance raged in the whole people, lest the vulgar should accuse a few men, as if they were the authors of all the wickedness. He gives proof of their frenzy, because they could not have been hitherto amended by any corrections. *They have eaten,* he says, *their own judges; their kings have fallen; and in the meantime not one of them cries to me* What the Prophet says here I refer to good kings, or to those who were able to uphold an ordinary government among the people. He says that judges as well as kings had fallen; by which words he means, that the Israelites had been deprived of good and wise governors; and this was a sad and miserable disorder to the people; it was the same as if the head were taken from the body. He says, in short, that the body was mangled and mutilated, because the Lord had taken away the kings and judges. We indeed know that kings in continual succession reigned among the Israelites; but we must consider of what kings the Prophet here speaks.

But let us now notice what he says: *Judges have been devoured* Some hold that the people through their wantonness had risen up against their judges, and, as if freed from all laws, had by main force upset all order; but this seems to me strained. The Prophet, I doubt not, means that the judges had been devoured, because the people had through their own fault made, as it were, entirely void the favor of God, as it often happens daily. God indeed so begins to do good, that he intends to continue his benefits to us to the end; but we devour his benefits; for we dry up, as it were, the fountain of his goodness, which would otherwise be exhaustless and perpetually flow to us. As then the goodness of God, which is otherwise inexhaustible, is in a manner dried up to us, when we allow it not to approach us; it is in this sense that the Prophet now complains that judges had been devoured by the Israelites; for through their impiety they had been deprived of this singular kindness of God; and they had consumed it, as rust or some other fault in

brass destroys good fruit. We now comprehend the meaning of this verse.

God first shows that the Israelites were so ardent, that their frenzy could not be corrected or quieted. How so? "I have tried," he says, "whether their disease was healable; for I have taken away their kings and governors, which was no obscure sign of my displeasure: but I have effected nothing." Then it follows, {אלי} {בהם} {קרא} {אין}, *ain kora beem ali, There is no one,* he says, *among them who cries to me* He had said that all were burning with the lust of committing sin; now, accusing their stupidity, he excepts none. We hence see that the whole people were so seized with frenzy, that when chastised by God's hand, they did not yet cry to him. It is indeed certain that the Israelites did cry, but without repentance; and it is usual with hypocrites to howl when God punishes them; but they yet direct not to him their supplications and their groans, for their heart is locked up by obstinacy. Thus then ought this clause to be expounded, that they repented not, nor fled to God for mercy. Then it follows —

Hosea 7:8

8. Ephraim, he hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned. [42]

8. Ephraim inter populos ipse miscuitse: Ephraim fuit panis subciniricius, qui versus non est.

God now complains, that Ephraim, whom he had chosen to be a peculiar possession to himself, differed nothing from other nations. The children of Abraham, we know, had been adopted by God for this end, that they might not be like the heathens: for the calling of God brings holiness with it. And we ought to remember that memorable sentence, which often occurs, 'Be ye holy, for I am holy.' The Israelites then ought to have been mindful of their calling, and to resolve to worship God purely, and not to pollute themselves with the defilements and filth of the Gentiles. But God says here that Ephraim differed now nothing from the uncircumcised nations. *He mingles himself,* he says, *with the peoples* And there is an emphasis to be noticed in the pronoun demonstrative, {הוא}, *eva, Ephraim himself,* he says: for surely this was unworthy and by no means to be endured, that Ephraim, on whom God had engraven the mark of his election, was now entangled in the superstitions of the Gentiles. We now then see the drift of the Prophet's words, *He, even Ephraim, mingles himself with the nations* If the condition of Israel and of all the nations had been alike and equal, the Prophet would not have thus spoken; but as God had designed Ephraim to be holy to himself; the Prophet here amplifies his sin, when he says that even Ephraim had mingled himself with the nations.

He then adds, *Ephraim is like bread baked under the ashes, which is not turned* This metaphor most fitly suits the meaning of the Prophet and the circumstances of this passage, provided it be rightly understood. And I

[42] "Ephraim! he hath mixed himself among the peoples! Ephraim is a cake not turned!" —Bp. Horsley. The Bishop adds this note, — "The word {,{עמים in the plural, always signifies the various nations of the earth, the unenlightened nations, in opposition to God's peculiar people, the Israelites."

think the Prophet simply meant this, that Ephraim was in nothing fixed, but was inconstant and changeable; as, when we in vulgar language notify their changeableness who are not consistent with themselves, and in whom there is no sincerity, we say, *Il n'est ne chair ne poisson,* (It is neither flesh nor fish.) So also in this place the Prophet says, that Ephraim was like a cake burnt on one side, and was on the other doughy, or a crude and unbaked lump of paste. For Ephraim, we know, boasted themselves to be a people sacred to God; and since circumcision distinguished that people from other nations, there seemed to be some difference; but in the meantime the worship of God was corrupted; all the sacrifices were adulterated, as we have already seen and the whole of their religion was a confused mixture; yea, a chaos composed of Gentile superstitions and of something that resembled true and legitimate worship. When, therefore, the Israelites were thus perfidiously mocking God, they had nothing fixed: hence the Prophet compares them to a cake, which, being placed on the hearth, is not turned; for on one side it must be burnt, while on the other it remains unbaked. [43]

The Prophet here anticipates what the Israelites might object; for hypocrites, we know, never want pretenses. The Israelites might then bring forward this defense, "Thou sayest that we are now entangled in the pollutions of the heathens; but the heathens have no circumcision; among them the God of Israel is despised, there is no altar on which the people can sacrifice to the true God; we, on the contrary, are the children of Abraham, we have the God who stretched forth his hand to deliver us from Egypt, and the priesthood ever abides with us." As then the Israelites might have introduced these pretenses for their superstitions, the Prophet says, by anticipation, that they were *like bread baked under the ashes,* which, being thrown on the hearth, is not turned, so that the baking might be equal; for then on the one side it would receive heat, and on the other there would be no proportionate temperature. "Ye are," he says, "on one side burnt, but on the other crude; so that with you there is nothing but mere perfidiousness." We now understand what the Prophet means.

But this similitude might also be referred to their punishment; for God had shown before in many places, that the Israelites were so perverse, that they could not be subdued nor brought to a sound mind by any distresses: and he again repeats this complaint. The meaning of the words may then be this, That Ephraim was like a cake, which was not turned on the hearth, because he had been sharply and severely chastised, but without any benefit; being like reprobates, who, though the Lord may bruise them, yet continue obstinate in their hardness. They are then on one side burnt, because they are nearly wasted away under their evils; but on the other side they are

[43] Bishop Horsley gives the same exposition, — "One thing on one side, another on the other; burnt to a coal on the bottom, raw dough at the top. An apt image of a character that is all inconsistencies. Such were the ten tribes of the Prophet's day; worshippers of Jehovah in profession, but adopting all the idolatries of the neighboring nations, in addition to their own semi-idolatry of the calves." "Baked on one side and raw on the other, he is neither through hot nor through cold, but partly a Jew and partly a Gentile." — Geneva Bible.

wholly unbaked, because the Lord had not softened their perverseness. But what I have adduced in the first place is more suitable to the context.

We now then understand what the Prophet says: in the first clause God accuses Ephraim, because he had made himself profane by receiving the rites and superstitions of heathens, so that there was, as I have said before, a confused mixture. In the second place, he answers the Israelites, in case they pleaded in their favor the name of God, for it was usual for them to make false pretenses. He therefore says, that they were in some things different from the uncircumcised nations, but that this difference was nothing before God, for they were like bread baked under the ashes, which is neither baked nor unbaked on either side; for on one side it is burnt, and on the other it remains unbaked. [44] It now follows —

Hosea 7:9

9. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he knoweth it not: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth not.

9. Comederunt extranei robur ejus, et ipse non intelligit: etiam canities sparsa est in eo, et ipse non intelligit.

The Prophet follows the same subject, that is, that Israel had not repented, though the Lord had in various ways invited them to repentance; yea, and constrained them by his scourges. It is indeed a proof of desperate and incurable wickedness, when God prevails nothing with us either by his word or by his stripes. When we are deaf to his teaching and admonitions, it is quite evident that we are wholly perverse: but when the Lord also raises up his hand and inflicts punishment, if then we bend not, what can be said, but that our sins have taken such deep roots, that they cannot be torn away from us? Hence God in these words shows that the Israelites were now past all remedy; for after having been so often and in so many ways warned, they did not return to the right way; nay, they did not think of their sins, but remained insensible. And Paul says of such that they are {απηλγηκοτας}, ("past feeling," Ephesians 4:19,) that is void of feeling. When men are touched by no grief in their distresses, it is certain that they are smitten by the spirit of giddiness. Notwithstanding, the Israelites no doubt felt their evils; but the Prophet means, that they were so stupefied, that they did not consider the cause and source of them. And what can it avail, when one knows himself to be ill, and yet looks not to God, nor thinks that he is justly visited? Hence when any one cries only on account of the strokes, and regards not the hand of the striker, as another Prophet says, (Isaiah 9:13,) there is certainly in him complete stupidity. We hence see what the Prophet had in view when he said, that *Israel did not understand while he was devoured by strangers, while hoariness was spreading over him;* for he attended not to the cause of evils, but remained stupid; nor did he raise up

[44] The account which Pocock, as quoted by Newcome, gives of baking in the East among the country-people is the following: — "The people make a fire in the middle of the room: when the bread is ready for baking they sweep a corner of the hearth, lay the bread there, cover it with hot ashes and embers, and in a quarter of an hour they turn it."

his mind to God, so as to impute to his sins all the evils which he suffered.

He says, that *his strength was eaten by strangers* God had promised that the people would be under his protection; and when they were exposed to the plunder of strangers, why did they not perceive that they were deprived of God's protection? And this could not have happened, except their own sin had deprived them of this privilege. Hence the Israelites must have been extremely blind and alienated in mind, when they did not perceive that they were thus spoiled by strangers, because God did not now defend them, nor was their patron, as he was wont to be formerly.

He adds, *that hoariness was upon him* Some understand by this, that the Israelites were not improved by long succession of years. Age, as we know, through long experience, brings to men some prudence. Young people, even when the Lord invites them to himself, are carried away by some impulse or another; but in the aged there is greater prudence and moderation. Many hence think that the Israelites are here condemned because they had profited nothing — no, not even by the advance of age. But the Prophet, I doubt not, expresses the greatness of their calamities by this mode of speaking, when he says that *hoariness was sprinkled over him;* for we know, that when any one is grievously pained and afflicted, he becomes hoary through the very pressure of evils; inasmuch as hoariness proceeds not only from years, but also from troubles and heavy cares, which not only waste men, but consume them. We indeed know that men grow old through the suffering of evils. And here, in my judgment, the Prophet means, that "hoariness had come upon Israel," — that is, that he had been visited with so many evils, that he was worn out, as it were, with old age; and that, after all, he had derived no benefit. We now perceive the truth of what I have said before, that it was the constant teaching of the Prophet, that the diseases which prevailed among the people of Israel were incurable, for they could by no remedies be brought to repentance. It follows —

Hosea 7:10

10. And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face: and they do not return to the LORD their God, nor seek him for all this.

10. Et testificabitur (vel, testificata est) superbia Israelis ad faciem ejus, et non reversi sunt ad Jehovam Deum suum, et non quaesierunt eum in omnibus his.

The Prophet now confirms his previous doctrine, and speaks generally, that *the pride of Israel shall bear testimony to him to his face,* or shall humble him to his face. The word {ענה}, *one,* means, in Hebrew, "to testify," and often, also, "to humble," or "to afflict," as it was stated in the fifth chapter; and the words of the Prophet are now the same, and both senses are appropriate. I do not, however, make much of this, for the design of the Prophet is clear; what he means is, that God had so openly chastised the Israelites, that they must have perceived his hand, except they were blind indeed, and that, being at the same time warned, they ought to have

suppliantly humbled themselves. Whether then we read, "to testify" or "to humble," the sense will be the same, and the design of the Prophet will appear to be the same. "The pride, then, of Israel will humble him to his face," or, "the pride of Israel will testify to his face:" for the Prophet means, that however fiercely the Israelites might rise up against God, and be uncourteous to his Prophets and however perversely they might reject all teaching, and also excuse their own sins, yet all this would avail them nothing, since they were so cast down by their pride, that the Lord regarded them as convicted as much so as if their crime had been proved by many witnesses, and their mask now taken away; in short, there was no longer any doubt: this is what the Prophet means.

The pride, then, *of Israel testifies,* or, *humbles him to his face;* that is, though Israel had appeared hitherto inflexible against all admonitions, against all punishments, they were yet held as convicted; and, at the same time, *they return not,* he says, *to their God, and seek him not for all these things* We now perceive what I have said, that the previous complaint respecting the diabolical perverseness which so reigned in the people is here confirmed, so that their salvation was now past hope. And he says that *they returned not to Jehovah their God;* for they were running constantly after their idols, as we have before seen; yea, they were possessed with that inordinate zeal of which the Prophet speaks in the beginning of the chapter; but they returned not to Jehovah; they were wholly taken up with the multitude of their deities, and at the same time had no regard for God.

And when he says, *their God,* he conveys a strong reprobation; for God had manifested himself to them; yea, he had made himself plainly known to them by his law. That they then did not return to him, was not simply through ignorance or error; but through a diabolical madness, as if they wished of their own accord and deliberately to perish. God then calls himself here the God of Israel, not for honour's sake, but that he might the more expose their ingratitude, and enhance their perfidiousness, because they had fallen away from him, and would not seek him.

What he means, when he says, *For all these things,* is, that every kind of remedy had been tried, and hence that their disease was wholly incurable. When we can do nothing in one way, we often try another. Now God had not tried in one way only to bring Israel back to himself, but he had tried all remedies. When no good followed, what was to be said, but the people were lost, and past all hope? This then is what the Prophet means here. It now follows —

Hosea 7:11-12

11. Ephraim also is like a silly dove without heart: they call to Egypt, they go to Assyria.

11. Et fuit Ephraim tanquam columba credula (vel, quae fallitur, vel, declinans, ut alii vertunt) sine corde (id est, sine intelligentia; cor enim saepe est Hebraeis voluntas, sed interdum mentem et intelligentiam significat;)

clamant Aegyptum, proficiscuntur in Assyriam.

12. When they shall go, I will spread my net upon them; I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven; I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard.

12. Ubi autem profecti fuerunt (vel, quocunque profecti fuerunt) extendam super eos rete meum: tanquam avem coeli dejiciam eos; corrigam eos (vel, ligabo,) secundum auditionem coetus ipsorum. [45]

The Prophet here first blames Israel for foolish credulity, and compares them to a dove; for they had invited the Egyptians and sent to Assyria for help. Simplicity is indeed a commendable virtue, when joined to prudence. But as everything reasonable and judicious in men is turned into wickedness when there is no integrity; so when men are too credulous and void of all judgment and reason, it is then mere folly. But when he says that *Israel is like a dove,* he does not mean that the Israelites had sinned through mere ignorance, but that they were destitute of all judgment; and this folly is opposed to the knowledge which God had offered to them in his law: for God had never ceased to guide Israel by sound doctrine; he had ever exhibited before them the torch of his word; but when God thus gave them light, Israel was so credulous as to give heed to the delusions of Satan and of the world. We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet.

Some render {פותה}, *pute,* by "turning aside:" and its root {פתה}, *pite,* no doubt, means "to turn aside;" and it means also sometimes "to persuade:" hence some give this rendering, "a persuasible," or, "a credulous dove." But the Prophet, I doubt not, means, that they were enticed by flatteries, or deceived by allurements, which is the same thing. Israel then was like a dove, deceived by various lures.

How so? *Because they ran to the Assyrians, they invited the Egyptians* If Israel had attended to the law of God, they might have felt assured that they were not in danger of going astray; for the Lord keeps us not in suspense or doubt, that we may fluctuate, but makes our minds fixed and tranquil by his word, as it is also said in another place, 'This is rest.' It was then determined by the Israelites not to fix their feet as it were on solid ground; and they preferred to fly here and there like doves; and their credulity led them to many errors. How? Because they chose rather to give themselves up to be deceived by the Egyptians as well as by the Assyrians, when yet God was willing to guide them by sound knowledge. We now understand the design of this accusation of the Prophet to be, that Israel wilfully refused the way of safety offered to them, which they might have followed with confidence, and with a tranquil and composed mind; but in the meantime they flew up and down, and became wilfully erratic; for they suffered themselves to be deceived by various lures.

Now this place teaches us that men are not to be excused by the pretext of simplicity; for the Prophet here condemns this very weakness in the Israelites.

[45] "As they hear it declared in their congregation." — Bp. Horsley.

We ought then to attend to the rule of Christ, 'To be innocent as doves, and yet to be prudent as serpents.' [46] But if we inconsiderately abandon ourselves, the excuse of ignorance will be frivolous; for the Lord shines upon us by his word and shows us the right way; and he has also in his power the spirit of prudence and judgment, which he never denies to those who ask. But when we despise the word, and neglect the Spirit of God, and follow our own vagrant imaginations, our sin is twofold; for we thus despise and quench the light of the word, and we also wilfully perish, when the Lord would save us.

But a denunciation of punishment afterwards follows, *Wheresoever,* he says, *they shall go, I will expand over them my net, and will draw them down as the birds of heaven* God shows that though the Israelites might turn about here and there, yet their end would be unhappy; for he would have his expanded net: and he follows up the simile he used in the last verse. He had said that they were like doves, which are carried by a sudden instinct to the bait, and consider not the expanded net. If then the dove sees only the lure, and at the same time shuns not the danger, it is a proof of foolish simplicity. Hence God says, *I will expand my net;* that is, I will cause all your endeavors and purposes to be disappointed, and all your hopes to be vain; for *wheresoever they shall fly, my net shall be expanded.*

This is a remarkable passage; for we hence learn, that the issue will always be unfortunate, if we attempt any thing contrary to the word of the Lord, and it we hold consultations over which his Spirit does not preside; as it is said by Isaiah 30:1,

'Woe to them who weave a web, and draw not from my mouth! Woe to them who take counsel, and invoke not my Spirit!'

This passage wholly agrees with the words of Isaiah, though the form of speaking is different. It belongs then to God to bless our counsels, that they may have a prosperous and the desired success. But when God is not favorable, but even opposed to our designs, what end shall at last await us, but that whatever we may have attained shall at length be turned to our ruin? Let us then know, that whatever men do in this world is ruled by the hidden providence of God; and as God leads by his extended hand his own people, and gives his angels charge to guide them; so also he has his expanded net to catch all those who wander after their own erratic imaginations. Hence he says, *Wheresoever they shall go, I will expand over them my net;* and farther, *I will draw them down as the birds of heaven*

The Prophet seems to allude to the vain confidence, which he mentioned, when he said that Israel had bound wind in his wings. For when men presumptuously undertake any thing, they at the same time promise to themselves, that there will be nothing to prevent them from gaining their object. Inasmuch then as men, elated with this foolish confidence, gather more boldness, yea, at length furiously assail God, and seem as though they would

[46] Matthew 10:16. — fj.

break through the very clouds, the Prophet says, *I will draw them down as the birds of heaven;* that is, "I will allow them to be carried up for a time; but when they shall penetrate to the clouds, I will draw them down, I will make them to know that their flying will avail them nothing." And we must notice from whence the Israelites had been drawn down. For who would not have thought that so much protection must have been found in the Assyrians or in the Egyptians, that they could not in vain expect deliverance? But the Lord laughs to scorn this vain power of the world; for whatever hope men may conceive when they alienate themselves from God, it will entirely vanish like smoke.

And he afterwards adds, *I will chastise them*, or, 'I will bind them:' for the verb {יסר}, *isar*, means both "to chastise" as well as "to bind;" so that either sense may be taken. If the word, "to bind," be approved, it will well agree with the metaphor, as though he said, "I will hold you fast in my nets." For as long as birds are allowed to fly, they think the whole heaven to be theirs; but when they fall into nets, they remain confined; they are then unable to fly, and cannot move their wings. So then this sense, "I will bind them", is very suitable; which means, "They will not be able to break my net, but I will hold them there bound to the end." But if one prefers the other sense, *I will chastise them,* I do not object; and as far as the meaning is concerned, we see that there is not much difference which sense we take, except that the word, "to bind," as I have said, harmonizes better with the metaphor.

He says, *According to the hearing of their assembly.* Nearly all so render this, as if God had said that he would punish them as he had threatened by Moses, and as if it was also an indirect accusation of their carelessness, because they did not become wise after having been long admonished, but even despised those denunciations, which constantly resounded in their ears. For God had not only prescribed in his law the rule of a religious life, but also added heavy and severe threatening, by which he gave a sanction to the doctrine at the law. We know how dreadful are those curses of the law. Since then God had even from the beginning thus threatened the Israelites, ought they not to have walked more carefully before him? But they were not terrified by these denunciations. Hence God here indirectly reproves this great madness, that the Israelites did not sufficiently attend to his threatening, by which they might have been recalled to the right way; for Moses did by these put a restraint even on the furious passions of men, if only there remained in them a particle of sound understanding. Still further, the same admonitions had been often pressed on them by the Prophets; nor had God ever ceased to arouse them, until the ears of them all had become deaf to his voice. He therefore says, *'I will hold them fast bound,'* or, 'I will chastise them, *according to the hearing of their assembly;*' that is, "The punishment which I shall inflict must have been long ago known to them, for I have openly commanded my law to be promulgated, that I might thus testify my

people by severe threatening; I will now then execute the judgment, which they have not believed, because I have hitherto spared them."

As I have already said, interpreters nearly all agree in this view, except that they do not consider the design of the Prophet; they do not perceive that the Israelites were upbraided for their hardness; but they only speak of punishment, without any intimation of the end or object for which God had promulgated maledictions in his law, and renewed the recollection of them by his Prophets. Jerome brings forward another meaning, even this, that God would punish the people according to the report of their assembly; that is, that as they had with one consent violated the worship of God, and transgressed his laws, so he would punish them all. I will at the same time add this view, that God would chastise them according to the clamour of their assembly, so that the Prophet points out, not only a conspiracy among the people of Israel, but also their violence in eliciting one another to sin. As, then, they had thus tumultuously risen up against God, so the Prophet in his turn declares, that God would punish them; as though he said, "Your tumult will not prevent me from quelling your fury. Ye do indeed with great noise oppose me, and think that you will be safe, though addicted to your sins; but this your violence will be no hindrance, for I have in my power the means of chastising you."

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou sees us to be so prone to all the allurements of Satan and the world, and at the same time so void of judgment, and carried away by mere levity, — O grant, that by thy Spirit leading us, we may proceed in the right course, on which we have already entered under thy guidance and directing hand, so that we may never go astray from thy word, nor by any means turn aside from pursuing towards the mark which thou hast set before us; and though Satan may attempt to draw us aside, may we yet continue steadfast in thy service, and thus proceed, until we arrive at that blessed rest which, after the warfare of the present life, thou hast promised to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Twentieth

Hosea 7:13

13. Woe unto them! for they have fled from me: destruction unto them! because they have transgressed against me: though I have redeemed them, yet they have spoken lies against me.

13. Vae illis, quia recesserunt a me; vastitas illis, (vel, Direptio,) quia perfide egerunt in me: et ego redimam eos (potest etiam resolvi in tempus praeteritum, Redemi eos,) et loquuti sunt contra me mendacia.

Here the Prophet takes away from the Israelites the hope of pardon, and declares that it was all over with them, for God had now resolved to destroy them. For as God everywhere declares himself to be ready and inclined to pardon, hypocrites hope that God will be propitious to them; and entertaining this vain confidence, they despise his threatening and boldly rise up

against him. Hence the Prophet here shows, that God would hereafter be inexorable to them, because they had too long pertinaciously abused his patience. *Woe to them!* he says, *for they have withdrawn from me: desolation to them! for they have acted perfidiously towards me* There is then no reason, says the Prophet, for them to delude themselves in future with vain confidence, as they have hitherto done; for this has been once for all determined by God — to indict on them his extreme vengeance, for their defection deserves this.

He then adds, *I will redeem them, and they have spoken lies against me.* They who render the first word in the future tense, think that the Prophet asks a question, "Shall I redeem them? for they have spoken lies against me:" and they think it to be an indefinite mode of speaking — "Should I redeem them, men of no faith; for what good should I do by such kindness?" Others give this expositions — "Though I wished to redeem them, yet I found that this would not be beneficial nor just, because they speak lies against me;" as though God did not express here what he had done, but what he had wished to do. But the past tense is not unsuitable to this place; and we know how common and familiar to the Hebrews was the change of tenses. The meaning, then, will be, "I have redeemed them, and they have spoken lies against me;" that is, "I have often delivered them from death, when they were in extreme peril; but they have not changed their disposition; nay, they have deprived me of the praise due for their deliverance, and they have lived in no way better after their deliverance. Since, then, I have hitherto conferred my benefits to no good purpose, nothing now remains but that I must destroy them." And this seems to me to be the Prophet's meaning.

He then declares, in the first clause, that they hoped for mercy in vain from God, because their ultimate destruction was decreed. Then follows the reason for this, because they had foolishly and impiously abused the favor of God, inasmuch as, having been redeemed by him, they yet went on in their own wickedness, and even acted perfidiously towards God, while yet they pretended to act differently. Since, then, there was no change for the better, God now shows that he would spend his favor no longer on men so impious. Now this place teaches how intolerable is our ingratitude, when, after having been redeemed by the Lord, we keep not the faith pledged to him, and which he requires from us; for God is our deliverer on this condition, that we be wholly devoted to him. For he who has been redeemed ought not so to live, as if he had a right to himself and to his own will; but he ought to be wholly dependent on his Redeemer. If, then, we thus act perfidiously towards God, after having been delivered by his grace, we shall be guilty of such impiety and perfidiousness as deserve a twofold vengeance: and this is what the Prophet here teaches.

We indeed know how mercifully God had spared the people of Israel: after they had fallen away into superstitious worship, and had also violated their faith to the posterity of David, the Lord did not yet cease to show

to that people many favors, notwithstanding their unworthiness. We know also, that under Jeroboam prosperity had attended them beyond all human expectation. But they yet hardened themselves more and more in their wickedness, so far were they from returning to the right way. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 7:14

14. And they have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds: they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebel against me.

14. Et non clamaverunt ad me in corde suo: quia ululârunt super cubilibus suis; ad triticum et vinum congregabunt se, defecerunt (deficient, ad verbum) a me. [47]

The Prophet here again reproves the Israelites for having not repented, after having been so often admonished; for, as it was said yesterday, all the chastisements which God by his own hand inflicts on us, have this as the object — to heal us of our vices. Now the Prophet says here that the Israelites had not cried to God, which is yet the chief thing in repentance. But this expression is to be noticed. *They have not cried to me with their heart;* that is sincerely. We indeed know that some worship of God had ever remained among them; though the Israelites devised for themselves many gods, yet the name of the true God had never been wholly obliterated among them; but they blended the worship of God with their own inventions; God, at the same time, could not endure these fictitious invocations. Hence he says, that *they cried not from the heart.* He accuses them, not that they performed no outward act, but that they did not bring a real desire of heart; nay, they only cried to God dissemblingly. We now perceive what the Prophet meant by saying, *They have not cried to me with their heart* As calling on God is the chief exercise of religion, and especially manifests our repentance, the Prophet expressly notices this defect in the Israelites — that they cried not to the Lord. But as they might object and say, that they had formally prayed, he adds, that they did not do so from the heart; for the outward act (*ceremonia*) without the exercise of the heart, is nothing else but a profanation of God's name. In short, the Prophet shows here to the Israelites their hardness; for when they were smitten by God's hand, they did not flee to him and supplicate pardon, at least they did not do this from the heart or sincerely.

He then adds, *Because they howled on their beds* Some explain the particle {כי}, *ki,* adversatively; as though the Prophet had said, "Though they howl on their beds, they do not yet direct their petitions to me." But we may take it in its proper sense, and the sentence would thus run better: They howl then on their beds, that is, "They bring not their concerns to me; for

[47] "And they cry not to me with their heart, Though they howl on their beds; For corn and wine they bestir themselves, They turn aside from me." The word I render "bestir," whether we take the text as it is, or a similar word, {,{יתגודדו countenances by several MSS, and by the Septuagint, means nearly the same, signifying great agitation and anxiety. ---Ed.

like brute animals they utter their howlings:" and this we see to be the case with the unbelieving; for they fear the presence of God, and the very mention of him is dreaded by them; hence they howl, that is, they pour forth their impetuous feelings, but at the same time they shun every access to God as much as they can. The sense then is, "They cry not to me from the heart, for they only howl; but it is only by an animal effort without any reason." If, however, any one prefers to take the particle כִּי, *ki,* adversatively, the sense would not be unsuitable, "Though they howl on their beds, they do not yet cry to me;" that is, "Though grief urges them to make great noises, they are yet mute as to any cry of prayer." If any one more approves of this meaning, I say nothing against it: but as the particle כִּי, *ki,* is commonly taken as a causative, I prefer thus to explain it, "As they cry on their beds, they raise not up their voice to God."

Then it follows, *They assemble,* or, *will assemble themselves for corn and wine* This place is explained in two ways. Some think that the Israelites are here in an indirect way reproved, inasmuch as when they found wine and corn in the market, having obtained their wishes, they went on heedlessly in their sins, and despised God, as if they had no more need of his help. They then ran together for wine and corn; that is, as soon as they heard of wine or corn, they provided themselves with provisions, and afterwards neglected God. But this sense seems too frigid and strained. The Prophet then, I doubt not, opposes the running together of which he speaks, to true and sincere attention to prayer; as though he said, "They are not touched with grief for having offended me, though they see by evident proofs that I am displeased with them; they regard not my favor or my displeasure, provided they enjoy plenty of wine and corn: this satisfies them, and it is all the same with them whether I am adverse or propitious to them." This seems to be the genuine meaning of the Prophet.

But that this reproof may be more evident, we must observe what Christ teaches, that we ought first to seek the kingdom of God. [48] For men act strangely when they anxiously labour only for this life, and strive only to procure for themselves food, and what is needful for the wants of the flesh: we ever make a beginning here; and yet it is a most thoughtless anxiety, when we are so attentive to a frail life, and in the meantime neglect the kingdom of God. Inasmuch then as men by this perverted feeling derange the whole order of religion, the Prophet here shows that the Israelites did not truly and from the heart cry unto God, because they were only solicitous about wine and corn; for except when they were hungry, they despised God, and allowed him to rest quietly in heaven: hence penury and want constrained them. As brute beasts, when they are hungry, go to the stall, and seek not to be fed by the Lord; so also did the Israelites, when they were touched by some feeling of need; but at the same time they were contented with their wine and corn; nor had they any other God. Hence they so cried, that their

[48] Matthew 6:33; Luke 12:31. — fj.

voice did not come to God, as they did not indeed go really and directly to him. The Prophet then does here, by a particular instance, convict the Israelites of impious dissimulation, inasmuch as they did not seek God, but were only intent on food; and provided the stomach was well supplied, they neglected God, and desired not his favor, and only wished to have full barns and full cellars; for plenty of provisions, without the paternal favor of God, was their only desire. It is hence sufficiently evident that they did not cry to the Lord.

This place is worthy of being observed; for we here see that our prayers are faulty before God, if we begin with wine and bread, and seek not first the kingdom of God, that is, his glory; and if we apply not our minds to this — to live, so to have God propitious to us. When we go to Him, the fountain of divine blessing, God only desire to glut ourselves with the abundance of the good things which he has to bestow, then all our prayers are deservedly rejected by him. We see this to be the case with the Papists; when they present their supplications, they are wholly like animals. They indeed implore God for rain and for dry weather; but have they any desire of reconciling themselves to God? By no means; for they wish, as much as possible, to be at the farthest distance from him: but when want and famine constrain them, they then ask for rain, — for what purpose? only that they may abound in bread and wine. We ought then to preserve a legitimate order in our prayers. If the Lord shows to us proofs of his wrath, we must strive first to return into favor with him, and then his glory must be regarded by us, and he is to be sought with the real feeling of piety, that he may be a Father to us: and then may be added in their place the things which belong to the condition and preservation of the present life.

We must also notice what he adds, *They have revolted from me* The verb {סור}, *sur,* means, "to recede," and also "to revolt;" and this second sense is the most suitable; for the Prophet said before that they had receded or departed from God; but now he seems to signify something more grievous, and that is, that they had revolted from God. Thus hypocrites, when they pretend to seek God in a circuitous course, betray their own revolt; for they are unwilling to be reconciled to him on the condition that they are to change for the better their life, to cast away the affections of the flesh, to renounce themselves and their depraved desires. These things they by no means seek. Hence then it becomes evident that they are witnesses to their own revolt, and also to dissimulation in their prayers, even when there is some appearance of piety. It follows —

Hosea 7:15

15. Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me.

15. Et ego ligavi, eoboravi brachia ipsorum, et contra me cogitant malum.

God again reproaches the Israelites for having in a base manner abused his goodness and forbearance. Some consider the verb {יסר}, *isar,* as meaning,

"to chastise," because God had disciplined the Israelites; and, as I have said yesterday, it is often taken in this sense. But as it signifies sometimes "to bind," it seems a fitter metaphor for this place. *I have bound and strengthened their arms;* as though God had said, that he had caused their arms not to be enervated. For we know that the strength of the arm depends on the structure of the nerves. Except the bones were bound together by the nerves, a dissolution would immediately follow. Hence God says, *I have bound and strengthened their arms;* which two things combine for the same end, and the notion of chastising seems not to me to be in any way suitable to the context. The meaning is, that the Israelites had hitherto continued, because God had sustained them by his power. As when one binds up and strengthens a weak or a loosened arm, so God here reminds Israel that he had preserved them in their position. And the Prophet, I have no doubt, alludes here to the many calamities by which the strength of Israel might have been broken, had not a timely remedy been applied by the Lord.

God then compares himself here to a physician or a surgeon, when he says that he had bound the arm of Israel and strengthened it, when it might have been otherwise broken: for they had been often as it were enervated, but the Lord restored them. We now understand the meaning of the Prophet to be, that God had not only by his power sustained the Israelites, but had also performed the office of a surgeon or a physician, when he saw their arms broken, when they were wasted by slaughters in wars, and by other adversities.

Now the Israelites were so far from being grateful to God and mindful of him, that they were even devising evil against him. For after having obtained victories, after having been restored and even replenished with fulness of all blessings, they the more boldly conspired against him; for under this pretence were superstitions established, and then followed the indulgence of all vices; for pride, and cruelty, and ambition, and frauds, prevailed more and more. Since then the Israelites had thus perverted the blessings of God, was not the hope of pardon and salvation justly cut off from them? Now we are reminded in this place, that whenever God heals our evils, and raises us up in adversity and succors us, we ought devoutly to acknowledge his favor, and not to meditate evil against him, when he so kindly extends his hand to us. Let us now proceed —

Hosea 7:16

16. They return, but not to the most High: they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

16. Revertentur non Deo: fuerunt tanquam arcus dolosus (vel, doli:) ceciderunt (vel, cadent) in gladio principes eorum a superbia (hoc est, propter superbiam) linguae eorum: hoc eorum ludibrium in terra Aegypti.

The Prophet again assails the perverse wickedness of Israel, and also their fraud and perfidiousness. Hence he says that they feigned some sort of

repentance, but it was nothing else than false; for they returned not to God. *They return,* he says, *but not to God.* Some however think that {על}, *ol,* is a preposition, and that something is understood, as if it were an elliptical phrase: "They return, but not for anything;" that is, when they return, were any one to inquire what is in their minds, or what is their purpose, he would find it to be mere form and nothing real. But this exposition, as we see, is strained. Besides, the context requires that we should consider {על}, *ol,* to be for God, as it is also in other places; for this is nothing new. Then it is, *They return not to God*

The Prophet then declares here that the Israelites were wholly perverse, so that God could force out of them no repentance; that when they pretended something it was mere deceit, for they did not come in a direct way to God. For hypocrites, as it has been said before, when God's hand presses hard on them, seem indeed to be different from what they were previously, but they always shun God. The Lord does not in vain exhort the people by Jeremiah to return to him,

'If thou wilt return, O Israel,' he says, 'return unto me,'
(Jeremiah 4:1.)

For he knew that by devious windings men always go astray and keep not to the straight course. This is the meaning.

Then the Prophet adds, that *they were like a deceitful bow* This is an explanation of the last sentence; and hence we conclude that the word {על}, *ol,* cannot be otherwise taken than for God. The Prophet shows how the Israelites withdrew themselves from God, while they seemed to repent, for *they were,* he says, *like a deceitful bow.* Some expound it, the bow of darting or shooting; and no doubt {רמה}, *reme,* means to dart and to shoot; but this sense cannot be taken here, for we see that what the Prophet had in view was to show, that the Israelites put on a guise, and did nothing but deceive, when they made a show of repentance. To confirm this, he says, that they were like an oblique bow. For the archer, when he intends to shoot an arrow, first levels at a certain mark; then the arrow seems to be directed to that place which the archer fixes on by his eyes. Now if the bow is oblique, the arrow will fly elsewhere; or the bow may slip, so as to throw back the arrow to the archer himself. The like comparison is found in Psalm 78, [49] where it is said, that the Jews were turned back 'like a deceitful bow;' and in that passage this very word occurs. But there is here no ambiguity; for God accuses the people that they had turned back; that is, that they had turned backward their course, even like a deceitful bow. If one reads "the bow of darting," or, "of shooting," there will be no sense; nay, it will be vapid and absurd. It is then better to render the expression here, 'a deceitful bow.'

And we must notice the import of the similitude, to which I have already referred, that is, that as archers aim the arrow to the mark, as they direct its flight by winking and leveling, and shoot; so hypocrites seem to strive

[49] Psalm 78:57. — fj.

with great effort, but, at the same time, they are deceitful bows; that is, their mind is driven back, and they fly away from God, and, by tortuous windings, go astray, so that they never come to God, but rather turn their backs on him.

He then adds, *Their princes shall fall by the sword for the pride of their tongue* The Prophet again denounces vengeance on the Israelites, that they might feel assured that the heavenly decree respecting their destruction could not be changed. For though hypocrites always dread, and cannot hope anything from God, yet they never cease to flatter themselves, and always to contrive some new hope. Inasmuch then as they are so bountiful in vain promising, the Prophet says that there was no reason for the Israelites to hope for any remedy in their distresses. *Their princes* then *shall fall:* and in saying 'princes,' he takes a part for the whole; for God does not thus threaten princes, or denounces ruin on them, as though he intended to except the common people; but he implies, that destruction would be common to all, which not even the princes themselves would escape. And we know that in battles, when a great slaughter is made, the common soldiers lie dead in great numbers, and but few of the chiefs. But God says here, "I will take away the whole flower of the people. And if none of the princes shall remain, what will become of the ignoble vulgar, who are deemed of no account?" *The princes* then *shall fall by the sword*

He then adds, *For the pride of their tongue* Some expound this phrase actively, as though the Prophet had said, that they had provoked God's wrath by their blasphemies and profane speeches; but I rather take it for their high vaunting: *For the pride of their tongue,* he says, *they shall fall;* that is, because they haughtily boasted of their strength, and held in contempt all the prophecies, because they dared to vomit forth their blasphemies against God, and dared, also, no less obstinately than proudly, to defend their own impious and depraved forms of worship, I will revenge, he says, "this pride." We hence see that "pride," here, is to be taken for that disdain which the impious show by their high vaunting, as it is said elsewhere,

'They raise to heaven their tongues,' (Psalm 73:9.)

This will be their derision in the land of Egypt As the Israelites, then relying on the cursed treaty which they had made with the Egyptians, continued perverse against God, he says, "I will expose them to derision among their confederates: they boast of the power of Egypt: they think themselves beyond the reach of harm, as they can instantly call the Egyptians, to their aid, were any one to oppose them, or were any enemy to invade them. Since, then, their confidence so rests on Egypt, I will make," he says, "the Egyptians to regard them with scorn; and they shall not only be counted ignominious by those who rival or envy them, but also by the friends in whom they glory. I will give them up to every kind of dishonor among their lovers." He indeed compares, as we have before seen, the Egyptians as well as the Assyrians, to lovers, and compares his people to an unfaithful wife, who, having deserted

her husband, prostitutes her own chastity. “Thou,” he says, “sellest thyself to thy lovers, and strives to please them, and faintest and adornest thyself to allure them: I will cover thee all over with everything disgraceful and ignominious, that thy lovers shall abhor thy very sight.” So also in this place, he says that the Israelites shall be for derision in the land of Egypt; that is, not enemies, whom they fear, shall have them in derision; but they shall be a laughing-stock to those who they think will be their defenders, and through whose arms they imagine that they shall be free from every disgrace. The eighth chapter follows.

Hosea 8

Chapter 8

Hosea 8:1

1. Set the trumpet to thy mouth. He shall come as an eagle against the house of the Lord, because they have transgressed my covenant, and trespassed against my law.

1. Super palatum tuum tuba, tanquam aquila super domum Jehovae, [50] quia transgressi sunt foedus meum, et contra legem meam impie egerunt (vel, perfide segesserunt.)

Interpreters nearly all agree in this, that the Prophet threatens not the kingdom of Israel, but the kingdom of Judah, at the beginning of this chapter, because he names the house of God, which they take to be the temple. I indeed allow, that the Prophet has spoken already, in two places, of the kingdom of Judah, but as it were in passing. He has, it is true, introduced some reproofs and threatening, but so that the distinction was quite clear; and we see that he now goes to the kingdom of Judah, but in the second verse, he names Israel, and yet continues his discourse. *To thy mouth,* he says, *the trumpet, etc.*; and afterwards he adds, *To me* shall they cry, My God; we know thee, Israel. Here, certainly, the discourse is addressed to the ten tribes. I am therefore by no means induced to explain the beginning of the chapter by applying it to the kingdom of Judah: and I certainly do

[50] "The cornet at thy mouth, be it like the eagle over the house of Jehovah." — Horsley. It is in a note added, — "Let the sound of the cornet in thy mouth be shrill and terrible, as the ominous scream of the eagle hovering over the roof of the temple." But the literal rendering of the words with admit more naturally another sense. I translate it thus: — "To thy mouth the trumpet, Like the eagle over the house of Jehovah." That is, seize the trumpet as quickly as the eagle flies. He thereby denotes that judgment was to come without delay; or the distich may be thus rendered, — "To thy mouth the trumpet, like an eagle, Against the house of Jehovah." That is, "Apply the trumpet quickly, imitate the quickness of the eagle, and use it to proclaim war against the house of Jehovah." — Ed.

wonder that interpreters have mistaken in a matter so trifling; for the house of God means not only the temple, but also the whole people. As Israel retained this boast, that they were a people holy to God, and that they were his family, he says, "Put or set the trumpet to thy mouth, and proclaim the war, which is now nigh at hand; for the enemy hastens, who is to attack the house of God, that is, this holy people, who cover themselves with the name of God, and who, trusting in their election and adoption, think that they shall be free from all evils; war *shall come as an eagle* against this house of God."

Had the Prophet added any thing which could be referred peculiarly to the kingdom of Judah, I should willingly accede to their opinion, who think that the house of God is the sanctuary. But let the whole context be read, and any one may easily perceive, that the Prophet speaks of Israel no less in the first verse than in the second and third. For, as it has been said, he lays down no difference, but pursues throughout his teaching or discourse in the same strain.

He says first, *A trumpet to thy mouth,* or, "Set to thy mouth the trumpet." It is an exhibition, (*hypotyposis*;) for we know that God, in order to affect more powerfully the people, clothes his Prophets with various characters. The Prophet then is introduced here as a herald who proclaims war, or a messenger, or by whatever name you may be pleased to call him. Here then the Prophet is commanded, not to speak with his mouth, but to show by the trumpet that war was nigh, as though God himself by his trumpet declared war against Israel, which was to be carried on soon after by earthly enemies. The enemies were soon after to come, and the herald was to come in the usual manner to declare war. The Greeks call them {κηρρυκες}, *proclaimers*, we say, "Les heraux". As these earthly kings have their proclaimers, or {κηρυκες}, or heralds, or messengers, who proclaim war; so the Lord sends his Prophet with the usual charge to declare war: "Go then, and let the Israelites know, not now by thy mouth, but even by thy throat, by the sound of the trumpet, that I am an enemy to them, and that I am present with a strong army to destroy them." It is indeed certain that the Prophet did not use a trumpet; but the Lord by this representations as I have already said increased the reality of what was taught that the Israelites might perceive, that it was not in sport or in play that the Prophet threatened them, but that it was done seriously, as though they now saw the heralds who was to proclaim war; for this was not usually done except when the army is already prepared for battle.

He then says, *As an eagle against the house of Jehovah* We have already said what the Prophet means by the house of Jehovah, even that people who thought that they would be exempt from every evil, because they had been adopted by the Lord. Hence the Israelites called themselves God's household; and though under this cover, they impiously and profanely abandoned themselves to every kind of turpitude, yet they thought that they were on the best

of terms with God himself. “There shall come,” he says, “a common ruin to you all; this boasting shall not prevent me from taking vengeance at last on your sins.” But he adds *As an eagle,* that the Israelites might not think that there was to be a long delay; for the impious procrastinate, when they see any danger at hand. Hence, that the Israelites might not continue torpid in their vices, the Prophet says, that the destruction of which he spoke would be like the eagle; for in a moment the eagle goes over an immense distance, and we wonder when we see it over our heads, though a little before it did not appear. So also the Prophet says, that destruction, though not yet seen, was however nigh at hand, that being smitten with terror, though now late, yet as the Lord was thus urging them, they might return to him.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that since thou continues daily to restore us to thyself, both by scourges and by thy word, though we cease not to go astray after sinful desires, — O grant, that by the direction of thy Spirit, we may at length so return to thee, that we may never afterwards fall away, but be preserved in pure and true obedience, and thus constantly continue in the pure worship of thy majesty and in true, obedience, that after this life past, we may at last reach that blessed rest, which is reserved for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-first

We were not able yesterday to complete the first verse of the eighth chapter. It then remains for us to consider the latter clause, in which the Prophet expresses the cause of the war which he had previously proclaimed by God’s command. He says, that the Israelites had transgressed the covenant of the Lord, and conducted themselves perfidiously against his law. He repeats the same thing twice, for the covenant and the law are synonymous; only the word, law, in my view, is added as explanatory, as though he had said, that they had violated the covenant of the Lord, which had been sanctioned or sealed by the law. God then had made a covenant with Israel, which he designed to be comprehended in the tables. Since then it was not unknown to the Israelites what they owed to God, they were covenant-breakers. It was then the doubling of their crime, as the Prophet shows, that they had not fallen through mistake when they transgressed the covenant of the Lord, for they had been more than sufficiently taught by the law what faith and what purity the Lord required of them: at the same time, the covenant which the Lord so openly made with them was yet neglected. It follows —

Hosea 8:2-3

2. Israel shall cry unto me, My God, we know thee.

2. Mihi clamabunt, Deus mi, novimus te, Israel. [51]

[51] The construction of this versed is anomalous, there being a mixture of numbers, not uncommon in this book. The original is the following: — {{לי} {יזעקו} {אלהי} {ידעונך} {ישראל} The literal rendering is this: --- ``To me they will cry, My God, we have known thee, Israel.'' If we take the future as expressive of a continued act, as it is often to be taken, and consider ``my God'' as the expression of each one includes in ``they,'' or accommodate it to ``They,'' and say ``our God,'' and if we regard ``Israel'' to be in apposition with ``we,'' as some critics think and very justly, then we have the following appropriate rendering: --- ``To me they cry, Our God; we, Israel, have known thee.'' --- Ed.

3. Israel hath cast off the thing that is good: the enemy shall pursue him.

3. Deseruit Israel bonum (vel, abominatus est, repulit, vel, recessit procul a bono:) hostis persequetur eum.

By the Prophet saying, *To me shall they cry,* some understand that the Israelites are blamed for not fleeing to God; and they thus explain the Prophet's words, "They ought to have cried to me." It seems to others to be an exhortation, "Let the Israelites now cry to me." But I take the words simply as they are, that is that God here again touches the dissimulation of the Israelites, *They will cry to me, We know thee;* and to this the ready answer is *Israel has cast away good far from himself; the enemy shall pursue him* I thus join together the two verses; for in the former the Lord relates what they would do, and what the Israelites had already begun to do; and in the latter verse he shows that their labour would be in vain, because they ever cherished wickedness in their hearts, and falsely pretended the name of God, as it has been previously observed, even in their prayers. *Israel,* then *will cry to me, My God, we know thee.* Thus hypocrites confidently profess the name of God, and with a lofty air affirm that they are God's people; but God laughs to scorn all this boasting, as it is vain, and worthy of derision. They will then cry to me; and then he imitates their cries, *My God, we know thee* When hypocrites, as if they were the friends of God, cover themselves with his shadow, and profess to act under his guardianship, and also boast at the same time of their knowledge of true doctrine, and boast of faith and of the worship of God; be it so, he says, that these cries are uttered by their mouths, yet facts speak differently, and reprove and expose their hypocrisy. We now then see how these two verses are connected together, and what is the Prophet's object.

The verb {זנח}, *zanech,* means "to remove far off," and "to throw to a distance;" and sometimes, as some think, "to detest." There is here, I doubt not, an implied contrast between the rejection of good and the pursuing of which the Prophet speaks afterwards, *Israel has driven good far from himself;* some expound {טוב}, *thub,* of God himself, as if it was of the masculine gender: but the Prophet, I have no doubt, simply accuses the Israelites of having receded from all justice and uprightness; yea, of having driven far off every thing right and just. *Israel*, then, *has repelled good; the enemy,* he says, *will pursue him* There is a contrast between repelling and pursuing, as though the prophet said, that the Israelites had by their defection obtained this, that the enemy would now seize them. There is then no better defense for us against all harms than attention to piety and justice; but when integrity is banished from us, then we are exposed to all evils, for we are deprived of the aid of God. We then see how beautifully the Prophet compares these two things — the rejection of good by Israel — and their pursuit by their enemies. He then adds —

Hosea 8:4

4. They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and

I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off.

4. Ipsi regnare fecerunt et non ex me: principatum instituerunt et nescivi: argentum suum et aurum suum fecerunt sibi idola, propterea excidetur.

The Prophet here notices two things, with respect to which he reprobates the perfidy and impious perverseness of the people, — they had, against the will of God, framed a religion for themselves, — and they had instituted a new kingdom. The salvation of that people, we know, was, as it were, founded on a certain kingdom and priesthood; and by these two things God testified that he was allied to the children of Abraham. We know where the happiness of the godly is deposited, even in Christ; for Christ is to us the fulness of a blessed life, because he is a king and a priest. Hence I have said, that through a certain kingdom and priesthood did the favor of God towards the people then shine forth. Now when the Israelites overturned the kingdom, which God by his own authority instituted, and when they corrupted and adulterated the priesthood, did they not, as it were, designedly extinguish the favor of God, and strive to annihilate whatever was needful for their salvation? This then is what the Prophet now speaks of, that is, that the Israelites in changing the kingdom and priesthood had undermined the whole appointment of God, and openly showed that they were unwilling to be ruled by God's hand; for they would have never dared to turn asides even in the least degree, from the kingdom of David, nor would they have dared to set up a new and spurious priesthood, if any particle of the fear of God had prevailed in their hearts.

We now perceive the design of the Prophet, which interpreters have not sufficiently considered; for some refer this to the covenants, as it seemed strange to them, that the Israelites should be so severely reproved for setting up Jeroboam as their king, since Ahijah the Shilonite had already declared by God's command, that it would be so. But they attend not sufficiently to what the Prophet had in view; for, as I have already said, when God instituted the priesthood, there shone forth in it the image of Christ the Mediator, whose office it is, to intercede with God that he might reconcile him to men; and then in the person of David shone forth also the kingdom of Christ. Now when the people tumultuously chose a new king for themselves without any command from God, and when they built for themselves a new temple and altar contrary to what the law prescribed, and when they divided the priesthood, was not all this a manifest corruption, a denial of religion? It is hence evident that the Israelites were in both these respects apostates; for they forsook God in two ways, — first, by separating from the house of David, — and then by forming for themselves a strange worship, which God had not commanded in his law.

With regard to the first, he says, *They have caused to reign, but not through me; they have instituted a government, and I knew it not,* that is, without my consent; for God is said not to know what he does not approve, or that

concerning which he is not consulted. But some one may object and say, that God knew of the new kingdom since he was the founder of it. To this the answer is, that God so works, that this pretext does not yet excuse the ungodly, since they aim at something else, rather than to execute his purpose. As for instance, God designed to prove the patience of his servant Job: the robbers who took away his property, were they excusable? By no means. For what was their object, but to enrich themselves by injustice and plunder? Since then they purchased their advantage at the expense of another, and unjustly robbed a man who had never injured them, they were destitute of every excuse. The Lord, however, did in the meantime execute by them what he had appointed, and what he had already permitted Satan to do. He intended, as it has been said, that his servant should be plundered; and Satan, who influenced the robbers, could not himself move a finger except by the permission of God; nay, except it was commanded him. At the same time, the Lord had nothing in common or in connection with the wicked, because his purpose was far apart from their depraved lust. So also it must be said of what is said here by the Prophet. As God intended to punish Solomon, so he took away the ten tribes. He indeed suffered Solomon to reign to the end of his days, and to retain the government of the kingdom; but Rehoboam, who succeeded him, lost the ten tribes. This did not happen by chance; for God had so decreed; yea, he had declared that it would be so. He sent Ahijah the Shilonite to offer the kingdom to Jeroboam, who had dreamt of nothing of the kind. God then ruled the whole by his own secret counsel, that the ten tribes should desert their allegiance to Rehoboam, and that Jeroboam, being made king, should possess the greater part of the kingdom. This, I say, was done by God's decree: but yet the people did not think that they were obeying God in revolting from Rehoboam, for they desired some relaxation, when they saw that the young king wished tyrannically to oppress them; hence they chose to themselves a new king. But they ought to have endured every wrong rather than to deprive themselves of that inestimable blessing, of which God gave them a symbol and pledge in the kingdom of David; for David, as it has been said, did not reign as a common king, but was a type of Christ, and God had promised his favor to the people as long as his kingdom flourished, as though Christ did then dwell in the midst of the people. When therefore the people shook off the yoke of David, it was the same as if they had rejected Christ himself because Christ in his type was despised.

We hence see how base was the conduct of the people in joining themselves to Jeroboam. For that sedition was not merely a proof of levity, as some people do often rashly upset the state of things; it was not merely a rash levity, but an impious denial of God's favor, the same as if they had rejected Christ himself. They had also, in this way, torn themselves from the body of the Church; and though the kingdom of Israel surpassed the kingdom of Judah in wealth and power, it yet became like a putrid member, for the whole soundness depended on the head, from which the ten tribes had cut

themselves off. We now then see why the Prophet so sharply expostulates with the Israelites for setting up a kingdom, but not through God; and solved also is the question, how God here declares that was not through him, which yet he had determined and testified by the mouth of his prophet, Ahijah the Shilonite; that is, that God, as it has been said, had not given a command to the people, nor permitted the people to withdraw themselves from their allegiance to Rehoboam. God then denies that kingdom, with respect to the people, was set up by his decree; and he says that what was done was this, — that the people made a king without consulting him; for the people ought to have attended to what pleased him, to what the Lord himself conceded; this they did not, but suddenly followed their own blind impulse.

And this place is worthy of being observed; for we hence learn that the same thing is done and not done by the Lord. Foolish men at this day, not versed in the Scripture, excite great commotions among us about the providence of God; yea, there are many rabid dogs who bark at us, because we say, (what even Scripture teaches everywhere,) that nothing is done except by the ordination and secret counsel of God, and that whatever is carried on in this world is governed by his hand. "How so? Is God, then a murderer? Is God, then a thief? Or, in other words, are slaughters, thefts, and all kinds of wickedness, to be imputed to him?" These men show, while they would be deemed acute, how stupid they are, and also how absurd; nay, rather what mad wild beasts they are. For the Prophet here shows that the same thing was done and not done by the Lord, but in a different way. God here expressly denies that Jeroboam was created king by him; on the other hand, by referring to sacred history, it appears that Jeroboam was created king, not by the suffrages of the people, but by the command of God; for no such thing had yet entered the mind of the people, when Ahijah was bidden to go to Jeroboam; and he himself did not aspire to the kingdom, no ambition impelled him; he remained quiet as a private man, and the Lord stirred him up and said, "I will have thee to reign." The people knew nothing of these things. After it was done, who could have denied but that Jeroboam was set on the throne, as it were, by the hand of God? All this is true; but with are regard to the people, he was not created by God a king. Why? Because the Lord had commanded David and his posterity to reign perpetually. We hence see that all things done in the world are so disposed by the secret counsel of God, that he regulates whatever the ungodly attempts and whatever even Satan tries to do, and yet he remains just; and it avails nothing to lessen the fault of evils when they say, that all things are governed by the secret counsel of God. With regard to themselves, they know what the Lord enjoins in his law; let them follow that rule: when they deviate from it, there is no ground for them to excuse themselves and say that they have obeyed God; for their design is ever to be regarded. We hence see how the Israelites appointed a king, but not by God; for it was sedition that impelled them, when, at the same time, the law enjoined that they should choose no

one as a king except him who had been elected by God; and he had marked out the posterity of David, and designed that they should occupy the royal throne till the coming of Christ.

Then follows the other charge, — that *they made to themselves idols from their gold and from their silver* God here complains that his worship was not only fallen into decay, but that it was also wholly corrupted by superstitions. It was an impiety not to be borne, that the people had desired a new king for themselves; but it was the summit of all evils, when the Israelites converted their gold and their silver into idols. *They have made,* he says, *their gold and silver idols;* that is, "I destined the gold and the silver, with which they have been enriched, for very different purposes. When, therefore, I was liberal to them, they abused my kindness, and from their gold and their silver they made to themselves idols or gods." Here, then, the Prophet, by implication, sharply reproves the blind madness of the people, that they made to themselves gods of corruptible things, which ought, in the meantime, to be serviceable to them; for to what purpose is money given us by the Lord, but for our daily use? Since, then, the Lord has destined gold and silver for our service, what frenzy it is when men work them into gods for themselves! But this main point must be ever remembered, that the Israelites, in all things, betrayed their own defection; for they hesitated not to overthrow the kingdom which God had instituted for their salvation, and they dared to pervert the whole worship of God, together with the priesthood, by introducing new superstitions.

Then follows a denunciation of punishment — *Therefore Israel shall be cut off.* Were any, indeed, to object and say that God was too rigid, there would be no reason for such an objection; for they had betrayed and violated their pledged faith, and by condemning and treading under foot both the kingdom and priesthood, they had rejected his favor. We hence see that the Prophet threatens them now with deserved destruction. Let us proceed —

Hosea 8:5

5. Thy calf, O Samaria, hath cast thee off; mine anger is kindled against them: how long will it be ere they attain to innocency?

5. Elongavit (vel, procul regecit; est idem verbum, {זנח}) vitulus tuus (vel, vitulum tuum) Samaria; excanduit furor meus in illos: quousque non poterunt munditiem (vel, innocentiam.)

The Prophet goes on with the same subject; for he shows that Israel perished through their own fault, and that the crime, or the cause of destruction, could not be transferred to any other. There is some ambiguity in the words, which does not, however, obscure the sense; for whether we read *calf* in the objective case, or say, *thy calf has removed thee far off,* it will be the same. Some say, "has forsaken thee," as they do above, "Israel has forsaken good;" but the sense of throwing away is to be preferred. Thy calf, then, *Samaria, has cast thee off,* or, "The Lord has cast far off thy calf." If we read *thy calf* in the "objective" case, then the Prophet denounces destruction not only on

the Israelites, but also on the calf in which they hoped. But the probable exposition is, that the calf had removed far off, or driven far Samaria or the people of Samaria; and this, I have no doubt, is the meaning of the words; for the Prophet, to confirm his previous doctrine, seems to remind the Israelites again, that the cause of their destruction was not anywhere to be sought but in their wickedness, and especially because they, having forsaken the true God, had made an idol for themselves, and formed the calf to be in the place of God. Now, it was a stupidity extremely gross and perverse, that having experienced, through so many miracles, the infinite power and goodness of God, they should yet have betaken themselves to a dead thing. They forged for themselves a calf! Must they not have been moved, as it were, by a prodigious madness, when they did thus fall away from the true God, who had so often and so wonderfully made himself known to them?

Hence God says now *Thy calf O Samaria;* that is "The captivity which now impends over thee will not happen by a fortuitous chance, nor will it be right to ascribe it to the wrong done by enemies, that they shall by force take thee to distant lands; but *thy very calf drives thee away* God had indeed fixed thee in this land, that it might be to thee a quiet heritage to the end; but thy calf has not suffered thee to rest here. The land of Canaan was indeed thy heritage, as it was also the Lord's heritage; but after God has been banished, and the calf has been introduced in his place, by what right can you now remain in the possession of it? *Thy calf,* then, *expels thee,* inasmuch as by thy calf thou hast first attempted to banish the true God." We now perceive the mind of the Prophet.

He afterwards says that *his anger kindled against them* He includes here all the Israelites, and shows that it cannot be otherwise, but that God would inflict on them extreme vengeance, inasmuch as they were not teachable, (as we have before often observed,) and could not be turned nor reformed by any admonitions.

How long, he says, *will they be not able to attain cleanness*, or *innocence?* He here deplores the obstinacy of the people, that at no period or space of time had they returned to a sane mind, and that there was no hope of them in future. *How long* then *will they not be able to attain innocence?* "Since it is so; that is, since they are unimpressible, (*incompatibiles*) as they commonly say, since they are void of all purity or innocence, I am, therefore, now constrained to adopt the last remedy, and, that is, to destroy them." Here God shuts the mouth of the ungodly, that they could not object that the severity which he so rigidly exercised towards them was immoderate. He refutes their calumnies by saying, that he had patiently borne with them, and was still bearing with them. But he saw them to be so obstinate in their wickedness, that no hope of them could be entertained. It follows —

Hosea 8:6

6. For from Israel was it also: the workman made it; therefore it is not God: but the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.

6. Quia ex Israele etiam (sic verto) artifex fecit eum, et non est Deus: quia in frusta (vel, fragmenta; contritiones alii verterent; alii, scintillas: sed clarus est sensus, si ita vertatur, in fragmenta) erit vitulus Samariae.

The beginning of this verse is not rightly explained, as I think, by those who so connect the pronoun demonstrative {הוא}, *eva,* as if it had an interposed copulative; and this ought to be noticed, for it gives a great emphasis to the Prophet's words. *Even this is from Israel* But what does the Prophet mean? He means this, that the calf was from Israel, as they had long before, at the beginning, formed to themselves a calf in the desert. But we do not yet clearly apprehend the mind of the Prophet, unless we perceive that there is here an implied comparison. For he accuses the Israelites of being the first founders of this superstition, and that they had not been, as it were, deceived by others; for they had not borrowed this corruption from the Gentiles, as it had been at times the case; but it was, so to speak, an intrinsic invention. *From Israel,* he says, *it is;* that is, "I find that you are now the second time the fabricators of this impious superstition. Could your fathers, when they forged a calf for themselves in the desert, make excuse (as they did) and say, that they were led by the faith of others? Could they plead that this cause of offence was presented to them by the Gentiles, and that they were ensnared, as it often happens, when some draw others into error? By no means. As then your fathers, when no one tempted them to superstition, became the founders of this new superstition through their own inclination, and, as it were through the instigation of the devil, so this calf is the second time from Israel, for ye cannot otherwise account for its origin, ye cannot transfer the fault to other nations; within, within," he says, "has this evil been generated." We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet, which is, that this superstition was not derived from others, but that Israel, under the influence of no evil persuader, had devised for themselves, of their own accord, this corruption, through which they had departed from the true and pure worship of God. It ia indeed true, that oxen and calves were worshipped in Egypt, and the same also might be said of other nations; but rivalship did not influence the people of Israel. What then? It cannot certainly be denied, but that they had stimulated themselves to this impious denial of God.

The same thing may be brought against the Papists of this day; that is, that the filthy mass of superstitions, by which the whole worship of God is corrupted by them, has been produced by themselves. If they object and say, that they have borrowed many rites from the heathens: this is indeed true; but was it the imitation of heathens which led them to these wicked inventions? By no means, but their own lust has led them astray; for being not content with the simple word of God, they have devised for themselves strange and spurious modes of worship; and afterwards additions were made according to the caprices of individuals: thus it has happened, that they are sunk in the deepest gulf. Whence then have the Papists so many patrons, on whom relying, then despise Christ the Mediator? Even because they

have adopted them for themselves. Whence also have they so many ungodly ceremonies, by which they pervert the worship of God? Even because they have fabricated them for themselves.

We now then see how grievous was the accusation, that the calf was even from Israel. "There is no reason then", the Lord says, "for you to say that you have been deceived by bad examples, like those who are mixed with profane heathens and contract their vices, as contagion creeps in easily among men, for they are by nature prone to vice; there is no reason," he says, "for any one to make an objection of this kind." Why? "Because the calf your fathers made for themselves in the desert was from Israel; and this calf also is from Israel, for it was not thrust upon you by others, but Jeroboam, your king, made it for you, and you willingly and applaudingly received it."

The workman, he says, *made it, and it is not God* Here the Prophet derides the stupidity oú the people; and there are many other like places, which occur everywhere, especially in the Prophets, in which God reprobates this madness of having recourse to modes of worship so absurd. For what is more contrary to reason than for man to prostrate himself before a dead piece of wood or before a atone, and to seek salvation from it? The unbelieving indeed put on their guises and say that they seek God in heaven, and, because idols and images are types of God, that they come to him through them; but yet what they do appears evident. These pretencea are then altogether vain, for their stupidity is openly seen, when they thus bend their knees before a wood or stone. Hence the Prophet here inveighs against this senseless stupidity, because man had made the idol. "Can a mortal man make a god? Ye do certainly ascribe divinity to the calf; is this in the power of the workman? Man has not bestowed life on himself, and cannot for one moment preserve that life which he has obtained at the pleasure of another; how then can he make a god from wood or stone? What sort of madness is this?"

He then adds, *It is not God, for in fragments shall be the calf of Samaria* The Prophet shows here from the event, how there was no power or no divinity in the calf, because it was to be reduced *to fragments.* The event then would at length show how madly the Israelites played the fool, when they formed to themselves a calf, to be as it were the symbol of the divine presence. We now see what the Prophet means: for he enhances the sin of Israel, because they had not been enticed by others to depart from the pure and genuine worship of God, but they had been their own deceivers. This is the meaning. It follows —

Hosea 8:7

7. For they have sown the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind: it hath no stalk: the bud shall yield no meal: if so be it yield, the strangers shall swallow it up.

7. Quia ventum serent (certe serunt ventum, inquit primo loco) et turbinem metent: non est ei culmus, germen non producet ferinam (non faciet, ad verbum;) si forte produxerit, extranei vorabunt eam.

The Prophet here shows by another figure how unprofitably the Israelites exercised themselves in their perverted worship, and then how vainly they excused their superstitions. And this reproof is very necessary also in the present day. For we see that hypocrites, a hundred times convicted, will not yet cease to clamour something: in short, they cannot bear to be conquered; even when their conscience reproves them, they will still dare to vomit forth their virulence against God. They will also dare to bring forward vain pretences: hence the Prophet says, that they have sown the wind, and that they shall reap the whirlwind. It is an appropriate metaphor; for they shall receive a harvest suitable to the sowing. The seed is cast on the earth, and afterwards the harvest is gathered: *They have sown,* he says, *the wind, they shall then gather the whirlwind,* or, *the tempest.* To sow the wind is nothing else than to put on some appearance to dazzle the eyes of the simple, and by craft and guise of words to cover their own impiety. When one then casts his hand, he seems to throw seed on the earth, but yet he sows the wind. So also hypocrites have their displays, and set themselves in order, that they may appear wholly like the pious worshipers of God.

We hence see that the design of the Prophet's metaphor, when he says that they sow the wind, is to show this, that though they differ nothing from the true worshippers of God in outward appearance, they yet sow nothing but wind; for when the Israelites offered their sacrifices in the temple, they no doubt conformed to the rule of the law, but at the same time came short of obedience to God. There was no faith in their services: it was then wind; that is, they had nothing but a windy and an empty show, though the outward aspect of their service differed nothing from the true and legitimate worship of God. They then sow the wind and reap the whirlwind. But we cannot finish to-day.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that since the rule of thy true and lawful worship is sufficiently known to us, and thou continues to exhort us to persevere in our course, and to abide in that pure and simple worship which thou hast fully approved, — O grant, that we may, in true obedience of faith, respond to thee: and though we now see the whole world carried here and there, and all places full of the awful examples of apostacy, and so much madness everywhere prevailing, that men become more and more hardened daily, — O grant, that, being fortified by invincible faith against these so many temptations, we may persevere in true religion, and never at any time turn aside from the teaching of thy word, until we be at length gathered to Christ our King, under whom, as our head, thou hast promised that we shall ever be safe, and until we attain that happy life which is laid up for us in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-second

We were not able in the last lecture to finish what the Prophet has said in the seventh verse; that is, that whatever hope the Israelites entertained

would be deceptive and fruitless; for they imagined many deliverances as arising from nothing. He had before condemned their wandering and perverse circuitous courses, now flying to Egypt, then to Assyria, in order to seek assistance, and at the same time overlooking and neglecting God. He therefore says now, that they would have to gather fruit corresponding with what was sown: *They had sown the wind, they shall reap,* he says, *the whirlwind* And by this figure he signifies that their confidence was vain, that their counsels were frivolous.

He afterwards adds, that there would be no stalk; and pursuing the same similitude, he says, *The bud shall yield no meal; if so be it yields, strangers shall swallow it up* The meaning is, that the Israelites went astray in their counsels, and had nothing real; it was the same as if one had sown the wind. Then follows the harvest of the whirlwind; for their seed would not spring up, no corn would grow which would yield meal; but if their counsels attained any fruit, or if they reaped any thing, strangers would devour it; for the Lord would at length cause that their enemies would scatter whatever they thought that they had attained. It further follows —

Hosea 8:8

8. Israel is swallowed up: now shall they be among the Gentiles as a vessel wherein is no pleasure.

8. Voratus est Israel, nunc erunt inter gentes quasi vas in quo non est oblectatio (hoc est, vas rejectitium, vel, contemptibile.)

He uses the same word as before when he spake of the meal, and says, that not only the provision of Israel shall be devoured, but also the people themselves; and he upbraids the Israelites with their miseries, that they might at length acknowledge God to be adverse to them. For the Prophet's object was this — to make them feel their evils, that they might at length humble themselves and learn suppliantly to pray for pardon. For it is a great wisdom, when we so far profit under God's scourges, that our sins come before our eyes.

He therefore says, *Israel is devoured and is like a cast off vessel, even among the Gentiles,* when yet that people excelled the rest of the world, as the Lord had chosen them for himself. As they were a peculiar people, they were superior to other nations; and then they were set apart for this end, that they might have nothing in common with the Gentiles. But he says now that this people is dispersed, and everywhere despised and cast off. This could not have been, except God had taken away his protection. We hence see that the Prophet had this one thing in view — to make the Israelites feel that God was angry with them. It now follows

Hosea 8:9-10

9. For they are gone up to Assyria, a wild ass alone by himself: Ephraim hath hired lovers.

9. Quia ipsi ascenderunt in Assyriam, onager (asinus sylvestris) solitarius (aliqui tamen generaliter accipiunt pro quavis fera; sylvestris ergo asinus soli-

tarius:) Ephraim conduxit amores (vel, amatores conduxerunt; est quidem verbum pluralis numeri {,{ונתה sed Ephraim est collectivum nomen, ideo nihil est obsurdi. Sequitur)

10. Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them, and they shall sorrow a little for the burden of the king of princes.

10. Quanivis conducant (vel, conduxerint) inter gentes, nunc congregabo eos et dolebunt (vel, incipient) paululum ab onere regis, principum (hoc est, regis et principum, subaudienda enim est copula inter nomen {רלמ} et .{מירש}

Here again the Prophet derides all the labour the people had undertaken to exempt themselves from punishment. For though hypocrites dare not openly and avowedly to fight against God, yet they seek vain subterfuges, by which they may elude him. So the Israelites ceased not to weary themselves to escape the judgment of God; and this folly, or rather madness, the Prophet exposes to scorn. They have gone up to Assyria, he says, as a wild ass alone; Ephraim had hired lovers In the first clause he indirectly reprobates the brutish wildness of the people, as though he said, ``They are like the wild animals of the wood, which can by no means be tamed.'' And Jeremiah uses this very same similitude, when he complains of the people as being led away by their own indomitable lust, being like the wild ass, who, snuffing the wind, betakes himself, in his usual manner, to a precipitant course, (Jeremiah 2:24.) Probably he touches also, in an indirect way, on the unbelief of the people in having despised the protection of God; for the people ought not to have thus hastened to Assyria, as if they were destitute of every help, because they knew that they were protected by the hand of God. And the Prophet here reproves them for regarding as nothing that help which the Lord had promised, and which he was really prepared to afford, had not the Israelites betaken themselves elsewhere. Hence he says, Ephraim, as a wild ass, has gone up to Assyria; he perceived not that he would be secure and safe, provided he sheltered himself under the shadow of the hand of his God; but as if God could do nothing, he retook himself to the Assyrians: this was ingratitude. And then he again takes up the similitude which we have before noticed, that the people of Israel had shamefully and wickedly departed from the marriage-covenant which God had made with them: for God, we know, was to the Israelites in the place of a husband, and had pledged his faith to them; but when they transferred themselves to another, they were like unchaste women, who prostitute themselves to adulterers, and desert their own husbands. Hence the Prophet again reproves the Israelites for having violated their faith pledged to God, and for being like adulterous women. He indeed goes farther, and says, that they hired adulterers for wages. Unchaste women are usually enticed by the charms of gain; for when adulterers wish to corrupt a woman, they offer gifts, they offer money. He says that this practice was inverted; and the same thing is expressed by the Prophet Ezekiel; who, after having stated that women are usually corrupted by having some gain or some advantage proposed to them, adds,

`But thou wastest thine own property, and settest not thyself to hire, but on the contrary thou hirest wantons,'
(Ezekiel 16:31-33.)

So the Prophet speaks here, though more briefly, Ephraim, he says, has hired lovers

But it follows, Though they have hired among the nations, now will I gather them. This place may be variously expounded. The commonly received explanation is, that God would gather the hired nations against Israel; but I would rather refer it to the people themselves. But it admits of a twofold sense: the first is, that the great forces which the people has on every side acquired for themselves, would not prevent God from destroying them; for the verb {קבץ}, kobets, which they render, ``to gather,'' often means in Hebrew to throw by a slaughter into an heap, as we say in French, Trousser, (to bundle.) And this meaning would be very suitable --- that though they extended themselves far and wide, by gathering forces on every side, they would yet be collected in another way, for they would be brought together into a heap. The second sense is this --- that when Israel should be drawn away to the Gentiles, the Lord would gather him; as though he said, ``Israel burns with mad lusts, and runs here and there among the Gentiles; this heat is nothing else than dispersion; it is the same as if he designedly wished to destroy the unity in which his safety consists; but I will yet gather him against his will; that is, preserve him for a time.''

It then follows, They shall grieve a little for the burden of the king and princes. The word which the Prophet uses interpreters expound in two ways. Some derive {יחלו}, ichelu, from the verb {חל}, chel, and others from {חלל}, chelal, which means, ``to begin;'' and therefore give this rendering, ``They shall begin with the burden of the king and princes;'' that is, They shall begin to be burdened by the king and princes. Others offer this version, ``They shall grieve a little for the burden of the king and princes;'' that is, They shall be tributaries before the enemies shall bring them into exile; and this will be a moderate grief.

If the first interpretation which I have mentioned be approved, then there is here a comparison between the scourges with which God at first gently chastised the people, and the last punishment which he was at length constrained to inflict on them; as though he said, ``They complain of being burdened by tributes; it is nothing, or at least it is nothing so grievous, in comparison with the dire future grief which their last destruction will bring with it.''

But this clause may well be joined with that mitigation which I have briefly explained, and that is, that when the people had willingly dispersed themselves, they had been preserved beyond expectation, so that they did not immediately perish; for they would have run headlong into destruction, had not God interposed an hindrance. Thus the two verses are to be read conjointly, They ascended into Assyria as a wild ass; that is, ``They showed their unnameable and wild disposition, when thus unrestrainedly carried away; and then they offer me a grievous insult; for as if they were destitute of my help, they run to the profane Gentiles, and esteem as nothing my power, which would have been ready to help them, had they depended on me, and placed their salvation in my hand.'' He then reproaches their perfidy, that they were like unchaste women, who leave their husbands, and abandon themselves to lewdness. Then it follows, Though they do this, that is, ``Though having despised my aid, they seek deliverance from the profane Gentiles, and though they despise me,

and choose to submit themselves to adulterers rather than to keep their conjugal faith with me, I will yet gather them, when thus dispersed.'' The Lord here enhances the sin of the people; for he did not immediately punish their ingratitude and wickedness, but deferred doing so for a time; and in his kindness he would have led them to repentance, had not their madness been wholly incurable: though then they thus hire among the Gentiles, I will yet gather them, that is, ``preserve them;'' and for what purpose? That they may grieve a little, and that is, that they may not wholly perish, as persons running headlong into utter ruin; for they seemed designedly to seek their last destruction, when they were thus wilfully and violently carried away to profane nations. That is indeed a most dreadful tearing of the body, which cannot be otherwise than fatal. They shall, however, grieve a little; that is, ``I will so act, that they may by degrees return to me, even by the means of moderate grief.''

We hence see more clearly why the Prophet said, that this grief would be small, which was to be from the burden of the king and princes. It was designed by the Israelites to excite the Assyrians immediately to war; and this would have turned out to their destruction, as it did at last; but the Lord suspended his vengeance, and at the same time mitigated their grief, when they were made tributaries. The king and his counsellors were constrained to exact great tributes; the people then grieved: but they had no other than a moderate grief, that they might consider their sins and return to the Lord; yet all this was without any fruit. Hence the less excusable was the obstinacy of the people. We now perceive what the Prophet meant. It now follows ---

Hosea 8:11

11. Because Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.

11. Quia multiplicavit Ephraim altaria ad peccandum, erunt ei altaria ad peccandum.

The Prophet here again inveighs against the idolatry of the people, which was, however, counted then the best religion; for the Israelites, as it has been said were become hardened in their superstitions, and had long before fallen away from the pure and lawful worship of God. And we know, that where error has once prevailed, it attains firmness by length of time: hence the Israelites had become hardened in their perverted and fictitious worship. They thought that they did the most meritorious deed whenever they sacrificed, while at the same time, they provoked in this way the wrath of God more and more against themselves. And as they had become thus hardened, the Prophet says, that they multiplied for themselves altars for the purpose of sinning, and that there would be altars for them to sin It was (as I have already said) most difficult to persuade theme that their altars were for the purpose of sinnings and that the more attentive they were in worshipping God, the more grievously they sinned.

We see how Papists of this day glory in their abominations. It is certain that they do nothing but what is accursed before God; for there reigns among them every kind of filthiness, and there is no purity whatever: they therefore continue to offend God as it were designedly. Put at the same time it is their highest holiness to multiply

altars: the same also was the prevailing error in the Prophet's time. This was the reason why he said, that altars were multiplied in order to sin Who at this day can persuade the Papists, that many chapels as they build, are so many sins by which they provoke the wrath of God? But the faithful ought to be content, not with one altar, (for there is now no need of an altar,) but they ought to be content with a common table. The Papists, on the contrary, build altars to themselves without end, where they sacrifice; and they think that God is thus bound to them as by so many chains: as many chapels as are under the papacy are, they think, so many holds for God, (dei carceres,) and that God is there held inclosed. But if any one should say, that so many fiends (Diabolos) dwell in such places, we know how furiously angry they would be.

It is then no superfluous repetition, when the Prophet says, that altars were multiplied in order to sin; and then, that altars would be for sin: for in the second clause, he speaks of the punishment which God would inflict on superstitious men. In the first clause, he shows that their good intentions were frivolous, and that they were greatly deceived, when at their pleasure they devised for themselves various forms of worship. This is one thing. Then it follows, There shall then be to them altars to sin; as they would not willingly repent, nor embrace salutary admonitions, God would at last really show how much he valued what they called their good intentions; for now a dreadful vengeance was at hand, which would prove to them, that in increasing altars, they did nothing else but increase sins. It then follows ---

Hosea 8:12

12. I have written to him the great things of my law, but they were counted as a strange thing.

12. Scripsi ei pretiosa legis meae, sicut alienum reputata sunt (quasi aliquid extraneum reputatum fuit.)

The Prophet shows here briefly, how we ought to judge of divine worship, and thus intends to cut off the handle from all devices, by which men usually deceive themselves, and form disguises, when at any time they are reproved. For he sets the law of God, and the rule it prescribes, in opposition to all the inventions of men. Men think God unjust, except he receives as good and legitimate whatever they imagine to be so; but God, as it is said in another place, prefers obedience to all sacrifices. Hence the Prophet now declares, that all the superstitions, which then prevailed among the people of Israel, were condemned before God; for they obeyed not the law, but had spurious and perverted modes of worship, which they had invented for themselves. We then see the connection of what the Prophet says: he had said in the last verse, that they had multiplied altars for the purpose of sinning; but so great, as I have said, was the obstinacy of the people, that they would by no means bear this to be told to them; he then adds in the person of God, that his law had been given them, and that they had departed from it.

We hence see, that there is no need of using many words in contending with the superstitious, who daringly devise various kinds of worship, and wholly different from what God commands; for they are to be distinctly pressed with this one thing, that obedience is of more account with God than sacrifices, and further, that there is a

certain rule contained in the law, and that God not only bids us to worship him, but also teaches us the way, from which it is not lawful to depart. Since, then, the will of God is known and made plain, why should we now dispute with men, who close their eyes and wilfully turn aside, and deign not to pay any regard to God? I have written then, the Lord says: and to give this truth more weight, he introduces God as the speaker. It would have indeed been enough to say, ``God has delivered to you his law, why should you not seek knowledge from this law, rather than from your own carnal judgment? Why do you wish thus licentiously to wander, as if no restraint has been put upon you?'' But it is a more emphatical way of speaking, when God himself says, I have written my law, but they have counted it as something foreign; that is, as if it did not belong to them.

But he says, that he had written to Israel. He does not simply mention writing, but says, that the treasure had been deposited among the people of Israel; and the worse the people were, because they acknowledged not that so great an honor had been conferred on them, for this was their peculiar inheritance. I have written then my law, ``and I have not written it indiscriminately for all, but have written it for my elect people; but they have counted it as something extraneous.'' For the word may be rendered in either way.

He adds, The great things, or, the precious, or, the honorable things of my law. Had he said, ``I have written to you my law,'' the legislator himself was doubtless worthy, to whom all ought to submit with the greatest reverence, and to form their whole life according to his will; but the Lord here extols his own law by a splendid eulogy, and this he does to repress the wickedness of men, who obscure its dignity and excellency: I have written, he says, the great things of my law ``How much soever they may despise my law, I have yet set forth in it a wisdom which ought to be admired by the whole world; I have in it brought to light the secrets of heavenly wisdom. Since then it is so, what excuse can there be for the Israelites for despising my law?'' He says, that they counted it as something foreign, when yet they had been brought up under its teaching, and the Lord had called them to himself from their very infancy. Since then they ought to have acknowledged the law of God as a banner, under which the Lord preserved them, he here reproaches them for having counted it as something extraneous. It then follows ---

Hosea 8:13

13. They sacrifice flesh for the sacrifices of mine offerings, and eat it; but the Lord accepteth them not; now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins: they shall return to Egypt.

13. Sacrificia holocaustorum meorum immolant carnem, et comedunt: Jehova gratum non habebit; nunc recordabitur iniquitatis eorum, visitabit scelus ipsorum; ipsi Aegyptum revertantur.

Interpreters think that the Israelites are here derided because they trusted in their own ceremonies, and that their sacrifices are reproachfully called flesh. But we must see whether the words of the Prophet contain something deeper. For the word {הבהב}, ebeb, some rightly expound, in my judgment, as meaning ``sacrifices,'' either burnt or roasted; it is a word of four letters. Others derive it from {יהב}, ieb,

which signifies ``to give gifts;'' and hence they render thus, ``sacrifices of my gifts;'' and this is the more received opinion. I view the Prophet here as not only blaming the Israelites for putting vain trust in their own ceremonies, which were perverted and vicious; but also as adducing something more gross, and by which it could be proved, that their folly was even ridiculous, yea, to profane men and children. When we only read, The sacrifices of my gifts, which they ought to have offered to me, the sense seems frigid; but when we read, ``The sacrifices of my burnt-offerings! they offer flesh'', the meaning is, So palpable is their contempt, that they cannot but be condemned even by children. How so? Because for burnt-offerings they offer flesh to me; that is they fear lest any portion of the sacrifices should be lost: and when they ought, when offering burnt-sacrifices, to burn the flesh, they keep it entire, that they may stuff themselves. Hence they make a great display in sacrificing: and yet it appears to be palpable mockery, for they turn burnt-offerings into peace-offerings, that the flesh may remain entire for them to eat it. And no doubt, it has ever been a vice dominant in hypocrites to connect gain with superstitions. How much soever, then, idolaters may show themselves to be wholly devoted to God, they yet will take care that nothing be lost.

The Prophet then seems now to reprove this vice; I yet allow that the Israelites are blamed for thinking that God is pacified by sacrifices which were of themselves of no value, as we have had before a similar declaration. But I join both views together --- that they offered to God vain sacrifices without piety, and then, that they offered flesh for burnt-offerings, and thus fed themselves and cared not for the worship of God. The sacrifices then of my burnt-offerings they offer; but what do they offer? Flesh Nor does he seem to have mentioned in vain the word flesh. Some say that all sacrifices are here called flesh by way of contempt; but there seems rather to me to be a contrast made between burnt sacrifices and flesh; because the people of Israel wished to take care of themselves and to have a rich repast, when the Lord required a burnt-offering to be presented to him: and he afterwards adds, and they eat By the word eating, he confirms what I have already said, that is, that he here reproves in the Israelites the vice of being intent only on cramming themselves, and of only putting forth the name of God as a vain pretence, while they were only anxious to feed themselves.

It is the same with the Papists of our day, when they celebrate their festivals; they indulge themselves, and think that the more they drink and eat, the more God is bound to them. This is their zeal; they eat flesh, and yet think that they offer sacrifices to God. They offer, then, their stomach to God, when it is thus well filled. Such are the oblations of the Papists. So also the Prophet now says, ``They eat the flesh which they ought to have burned.''

The Lord, he says, will not accept them Here again he briefly shows, that while hypocrites thus make pretences, they are self-deceived, and will at last find out how vainly they have lied to God and men: ``God will not accept them.'' He here repudiates, in the name of God, their sacrifices; for whatever they might promise to themselves, it was enough that they devised for themselves these modes of worship; for God had never commanded a word respecting them.

It then follows, Now will he remember their iniquity, and visit their sins The Prophet denounces a future punishment, lest hypocrites should flatter themselves, when God's fury is not immediately kindled against them, for it is usual with them to abuse the patience of God. Hence Hosea now forewarns them, and says, ``Though God may connive for a time, there is yet no reason for the Israelites to think that they shall be free from punishment: God will at length,'' he says, ``remember their iniquity.'' He uses a common form of speaking, which everywhere occurs in Scripture: God is said to remember when he really, and as with a stretched-out hand, shows himself to be an avenger. ``The Lord now spares you; but he will, in a short time, show how much he abominates these your impure sacrifices: He will remember, then, your iniquity Visitation follows this remembering, as the effect the cause.

They shall flee, he says, to Egypt The Prophet, I doubt not, intimates here, that vain would be all the escapes which the Israelites would seek; and though God might allow them to flee to Egypt, yet it would be, he says, without any advantage: ``Go, flee to Egypt, but your flight will be useless.'' The Prophet expressed this distinctly, that the people might know that they had to do with God, against whom they could make no defense, and that they might no longer deceive themselves by foolish imaginations. And though the people were blinded by so great an obstinacy, that this admonition had no effect; yet they were thus rendered the more inexcusable. It now follows ---

Hosea 8:14

14. For Israel hath forgotten his Maker, and buildeth temples; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities: but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

14. Et oblitus est Israel factoris sui, et aedificavit altaris: Juda autem multiplicavit urbes munitas: ego vero ignem emittam (et emittam ignem, ad verbum) in urbes ejus, et comedet (qui comedet, aut, vorabit) palatia ejus.

Here the Prophet concludes his foregoing observations. It is indeed probable that he preached them at various times; but, as I have already said, the heads of the sermons which the Prophet delivered are collected in this book, so that we may know what his teaching was. He then discoursed daily on idolatry, on superstitions, and on the other corruptions which then prevailed among the people; he often repeated the same threatenings, but afterwards collected into certain chapters the things which he had spoken. The conclusion, then, of his former teaching was this, that Israel had forgotten his Maker, whilst for himself he had been building temples He says, that he forgot his Maker by building temples because he followed not the directions of the law. We hence see that God will have himself to be known by his word. Israel might have objected and said, that no such thing was intended, when he built temples in Dan and Bethel, but that he wished by these to retain the remembrance of God. But the Prophet here shows that God is not truly known, and that men do not really remember him, except when they worship him according to what the law prescribes, except when they submit themselves wholly to his word, and undertake nothing, and attempt nothing, but what he has commanded. What then the superstitious say is remembrance, the Prophet here plainly testifies is forgetfullness. The case is the

same at this day, when we blame the Papists for their idols; their excuse is this, that what they set forth is in pictures and statues the image of God, and that images, as they say, are the books of the illiterate. But what does the Prophet answer here? That Israel forgot his Maker There was an altar in Bethel, and there Israel was wont to offer sacrifices, and they called this the worship of God; but the Prophet shows that each worship was accursed before God, and that it had no other effect than wholly to obliterate the holy name of God from the minds of men, so that the whole of religion perished.

Remarkable then is this passage; for the Prophet says, that the people forgot God their Maker, when they built temples for themselves But what was in the temples so vicious, as to take away the remembrance of God from the world? Even because God would have but one temple and altar. If a reason was asked, a reason might indeed have been given; but the people ought to have acquiesced in the command of God. Though God may not show why he commands this or that, it is enough that we ought to obey his word. Now, then, it appears, that when Israel built for himself various temples, he departed from God, and for this reason, because he followed not the rule of the law, and kept not himself within the limits of the divine command. Hence it was to forget God. We now apprehend the object of the Prophet.

Though then they were wont to glory in their temples, and there to display their pomp and splendor, and proudly to delight in their superstitions, yet the Prophet says, that they had forgotten their Creator, and for this reason only, because they had not continued in his law. He says, that they had forgotten God their Maker; by the word Maker, the Prophet alludes not to God as the framer of the world and the creator of men, but he applies it to the condition of the people. For, as we well know, the favor of God had been peculiar towards that people; he had not only made them, as a part of the human race, but also formed them a people to himself. Since then God had thus intended them to be devoted to him, the Prophet here increases and enhances their sin, when he says, that they obeyed not his word, but followed their own devices and depraved imaginations.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have already so often provoked thy wrath against us, and thou hast in thy paternal indulgence borne with us, or at least chastised us so gently as to spare us, --- O grant, that we may not become hardened in our wickedness, but seasonably repent, and that we may not be drawn away after the inventions of our flesh, nor seek ways to flee away from thee, but come straight forward to thy presence, and make a humble, sincere, and honest confession of our sins, that thou mayest receive us into favor, and that being reconciled to us, thou mayest bestow on us a larger measure of thy blessings, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-third

It remains for us to consider the second part of the last verse of the eighth chapter, in which the Prophet blames the tribe of Judah for multiplying fenced cities. This was not in itself condemnable before God; but the Prophet saw that the confidence of the people was transferred to these cities as it usually happens. Rare indeed is the

example, when any people are well fortified, that they become not implicated in this charge of misplaced confidence. But as this vice in the tribe of Judah was well known, the Prophet does not here complain without reason, that they reposed their hope on their fortified cities, and thus deprived God of his just praise. And then he denounces a punishment. I will send fire upon his cities, and it shall devour his palaces The meaning is, that when men turn away their minds from God, and rely on perishable things, a fatal destruction will at last follow; for the Lord will frustrate the hope of those who thus deprive him of his honor. This then is the meaning. Now follows the ninth chapter.

Hosea 9

Chapter 9

Hosea 9:1

1. Rejoice not, O Israel, for joy, as other people: for thou hast gone a whoring from thy God, thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor.

1. Ne laeteris Israel super exultatione sicuti populi, quia scortata es a Deo tuo: dilexisti mercedem super omnes areas tritici.

It is not known at what time the Prophet delivered this discourse, but it is enough to know that it is directed against the obstinate wickedness of the people, because they could by no means be turned to repentance, though their defection was, at the same time, manifest. He now declares that God was so angry, that no success could be hoped for. And this warning ought to be carefully noticed; for we see that hypocrites as long as God spares or indulges them, take occasion to be secure: they think that they have sure peace with God, when he bears with them even for a short time; and further, except the drawn sword appears, they are never afraid. Since, then, men sleep so securely in their vices, especially when the Lord treats them with forbearance and kindness, the Prophet here declares, that the Israelites had no reason to rejoice for their prosperity, or to flatter themselves under this cover, that the Lord had not immediately taken vengeance on them; for he says, that though all people under heaven were prosperous, yet Israel would be miserable, because he had committed fornication against his God.

We now perceive the meaning of the Prophet. Israel, he says, rejoice not thou with exultations like the people; that is, ``Whatever prosperity may happen to thee, though God may seem propitious by not afflicting thee, but kindly bearing with thee, --- nay, though he may bountifully nourish thee, and may seem to give thee many proofs of paternal favor, yet there is no reason for thee to felicitate thyself, for vain will be this joy, because an unhappy end awaits thee.'' Thou hast committed fornication, he says, against thy God This warning was very necessary. This vice, we

know, has ever prevailed among men, that they are blind to their sins as long as the Lord spares them; and experience, at the present day, most fully proves, that the same disease still cleaves to our marrow. As it is so, let this passage of the Prophet awaken us, so that we may not rejoice, though great prosperity may smile on us; but let us rather inquire, whether God has a just cause of anger against us. Though he may not openly put forth his hand, though he may not pursue us, we ought yet to anticipate his wrath; for it is the proper office of faith, not only to find out from present punishment that God is angry, but also to fear, on account of any prevailing vices, the punishment that is far distant. Let us then learn to examine ourselves, and to make a severe scrutiny, even when the Lord conceals his displeasure, and visits us not for our sins. If, then, we have committed fornication against God, all our prosperity ought to be suspected by us; for this contempt, in abusing God's blessings, will have to be dearly bought by us.

The comparison here made is also of great weight. As other people, says the Prophet. He means, that though God might pardon heathen nations, yet he would punish Israel, for less excusable was his apostasy and rebellion in having committed fornication against his God. That other nations wandered in their errors, was no wonder; but that Israel should have thus cast off the yoke, and then denied his God, that he should have broken and violated the fidelity of sacred marriage, --- all this was quite monstrous. It is then no wonder that God here declares, by the mouth of his Prophet, that though he spared other people, he would yet inflict just punishment on Israel.

He then adds, Thou hast loved a reward upon every cornfloor He pursues the same metaphor, that Israel had committed fornication like an unchaste and perfidious woman. Hence he says, that they were like harlots, who are so enticed by gain, that they are not ashamed of their lewdness. He said yesterday, that the people had hired lovers; but now he says, that they were led astray by the hope of reward. These things are apparently contradictory; but their different aspect is to be noticed. Israel hired for himself lovers, when he purchased, with a large sum of money, a confederacy with the Assyrians; but, at the same time, when he worshipped false gods with the hope of gain, he was like strumpets, who prostitute their body to all kinds of filthiness, when any rewards entice them.

But a question may be here moved, Why does the Prophet say that the reward is meretricious, when a plenty of corn is sought for? for he reproaches the Israelites for no other thing, but that they wished their floors to be filled with wheat. This seems not indeed to be in itself worthy of reproof, for who of us does not desire a fruitful increase of corn and wine? Nay, since the Lord, among other blessings, promises to give abundance of provision, it is certainly lawful to ask by supplications and prayers what he promises. But the Prophet calls it a wicked reward, when what God has promised to give is sought from idols. When therefore we depart from the one true God, and devise for ourselves new gods to nourish us and supply our food and raiment, we are like strumpets, who choose by lewdness to gain support, rather than to receive it from their own husbands. This is then to be like a woman whom her husband treats bountifully, and she casts her eyes on others, and seeks a

filthy reward from adulterers. Such are idolaters. For God offers himself freely to us, and testifies that he will perform the part of a father and preserver; but the greater part, despising the blessing of God, flee elsewhere, and invent for themselves false gods, as we see to be done under the Papacy: for who are the patrons (nutricios --- nourishers) they implore, when either drought or any other adverse season threatens sterility and want? They have an innumerable multitude of gods to whom they flee. They are then strumpets who hunt for gain from adulterers; while, at the same time, God freely promises to be a husband to them, and to take care that nothing should be wanting. Since, then, they are not satisfied with the blessing of God alone, it is a meretricious lust, which is insatiable, and in itself filthy and disgraceful.

We now then see what the Prophet repudiates in the people of Israel, and that is, They hoped for a larger abundance of corn from their idols than from the true God, as was the case with the idolaters mentioned by Jeremiah,

`when we served,' they said, `the queen of heaven,
we abounded in wine and corn,' (Jeremiah 44:17.)

They compared God with idols, and denied that they were so well and so sumptuously provided for when they worshipped God alone. Since, then, idolaters give honour to fictitious gods, so as to think them to be more liberal to them than the true God, this is the reason that the Prophet now so severely blames Israel, when he says that they loved a meretricious reward on all the floors of wheat. It then follows ---

Hosea 9:2

2. The floor and the winepress shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail in her. [52]

2. Area et torcular non pascet eos, et mustum mentietur in ea.

God now denounces such a punishment as the Israelites deserved. They had been drawn away, as we have said, from the pure worship of God by allurements; they hoped for more profit from superstitions. Hence God shows, that he would on this account punish them by taking away from them their wine and corn, as we have already noticed in Hosea 2: for it is the only way by which the Lord restores men to a sane mind, or at least renders them inexcusable, to deprive them of his blessings. The harlot, as long as gain is to be had, as long as she surpasses all honest and chaste matrons in her dress and mode of living, is pleased with herself and blinded by her own splendour; but when she is reduced to extreme want, when she sees herself to be the laughing-stock of all, and when she drags a miserable life in poverty, she then sighs and owns how infatuated she had been in leaving her husband. So the Lord now declares by his Prophet, that he would thus deal with the Israelites, that they might no longer please themselves with such delusions.

Hence he says, The floor and the wine-press shall not feed them, and the new wine shall disappoint them, (mentietur illis --- shall lie to them;) --- that is, the vineyards shall not answer their expectation. It is the same as though he said, ``As these men regard only their stomach, as they deem nothing of any moment but provision,

[52] 'And the choice wine shall deceive them.' — Newcome. The true reading no doubt is {,בם `them,' and not ,{בה} `her,' confirmed by all the early versions and by several of the best MSS., and is adopted by Horsley as well as Newcome. And so does Calvin in his exposition take the word. --- Ed.

therefore the floor and the wine-press shall not feed them; I will deprive them of their support, that they may understand that they in vain worship false gods.'' Let us take a common similitude: We see some boys so disingenuous as not to be moved either by disgrace or even by stripes; but as they are subject to the cravings of appetite, when the father deprives them of bread, they nearly lose all hope. Stripes do no good, all warnings are slighted; but when the boy who loves excess sees that bread is denied him, he finds out that his father's displeasure ought to be feared. Thus God corrects men addicted to excessive indulgence; for they are so insensible, that no other remedy can do them any good.

We now, then, apprehend the meaning of the Prophet. He first reproaches the Israelites for loving a reward, for hastening after fictitious gods, that they might glut themselves with great abundance of things: but when the Lord saw that they had become stupefied in their fatness, he said, ``I will deprive them of all their provisions; neither wine nor wheat shall be given them; this want will at length drive them to repentance.'' We hence see how the Lord deals with men according to their disposition. And his manner of speaking ought to be noticed; he says, that neither the floor nor the wine-press shall feed them. He does not say, that the fields shall be barren; he does not say, that he would send hail or storm; but he says, that neither the floor nor the wine-press shall feed them; and further, that the new wine shall disappoint them; that is, when they shall think themselves to be blessed with all plenty, when the harvest shall appear abundant, and when they shall have already, by anticipation, swallowed up the large produce of their vineyards, all this shall come to nothing; for neither the floor nor the wine-press shall feed them; nay, the very wine which they thought to have been prepared shall disappoint them. It follows ---

Hosea 9:3

3. They shall not dwell in the Lord's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean things in Assyria.

3. Non habitabunt in terra Jehovae, et revertetur Ephraim in Aegyptum, et in Assyria immundum comedent.

The Prophet proclaims here a heavier punishment --- that the Lord would drive them into exile. It was indeed a dreadful repudiation, when they were deprived of the land of Canaan, which was the Lord's rest, as it is called in the Psalms, (Psalm 132:14.) While they dwelt in the land of Canaan, they lived as it were in the habitations of God, and could have a sure hope that he would be a father to them: but when they were thence expelled, the Lord testified that he regarded them as aliens; it was the same as when a father disinherits his son. The Prophet now threatens them not only with the want of food, but also with repudiation, which was far more grievous --- They shall not dwell, he says, in the Lord's land

There is an elegant play on words in the verbs here used; {ישבו}, ishebu, and {ושב}, usheb; the one is from {ישב}, isheb, and the other from {שוב}, shub. `They shall not dwell in the Lord's land; but Ephraim shall return into Egypt:' and the other circumstance is still more dreadful. In Assyria they shall eat what is unclean; for it was the same as if the Lord intended to blend that holy people with the profane Gentiles, so that there should be afterwards no difference; for the uncleanness of

which the Prophet speaks would have the effect of destroying the distinction which the adoption of God made between that people and the profane nations. It was indeed by badges that the Lord retained the people of Israel, when he ordered them to abstain from unclean meats: but when they differed nothing, as to common food, from the Gentiles, it was evident that they were rejected by God, and that the holiness which belonged to them through the free covenant of God was obliterated. They shall eat, then, what is unclean in Assyria; that is, ``They shall not now be under my care and protection; they shall live according to their own will, as the other nations. I have hitherto preserved them under some restraint; but now, as they will not bear to live under my law, they shall have their own liberty, and shall be profane like the rest of the world, so that they shall become involved in all the defilements and pollutions of the Gentiles.'' This is the meaning.

And now we ought to consider, whether it be right, when we are among idolaters, to conform to the rites approved by them. This place, no doubt, as other places, most clearly shows, that nothing more grievous can happen to us than the doing away of all difference between us and the profane despisers of God, even in the outward manner of living. Had the Prophet said, ``The Israelites shall now be hungry in a far country; --- the Lord has hitherto fed them with plenty, for he has performed what he had formerly promised by Moses; this land has in every way been blessed, and has supplied us with great abundance of wine, wheat, and oil; yea, honey has flowed like water; but they shall now be constrained to pine away with want among their enemies:'' --- Had the Prophet said this, it would have been a grievous and severe denunciation; but now he fills them, as it has been already said, with much greater horror, for he says, `They shall eat what is unclean.' There seemed to be some great importance belonging to the external rite: but the outward profession was the badge of divine adoption. When therefore the people loosened the reins and ate indiscriminately any meat, and made no choice according to the directions of the law, then the distinction was removed, so that they ceased to be the people of God. It is the same also, at this day, with those who turn aside from a sincere profession of their faith and associate with the Papists; they renounce, as far as they can, the favour of God, and abandon themselves to the will of Satan.

Let us then know that it is a dreadful judgement of God, when we are not allowed to profess our faith by outward worship; and when the ungodly so rule, as to put us under the necessity of which the Prophet here speaks, even of eating unclean things, that is, of being implicated in their profane superstitions. It is then a favour, to be highly valued, when we are permitted to abstain from all defilements and to worship God purely, so that no one may contaminate himself by dissimulation: but when we are compelled, under the tyranny of the ungodly, to conform to impure superstitions, it is a sign of the dreadful judgement of God; and there is nothing by which any one can excuse himself in this respect or extenuate his fault, as many do, whom yet conscience bites within, though they deem it sufficient to spread forth their own excuses before the eyes of men. But there is nothing by which such men can either flatter themselves, or dazzle the eyes of the simple; for it is an extreme reproach, when people, who ought to be sacred to God and to profess outwardly his

pure worship, suffer themselves to be polluted with unclean food. It follows ---

Hosea 9:4

4. They shall not offer wine offerings to the Lord, neither shall they be pleasing unto him: their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat thereof shall be polluted: for their bread for their soul shall not come into the house of the Lord

4. Non libabunt Jehovae vinum, et non dulcia erunt illi libamina (vel, ipsi non erunt grati et suaves Domino) sacrificia ipsorum sicut panis lugentium ipsis: quicunque comederint polluentur; quia panis ipsorum pro anima ipsorum, non veniet in domum Jehovae.

It is uncertain whether the Prophet testifies here, that they should lose their labour and their oil (as they say) when they sacrificed to God; or whether he declares what would be the case when they had been driven into exile. Both views seem probable. Now, if we refer the words of the Prophet to the time of exile, they seem not unsuitable, They shall not then pour out wine to Jehovah, and their sacrifices shall not be acceptable to him; no oblation shall come any more to the temple of Jehovah.'' And thus many understand the passage; yet the former sense is the most appropriate, as it may be easily gathered from the context. The Prophet says, that they shall not pour out wine to Jehovah, and that their sacrifices shall not be acceptable to him; and then he adds, All that eat shall be polluted It seems not by any means applicable to exiles, that they should vainly endeavour to pour out wine to God; for their religion forbade them to do such a thing. Further, when he says, Their sacrifices shall be to them as the bread of mourners, --- this must also be understood of sacrifices, which they were wont daily to offer to God; for in exile (as it has been said) it was not lawful for them to make any offering, nor had they there an altar or a sanctuary.

What, then, is the meaning of the Prophet, when he says, ``All that eat of their sacrifices shall be polluted''? We must know that the Prophet speaks here of the intermediate time, as though he said, ``What the Israelites now sacrifice is without any advantage, and God is not pacified with these trifles for they bring polluted hands, they change not their minds, they obtrude their sacrifices on God, but they themselves first pollute them.'' Of this same doctrine we have already often treated; I shall not then dwell on it now; but it is enough to point out the design of the Prophet, which was to show that the Israelites were seeking in vain to pacify God by their ceremonies, for they were vain expiations which God did not regard, but deemed as worthless.

They shall not then pour out wine to God. There is an important meaning in this sentence; for it is certain that as long as the Israelites lived in their country, they were sedulous enough in the performance of outward worship, and that drink-offerings were not neglected by them. Since, then, this custom prevailed among them, the Prophet must be speaking here only of the effect, and says, that they exercised themselves in vain in their frivolous worship, for they poured not out wine to Jehovah, that is, their libation did not come to Jehovah; and he explains himself afterwards, when he says, Their drink-offerings shall not be pleasant to him However much, then, the Israelites might labour, the Prophet says that their labour would

be fruitless, for the Lord would reject whatever they did. He then adds what is to the same purpose, Their sacrifices shall be unto them as the bread of mourners; all that eat shall be polluted; that is, all their sacrifices are polluted. The Prophet now shows more clearly, not that there would be no sacrifices, but that they would be in vain, because the Lord would abominate them, and would repudiate all the masks which they would put on in his presence, and under the cover of which they withdrew themselves from their allegiance to him. The reason is, because when any one unclean touches pure flesh, he pollutes it by his uncleanness. God then must necessarily abominate whatever impure men offer, unless they seek to purify their minds. And this principle has ever prevailed among the very blind, ---

An impious right hand does not rightly worship the celestials.
(Non bene coelestes impia dextra colit.)

These words, which spread everywhere, have been witnesses of the common feeling; for the Lord intended to draw out men, as it were, from their converts, when he forced them to make such a confession. It is no wonder that the Prophet now says (as this truth is also often taught in Scripture) that the sacrifices of the people, who continued in their own perfidy, would be like the bread of mourners; as Isaiah says,

`When one kills an ox, it is the same as if he slew a man; when one sacrifices a lamb, it is the same as if he killed a dog,'
(Isaiah 66:3.)

He compares sacrifices to murders; nor is it to be wondered at, for it is a more atrocious crime to abuse the sacred name of God than to kill a man, and this is what ungodly men do.

Then he says, ``If any one eats, he will be polluted.'' He enlarges on what he said before, and says that if any one clean should come, he would be polluted by being only in company with them. We now see how sharply the Prophet here arouses hypocrites, that they might now cease to promise to themselves what they were wont to do, and that is, that God would be propitious to them while they pacified him with their vain things. ``By no means,'' he says; ``nay, there is so much defilement in your sacrifices, that they even contaminate others who come, being themselves clean.''

But it may be asked, Can the impiety of others pollute us, when we afford no proof of companionship, nor by dissimulation manifest any consent? when we then abstain from all superstition, does society alone contaminate us? The answer is easy: The Prophet does not avowedly discuss here how another's impiety may contaminate men who are clean; but his object was to show in strong language how much God abhors the ungodly, and that not only he is not pacified with their sacrifices, but also holds them as the greatest abominations. But with regard to this question, it is certain that we become polluted as soon as we content to profane superstitions: yet when ungodly men administer either holy baptism or the holy supper, we are not polluted by fellowship with them, for the deed itself has nothing vicious in it. Then the act only does not pollute us, nor the hidden and inward impiety of men. This is true: but we are to understand for what purpose the Prophet said, that all who eat of their sacrifices shall be polluted.

He proceeds with the same subject, Their bread for their souls etc. This clause, ``for their soul,'' may be explained in two ways. In saying, Bread for their soul, the Prophet spake by way of contempt; as though he said, ``Let them serve themselves and their stomach with bread, and no more offer it to God; let them then satiate themselves with bread, for they cannot consecrate to God their bread, when they themselves are unclean.'' But I am inclined to follow what has been more approved, that bread for their soul shall not come to the house of the Lord; for men, we know, are then wont to offer their sacrifices to God to reconcile themselves to him, or at least to present emblems of their expiation: hence the Prophet says, that bread is offered for the soul according to the directions of the law; but that the ungodly could not bring bread into the house of Jehovah, because the Lord excludes them, as it were, by an interdict. Not that hypocrites keep away, for we see how boldly they thrust themselves into the temple; nay, they would occupy the first place; but the Lord yet forbids them to come to his presence. This is the reason why he says, that the bread of the ungodly shall not come before God, though in appearance their oblations glitter before men. It follows ---

Hosea 9:5

5. What will ye do in the solemn day, and in the day of the feast of the Lord?

5. Quid facietis in die solenni? in die festivitatis Jehovae?

The Prophet here alludes again to their exile, and shows how deplorable the condition of the people would be, when deprived of all their sacrifices. It is indeed true that the Israelites, when they changed the place of the temple, and when new and spurious rites were introduced by Jeroboam, became wholly rejected, so that from that time no sacrifice pleased God, for they sacrificed to idols and demons and not to God, as it is elsewhere stated, (Deuteronomy 32:17;) but yet, as they had some kind of divine worship, as circumcision remained, and sacrifices were offered, as it were, by Moses' command, and they boasted themselves to be the children of Abraham and lived in the holy land, they were satisfied with their condition. But when in exile they saw no sign of God's favour, when they were deprived of the temple and altar and all sacrifices, when on every side mere solitude and waste met their eyes, when God thus manifested that he was far removed from them, great sorrow must have entered their hearts. Hence the Prophet says, What will ye do in the solemn day?

And he expressly mentions solemn and festal-days. ``If the morning and the evening oblation, which is wont to be made, will not be remembered, and if the other sacrifices will not occur to your minds, what will you do when the festal days will come? for the Lord will then show that he has nothing to do with you.'' For the trumpets sounded on the festivals, that the people might come from the whole land into the temple; and it was, as it were, the voice of God, sounding from heaven: but when the feast-days were forgotten, when there were no holy assemblies, it was the same as if the Lord, by commanding silence, had proved that he no longer cared for the people. That the Israelites then might not think that exile only was threatened to them, the Prophet here shows that something worse was connected with it, and that was, that the Lord would wholly forsake them, and that there would exist no token of his presence, as though they were cut off from the Church. What then will

ye do on the solemn day, on the day of Jehovah's festivity? That is, ``Do you think that something of an ordinary kind is denounced on you when I speak of exile? The Lord will indeed take away the whole of your worship, and will deprive you of all the evidences of his presence. What then will you do? But if a brutish stupor should so occupy your minds, that this should not recur to your thoughts daily, the solemn and festal-days will at least constrain you to think how dreadful it is, that you have nothing remaining among you, which may afford a hope of God's favour.'' We now apprehend the meaning of the Prophet.

We hence learn what I have said before, that nothing worse can happen to us in this world, than to be scattered without any order, when no outward evidence appears by which the Lord collects us to himself. It would therefore be better for us to be deprived of meat and drink, and to go naked, and to perish at last through want, than that the exercises of religion, (exercita pietatis --- exercises of religion) by which the Lord holds us, as it were, in his own bosom, should be taken away from us. When therefore we are deprived of these aids, and God thus hides his face from us, and mournful waste discovers to us dread on every side, it is an extreme calamity, an evidence of the dreadful judgement of God. Let us then learn, when our flesh is touched, when sterility or some other evil impends over us --- let us learn to dread this deprivation still more, and to fear lest the Lord should deprive us of our festal-days; that is, take away all the aids of religion by which he holds us together in his house, and shows us to be a part of his Church. This then, in the last place, ought to be noticed: what remains we shall consider in our next lecture.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as thou drawest us at this time to thyself by so many chastisements, While we are yet insensible, through the slothfulness and the indolence of our flesh, --- O grant, that Satan may not thus perpetually harden and fascinate us; but that we, being at length awakened, may feel our evils, and be not merely affected by outward punishments, but rouse ourselves, and feel how grievously we have in various ways offended thee, so that we may return to thee with real sorrow, and so abhor ourselves, that we may seek in thee every delight, until we at length offer to thee a pleasing and acceptable sacrifice, by dedicating ourselves and all we have to thee, in sincerity and truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-fourth

Hosea 9:6

6. For, lo, they are gone because of destruction: Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them: the pleasant places for their silver, nettles shall possess them: thorns shall be in their tabernacles.

6. Quia ecce abierunt a vastatione (vel, propter vastationem;) Aegyptus colliget eso, Memphis sepeliet eos: desiderabile argenti eorum haereditabit urtica; spina in tabernaculis eorum.

The Prophet confirms here what is contained in the last verse, that is, that the Israelites would at length find that the Prophets had not in vain threatened them, though they at the time heedlessly despised the judgement of God. Lo, he says,

they have departed: he speaks of the exile as if it had already taken place, when it was only nigh at hand. The Israelites were then dwelling in their own country, he yet speaks of them as having already gone away. But he sets forth the certainty of the prediction by this manner of speaking, that profane men might cease to promise themselves impunity when God summons them to his tribunal: yea, he shows that he was already armed to take vengeance: ``They have gone away,'' he says, ``on account of desolation.'' Then he adds, Egypt shall gather them To gather here is to be taken in a bad sense; for it means the same as trousser (to pack up, to bundle) in our language; and it is often taken in this sense by the Prophets, when mention is made of destruction: and this appears still clearer from the word, burying, which the Prophet immediately subjoins. Egypt shall gather them: He certainly speaks not of a kind retreat, but declares that Egypt would be a sepulchre to them, in which they should remain shut up: and thus he takes away from them any hope of deliverance. The Israelites expected that they should find shelter for a season in Egypt, when they bent their course there for fear of their enemies. The Prophet now shows that they would be disappointed in dreaming of a return, for they would remain there gathered up; that is, a free return, as they imagined, would not be allowed them, but a perpetual habitation, yea, a grave.

`Egypt will gather them, Memphis will bury them.' There is a striking correspondence between the words here used, {קבר}, kober, and {קבף}, kobets,. By the first the Prophet signifies that they should be shut up, so as to be, as it were, bound and fixed to a place; and then he adds that they should be buried.

He then says, The desirable place of their silver the nettle shall possess, as by hereditary right, and the thorn, etc.; some render it paliurus; but I follow what is more received, the thorn then shall be in their tabernacles The meaning is, that the Israelites would be exiles and sojourners, not for a short time, but that their exile would be so long that their land would become waste and uncultivated; for neither nettles nor thorns grow in an inhabited place. Hosea then declares that their land would be deserted and without inhabitants, for nettles and thorns would occupy it instead of men. Now it tended greatly to increase the sorrow of exile, that the hope of return was cut off from them; and God had also declared that Egypt, where they had promised a refuge for themselves, would be to them like a grave. And thus it happens for the most part to the ungodly, who retake themselves to vain solaces, that they may escape the vengeance of God; for they throw themselves into deep labyrinths; where they think to find a harbour of rest for a time, and a commodious habitation; but there they find either a gulf or a grave. This is the meaning. Let us proceed ---

Hosea 9:7

7. The days of visitation are come, the days of recompence are come; Israel shall know it: the prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad, for the multitude of thine iniquity, and the great hatred.

7. Venerunt dies visitationis, venerunt dies retributionis; agnoscet Israel; stultus Propheta (vel, uno contextu, sicuti alii legunt, cognoscet Israel stultum Prophetam,) insanum virum spiritus, propter multitudinem iniquitatis tuae, et multum odium (vel,

stultus Prophets, vaesanus vir spiritus propter multitudinem iniquitatis tuae et multum odium: et propter accentun melior est distinctio, quam secundo loco posui, cognoscet Israel, stultus est Propheta: et que sequuntur poterunt legi separatim, sed tamen ego utrunque exponam, ut libera deinde sit electio. [53])

The Prophet, by saying that the days of visitation had come, intended to shake off from hypocrites that supine torpor of which we have often spoken; for as they were agitated by their own lusts, and were in a state of continual fervour, so they hardened themselves against God's judgement, and, as it were, covered themselves over with hardness. It was then necessary to deal roughly with them in order to break down such stubbornness. This is the reason that the Prophet repeats so often and in so many forms what might be expressed in this one sentence --- That God would be a just avenger. Hence he cries out here, that the days of visitation had come. For when the Lord spared them, as sacred history relates, and as we said at the beginning, (and under the king Jeroboam the second, the son of Joash, their affairs were prosperous,) their pride and contempt of God the more increased. Since then they thought themselves to be now beyond the reach of harm, the Prophet declares that the days had come. And there is here an implied contrast in reference to the time during which the Lord had borne with them; for as the Lord had not immediately visited their sins, they thought that they had escaped. But the Prophet here distinguishes between time and time: ``You have hitherto thought,'' he says, ``that you are at peace with God; as if he, by conniving at the sins of men, denied himself, so as not to discharge any more the office of a judge: nay, there is another thing to be here considered, and that is, that God has certain days of visitation, which he has fixed for himself; and these days are now come.''

And he again teaches the same thing, The days of retribution have come He uses another word, that they might know that they could not go unpunished for having in so many ways provoked God. For as the Lord disappoints not the hope of his people, who honour him; so also there is a reward laid up for the ungodly, who regard as nothing his judgement. ``God will then repay you what you have deserved, though for a time it may please him to suspend his judgement.''

Then he says, Israel shall know This is the wisdom of fools, as it is said even in an old proverb; and Homer has also said, {παθων} {δε} {τε} {νήπιος} {εγνω}, (Even the foolish knows when he suffers.) The foolish is not wise, except when he suffers. Hence the Prophet says, that Israel, when afflicted, would then perceive that instruction had been despised, and that all warnings had been trifled with, at least had not been regarded. Israel then shall know; that is, he shall at length, when too late, understand that he had to do with God, even when the time of repentance shall be no more. The meaning then is that as the ungodly reject the word of God, and obey not wise admonitions and counsels, they shall at length be taken to another

[53] The following is offered as the literal rendering of the original: — 'The days of visitation have come, The days of retribution have come; Israel shall know him a fool, the Prophet, And mad, the man of the spirit: For the greatness of thine iniquity, Great also has been the abomination.' The 'abomination,' or detestation, was the false Prophet, who had been a fool and a madman. The following verse confirms this view, where the Prophet is represented as 'an abomination in the house of his God;' for it is the same word. And this is the view substantially taken in this comment. It is singular that interpreters have overlooked the postfix, {,{ו `him,' to the verb, `know' --- .{ידעו} --- Ed.

school, where God teaches not by the mouth but by the hand. Whosoever then does not now willingly submit to his teaching, shall find God to be a judge, and shall not escape his hand.

They who join what follows elicit this meaning, Israel shall know the Prophet to be foolish, the man of the spirit to be mad; that is, Israel shall then understand that he was deluded by flatteries, when the false Prophets promised that all things would be prosperous. We indeed know that they catched at those prophecies which pleased their ears; for which Micah also reproves them; hence he calls those who gave hope of a better state of things, the Prophets of wine and oil and wheat, (Micah 2:11.) The world wishes to be ever thus deceived. Since then there were many in Israel, who by their impositions deceived the miserable, he says, Israel shall at last know that he has been deluded by his own teachers. If we receive this sense, there is then here a reproof to Israel for thinking that the vengeance of God was in some way restrained, when the false Prophets said that he was pacified, and that there was no danger to be feared. For do not men in this way stultify themselves? And how gross is their stupidity, when they think that God's hands are tied, when men are silent, or when they perfidiously turn the truth into a lie? And yet even at this day this disease prevails in the world, as it has prevailed almost in all ages. For what do the ungodly seek, but to be let alone in their sins? When mouths are closed, they think that they have gained much. This madness the Prophet derides, intimating that those profane men, who have such delicate ears, that they can bear no words of reproof, shall at last know what they had gained by hiring prophets to flatter them. We hence see, in short, that the adulations, by which the ungodly harden themselves against God, will be to them the occasion of a twofold destruction; for such fallacies dementate them, so that they much more boldly provoke against themselves the wrath of God.

But if we read the two clauses apart, the rendering will be this, ``The Prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is mad.'' And as to the matter itself, there is not much difference. I will not then dwell on the subject; for when we are agreed as to the design of the Prophet and the truth remains the same, it is vain, at least it is of no benefit, to labour very anxiously about the form of the sentence. If then we begin a sentence with these words, {הנביא} {אויל}, avil enebia, the sense will be this, ``I know that the Prophets promise impunity to you; but they who thus hide your sins, and cover them over as with plasters, are insane men, yea, they are wholly infatuated. There is then no reason why their flatteries should delight you; for the event will show that they are mere absurdities and idle ravings.'' We now see that there is no great difference in the sense: for this remains still unaltered, that there were many flatterers among the people, who made it their business to lie, that they might thus procure the favour of the people; and this ambition has prevailed in all ages: and sometimes also cupidity or avarice takes such hold on men, that they use a meretricious tongue, and excuse all vices however grievous, and elude all threatening. This is what the Prophet shows in the first place; and then he shows, that men without any advantage indulge their vices, when there is no one severely to reprove them, or boldly to exhort them to repent; and that though all the Prophets should give them hope of safety they should yet perish: for men cannot

by their silence restrain God from executing at last his judgement. Nay, we must remember this, that God spares men when he does not spare them; that is, when he chastises them, when he reproves their sins, and when he constrains them by terror, he then would spare them. And again, when God spares, he does not spare; that is, when he connives at their sins, and leaves men to their own will, to grow wanton at their pleasure, without any yoke or bridle, he then by no means spares them, for he destines them for destruction.

``The man of the spirit,'' some render ``the man of the wind;'' and some ``the fanatical man;'' but they are in my judgement mistaken; for the Prophet, I doubt not, uses a respectful term, but yet by way of concession. He then calls those the men of the spirit who were by their office prophets, but who abused that title, as those who at this day call themselves pastors when they are really rapacious wolves. The Prophets, as we know, always declared that they did not speak from their own minds but what the Spirit of God dictated to them. Hence they were men of the Spirit, that is, spiritual men: for the genitive case, we know, was used by the Hebrews to express what we designate by an adjective. The Prophets then were the men of the Spirit. He concedes this name, in itself illustrious and honourable, to impostors; but in the same sense as when I speak generally of teachers; I then include the false as well as the true. This then is the real meaning of the expression, as we may gather from the context: for he says the same thing twice, {הנביא} {אויל}, avil enebia, Fool is the Prophet, and then, {הרוח} {איש} {משגע}, moshigo aish eruch, Mad is the man of the spirit As he spoke of a Prophet, so he now mentions the same by calling him a man of the spirit, or a spiritual man.

At the end of the verse he adds, For the multitude of thine iniquity, for great hatred, or, much hatred; for it may be rendered in these two ways. Here the Prophet shows, that though the false Prophets stultified by their fallacies the people, yet this could by no means avail for an excuse or for extenuating the fault of the people. How so? Because they suffered the punishment of their own impiety. For whence comes it, that the Lord takes away his light from us, that after having once shown to us the way of salvation, he turns suddenly his back on us, and suffers us to go astray to our perdition? How does this happen? Doubtless, because we are unworthy of that light, which was a witness to us of God's favour. For as much then as men through their own fault procure such a judgement to themselves, the Lord neither blinds them nor gives to Satan the power of deluding them, except when they deserve such a treatment. Hence the Prophet says, For the multitude of thine iniquity, and for thy crimes, by which thou hast excited against thyself the wrath and hatred of God. We hence see how frivolous are the pretences by which men clear themselves, when they object and say that they have been deceived and that if their teachers had been faithful and honest, they would have willingly obeyed God. When therefore men make these objections, the ready answer is this, that they had been deprived of true and faithful teachers, because they had refused the favour offered to them, and extinguished the light, and as Paul says, preferred a lie to the truth; and that they had been deceived by false Prophets, because they willingly hastened to ruin when the Lord called them to salvation. We now then understand the import of what

is here taught.

The Prophet says, in the first place, that the day of vengeance was now at hand, because the Lord by forbearance could prevail nothing with the obstinate. He then adds, that as all threatenings were despised by the people, and as they were deaf to every instruction, they would at length know that God had not spoken in vain but would perceive that their were justly treated; for the Lord would not now teach them by his word, but by scourges. He adds, in the third place, that the Prophet was foolish and delirious, and also, that they who boasted themselves to be the men of the spirit were mad: by which expressions he meant that the flatteries, by which the people were lulled asleep were foolish; for God would not fail at last, when the time came, to execute his office. And, lastly he reminds them that this would happen through the fault of the people, that there was no reason for them to trace or to ascribe the cause of the evil to any thing else; for this blindness was their just punishment. The Lord would have never permitted Satan thus to prevail in his own inheritance, had not the people, by the immense filth of their sins, provoked God for a long time, and as it were with a determined purpose. It now follows ---

Hosea 9:8

8. The watchman of Ephraim was with my God: but the prophet is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, and hatred in the house of his God. [54]

8. Speculator Ephraim cum Deo meo, Propheta laqueus aucupis super omnes vias ejus, odium (hoc est, res execrabilis: est idem nomen quo usus est in proximo versu: res igitur execrabilis) in domo Dei sui.

Interpreters obscure this verse by their various opinions. Almost all suppose a verb to be understood that Ephraim ``had set'' a watchman. But I see no need to make any change in the words of the Prophet: I therefore take them simply as they are. Now some think that there is here a comparison between the old Prophets who had not turned aside from God's command, and those flatterers who pretended the name of God, while they were the ministers of Satan to deceive. They therefore thus distinguish them, The watchman of Ephraim was with my God; that is, there was a time formerly when the watchmen of Ephraim were connected with God, and declared no strange doctrine, when they drew from the true fountain all that they taught; there was then a connection between God and the Prophets, for they depended on the mouth of God, and the Prophets delivered to the people, as from hand to hand, whatever God commanded; there was then nothing corrupt, or impure, or adventitious in their words. But now the Prophet is a snare of a fowler; that is, the dice is turned, a deplorable change has taken place; for now the Prophets lay snares to draw people by their disciples into destruction; and this abomination bears

[54] Bishop Horsley gives the following rendering of this verse: — 'The watchman of Ephraim is with his God. The Prophet! the snare of the fowler is Over all his ways. Vengeance against the household of my God.' For 'his,' instead of 'my' God in the first clause, there is the authority of many MSS: but for turning 'his' into 'my,' in the last clause there is no satisfactory authority: and there is nothing to justify the introducing of 'vengeance' for the word here used. The verb from which it is derived means to hate: and the noun as here formed signifies, no doubt, either the act or feeling of hating, or what is hated or is hateful. Calvin gives nearly its meaning — 'res execrabilis' — an execrable thing. I offer the following translation: — 'The watchman of Ephraim, Before his God a Prophet, Is a snare of a fowler in all his ways, An abomination in the house of his God.' The first two lines designate his office — a watchman and a Prophet before God; and the two last, his wicked conduct and base character. — Ed.

rule, that is, this monstrous wickedness prevails in the temple of God: these Prophets live not in caves nor traverse public roads, but they occupy a place in the temple of God; so that of the sacred temple of God they make a brothel for the impostures of Satan. Such is their view.

But I read the verse as connected together, The watchman of Ephraim, who ought to have been with God, even the Prophet, is a snare of a fowler on all his ways The former view would have indeed met my approbations did not the words appear to be forced; and I do not love strained meanings. This is the reason which prevents me from subscribing to an exposition which in itself I approve, as it embraces a useful doctrine. But this simple view is more correct, that the watchman of Ephraim, a Prophet, is a snare of a fowler: and he adds, with God; for it is the duty of teachers to have nothing unconnected with God. Hosea then shows what Prophets ought to do, not what they may do. A Prophet then is he who is a watchman of Israel; for this command, we know, is given in common to all Prophets --- to be as it were on their watch-tower, and to be vigilant over the people of God. It is therefore no wonder that the Prophet dignifies with his own title all those who were then teachers among God's people. But he thus doubles their crime, by saying that they were only keen and sharp-sighted to snare the people. Then the watchmen of Israel, the Prophet, who was placed on the watch-tower to watch or to exercise vigilance over the safety of the whole people --- this Prophet was a snare of a fowler! But he triplicates the crime when he says, With my God: for as we have already observed, teachers could not faithfully discharge their office, except they were connected with God, and were able truly to testify that they brought forth nothing that was invented, but what the Lord himself had spoken, and that they were his organs. We now then apprehend the real meaning of the Prophet; and according to this view there is nothing strained in the words.

The Prophet also thus confirms what he had said before, that the Prophets were fools, that is, that their prophecies would at length appear empty and vain; for they could not prevent God from inflicting punishment on the wicked by their fallacious flatteries; he confirms this truth when he says, The watchmen of Ephraim is a snare of a fowler on all his ways: that is, he ought to have guided the people, and to have kept them safe from intrigues. But now the people could not move a foot without meeting with a snare; and whence came this snare but from false doctrine and impostures? What then was to be at last? Could the snares avail to make them cautious? By no means; but Satan thus hunts his prey, when he soothes the people by his false teachers, and keeps them, as it were, asleep, that they may not regard the hand of God. There was then no reason for the Israelites to think well of the fowlers by whom they were drawn into ruin.

This indignity is more emphatically expressed, when he says, that there was a detestable thing in the temple of God There was not, indeed, a temple of God in Bethel, as we have often said; but as the people were wont to pretend the name of God, the Prophet, conceding this point, says, that these abominations were covered over by this pretence. There is then no need anxiously to inquire here, whether it was the temple at Samaria or at Bethel, or the house and sanctuary of God; for a

concession proves not a thing to be so, but it is to speak according to the general opinion. So then the Prophet does not without reason complain, that the place, on which was inscribed the name of God, was profaned, and that, instead of the teaching of salvation, there was fowling everywhere, which drew the people into apostasy, and finally into utter ruin. It follows ---

Hosea 9:9

9. They have deeply corrupted themselves, [55] as in the days of Gibeah: therefore he will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.

9. Profundaverunt (ad verbum, alii vertunt, Multiplicaverunt, sed male; alii, Astute cogitaverunt, quod mihi etiam non placet: sed quia verbum quod posui neque Latinum est et esset ambiguum, ideo vertamus, Profunde vel alte defixi sunt) corruperunt sicuti in diebus Gabaa; recoradabitur iniquitatis eorum, visitabit scelera eorum.

Hosea declares here, that the people were so sunk in their vices, that they could not be drawn out of them. He who has fallen can raise up himself when one extends a hand to him; and he who strives to emerge from the mire, finding a helper to assist him, can plant his foot again on solid ground: but when he is cast into a gulf, he has no hope of a recovery. I extend my hand in vain, when one sinks in a shipwreck, and is fallen into the deep. So now the Prophet says, that the people were unhealable, because they were deeply fixed; and further, because they were infected with corruptions. He therefore intimates that their diseases were incurable, that they had struck roots so deeply, that they could by no means be cleansed. They were then deeply fixed, and were corrupt as in the days of Gibeah

The Gibeonites, we know, were so fallen, that their city differed nothing from Sodom; for unbridled licentiousness in all kinds of vices prevailed there, and lusts so monstrous reigned among them, that there was no distinction between good and evil, no shame whatever. Hence it was, that they ravished the Levite's wife, and killed her by their filthy obscenities: and this was the cause of that memorable slaughter which nearly demolished the whole tribe of Benjamin. The history is related in the Book of Judges 19, 20, 21; and it deserved to be recorded, that people might know what it is not to walk with care and fear in obedience to the Lord. Who could indeed have believed that a people taught in the law of God could have fallen into such a state of madness as this city did, which was nigh to Jerusalem, the destined place of the temple, though not yet built? and, not to mention the temple, who could have thought that this city, which was in the midst of the people, could have been so demented, that, like brute beasts, they should abandon themselves to the filthiest lusts? nay, that they should have been more filthy than the beasts? For monstrous lusts, as I have said, were there left unpunished, as at Sodom and in the neighbouring cities.

The Prophet says now, that the whole of Israel had become as corrupt as formerly the citizens of Gibeah. Deeply sunk, then, were the Israelites in their vices, and were as addicted as the inhabitants of Gibeah to their corruptions. What, then, is

[55] Our translators, contrary to their usual practice, have paraphrased this clause, without any notice in the margin. — Ed.

to follow? God, he says, will remember their iniquities, and will visit their sins The Prophet means two things first, that as the Israelites were wholly disobedient, and would receive no instruction, God would in no other way deal with them, as though he said, ``The Lord will no longer spend labour in vain in teaching you, but he will seize the sword and execute his vengeance; for ye are not worthy of being taught by him any longer; for his teaching is counted a mockery by you.'' This is one thing; and the other is, that though God had hitherto spared the people of Israel, he had not yet forgotten the filth of sins which prevailed among them. Hence God, he says, will at length remember and, as he had said before, will visit your sins.

We now then perceive the simple meaning of the Prophet. But let us hence also learn to rouse ourselves; and let us, in the first place, notice what the Prophet says of the Israelites, that they were deeply fixed; for men must be filled with contempt to God, when they thus descend, as Solomon says, (Proverbs 18:4,) to the deep. Lets then each of us stir up himself to repentance and carefully beware lest he should descend into this deep gulf. But since he says, ``the Lord will remember and will visit'', let us know that they are greatly deceived who indulge themselves as long as the Lord mercifully bears with their sins; for though he may for a time conceal his displeasure yet an oblivion will never possess him: but at a fit time he will remember, and prove that he does so by executing a just punishment.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou shinest on us by thy word, we may not be blind at mid-day, nor wilfully seek darkness, and thus lull our minds asleep: but that exercising ourselves in thy word, we may stir up ourselves more and more to fear thy name, and thus present ourselves, and all our pursuits, as a sacrifice to thee, that thou mayest peaceably rule, and perpetually dwell in us, until thou gatherest us to thy celestial habitation, where there is reserved for us eternal rest and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-Fifth

Hosea 9:10

10. I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

10. Tanquam uvas in deserto inveni Israel, sicut primum fructum ficulneae in suo exordio vidi patres eorum: ipsi ingressi sunt ad Baalpeor, et segregati sunt in opprobrium, et fuerunt abominationes secundum amores suos. [56]

In this verse God reproves the Israelites for having preferred to prostitute themselves to idols, rather than to continue under his protection, though he had from the beginning showed his favour to them; as though he had said that they having been previously favoured with his free love, had transferred their affections to others; for he says, that he had found them as grapes in the wilderness. The word wilderness, ought to be joined with grapes, as if he had said, that they had been as sweet and acceptable to him as a grape when found in a desert. When a traveller finds, by

[56] 'As grapes in the desert have I found Israel, As the first fruit on the fig-tree in its first season Have I seen your fathers: They went to Baal-peor, And dedicated themselves to shame, And became filthy like what they loved.' Or, literally, 'like their love.' — Ed.

chance, a grape in a barren and desolate place, he not only admires it, but takes great delight in a fruit so unlooked for. And thus the Lord, by this comparison, shows his great love towards the Israelites. He adds, --- As the first fruit of the figtree; for the fig-tree, we know, produces fruit twice every year. Therefore, God says, --- As figs at the beginning (or, as they say, the first fruits) are delightful, so have I taken delight in this people. The Prophet does not however mean, that the people were worthy of being so much loved. But the Hebrews use the word, to find, in the same sense as we do, when we say in French, --- Je treuve cela a mon gout, (I find this to my taste.) I have therefore regarded Israel as grapes in the wilderness And this remark is needful, lest some one should subtilely infer, that the Israelites were loved by God, because they had something savoury in them. For the Prophet relates not here what God found in the people, but he only reproves their ingratitude, as we shall presently see.

The first part then shows that God had great delight in this people. It is the same or similar sentence to that in Hosea 11, where he says, `When Ephraim was yet a child, I loved him,' except that there is not there so much fervour and warmth of love expressed; but the same argument is there handled, and the object is the same, and it is to prove, that God anticipated his people by his love. There remained, in this case, less excuse, when men rejected God calling them, and responded not to his love. A perverseness like this would be hardly endured among men. Were any one to love me freely, and I to slight him, it would be an evidence of pride and rudeness: but when God himself gratuitously treats us with kindness, and when, not content with common love, he regards us as delectable fruit, does not the rejection of this love, does not the contempt of this favour, betray, on our part, the basest depravity? We now then understand the design of the Prophet. In the first clause, he says, in the person of God, ``I have loved Israel, as a traveller does grapes, when he finds them in the desert, and as the first ripe figs are wont to be loved: since then, I so much delighted in them, ought they not to have honoured me in return? Ought not my gratuitous love to have inflamed their hearts, so as to induce them to devote themselves wholly to me?''

But they went in unto Baal-peor. So I interpret the verb {באו}, bau; and it is taken in this sense in many other places. For the Hebrews say, ``they went in,'' to express in a delicate way the intercourse between husbands and wives. And the Prophet does not, without reason, compare the sacrifices which the people offered to Baal-peor to adultery, as being like the intercourse which an adulterer has with an harlot. They then went in unto Baal-peor; and he adds, that they ``separated themselves''. Some interpret the word {נזר}, nesar, as referring to worship, and as meaning that they consecrated themselves to Baal-peor; and others derive it from {זרה}, sare, which they think is here in a passive sense, and means, ``to be alienated.'' But I take it in the same sense as when Ezekiel says, ``They have separated themselves from after me,'' {מאחרי}, macheri, Ezekiel 14; that is, that they may not follow me. God here expostulates with the people for following their fornication, and for thus repudiating that sacred marriage which God contracts with all his people. I therefore read the two sentences as forming one context, The Israelites went in unto Baal-peor, as an

adulterer goes in unto a harlot; and they separated themselves; for they denied God, and violated the faith pledged to him; they discarded the spiritual marriage which God made with them.'' For the Prophet, we know, whenever he refers to idolatries speaks allegorically or metaphorically, and mentions adultery.

They have separated themselves, he says, to reproach; that is, though their filthiness was shameful, they were yet wholly insensible: as when a wife disregards her character, or as when a husband cares not that he is pointed at by the finger, and that his baseness is to all a laughing-stock; so the Israelites, he says, had separated themselves to reproach, having cast away all shame, they abandoned themselves to wickedness. Some render the word {בשת}, beshet, obscenity, and others refer it to Baal-peor, and render the sentence thus, ``They have separated themselves to that filthy idol.'' For some think Priapus to have been Baal-peor; and this opinion has gained the consent of almost all. But I extend wider the meaning of the word ``reproach,'' as signifying that the people observed no difference between what was decent and what was shameful, but that they were senseless in their impiety. They were therefore abominable, or abominations according to their lovers The Prophet, I doubt not, connects here the Israelites with idols and with Baal-peor itself, that he might strip them of all that holiness which they had obtained through God's favour. We now apprehend the meaning of the Prophet.

Now, what is here taught is worthy of being noticed and is useful. For, as we have said, inexcusable is our wickedness, if we despise the gratuitous love of God, bestowed unasked. When God then comes to us of his own accord, when he invites us, when he offers to us the privilege of children, an inestimable benefit, and when we reject his favour, is not this more than savage ferocity? It was to reprobate such conduct as this that the Prophet says, that God had loved Israel, as when one finds grapes in the desert, or as when one eats the first ripe figs. But it must, at the same time, be noticed why the Prophet so much extols the dealings of God with the people of Israel; it was for this reason, because their adoption, as it is well known, was not an ordinary privilege, nor what they enjoyed in common with other nations. Since, then, the people had been chosen to be God's special possession, the Prophet here justly extols this love with peculiar commendation. And the like is our case at this day; for God vouchsafes not to all the favour which has been presented to us through the shining light of the gospel. Other people wander in darkness, the light of life dwells only among us: does not God thus show that he delights especially in us? But if we continue the same as we were, and if we reject him and transfer our love to others, or rather if lust leads us astray from him, is not this detestable wickedness and obstinacy?

But what the Prophet says, that they separated themselves to reproach, is also worthy of being noticed; for he exaggerates their crime by this consideration, that the Israelites were so blinded, that they perceived not their own turpitude, though it was quite manifest. The superstitions which then prevailed in the land of Moab were no doubt very gross; but Satan had so fascinated their minds that they gave themselves up to a conduct which was worse than shameful. Let us then know that our sin is worthy of a heavier punishment in such a case as this, that is, when every

distinction is done away among us, and when we are hurried away by the spirit of giddiness into every impiety and when we no longer distinguish between light and darkness, between white and black; for it is a token of final reprobation. When, therefore, shame ought to have restrained them, he says, that the Israelites had yet ``separated themselves to reproach, and became abominable like their lovers''; that is, As Baal-peor is the highest abomination to me, so the people became to me equally abominable. It now follows ---

Hosea 9:11-12

11. As for Ephraim, their glory shall fly away like a bird, from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception.

11. Ephraim, quasi avis avolavit gloria eorum, a partu et ab utero et a conceptione, (jungamus etiam sequentem versum:)

12. Though they bring up their children, yet will I bereave them, that there shall not be a man left: yea, woe also to them when I depart from them!

12. Quia si extulerint filios suos, tunc exterminabo eos ab homine (hoc est, ne sint in numero hominum:) certe etiam vae illis quum recessero ab eis. [57]

The Hebrews, we know, have often abrupt sentences as in this place, Ephraim! their glory has fled Ephraim is to be placed by itself; and the speech seems striking, when the Lord thus breaks off the sentence, Ephraim! he does not continue the sense, but immediately adds, Like a bird their glory has fled. When he speaks of Ephraim, he no doubt refers especially to his offspring; and by mentioning a part for the whole, he includes whatever was then deemed to be wealth, or glory, or power. The Prophet, I say, speaks of offspring, for he immediately adds, from the birth, and the womb, and the conception But they are mistaken who confine this sentence to offspring only; for it is, as I have said, a mode of speaking, by which a part is taken for the whole. According to the letter, he mentions children or offspring; but yet he includes generally the whole condition of the people.

Then as a bird the glory of Ephraim fled away In what respect? From the birth, from the womb, from the conception. The Prophet, no doubt, sets forth here the gradations of God's vengeance, which was yet in part near at hand to the Israelites, and which was in part already evident by clear proofs. He says, from the birth, then from the womb, and, lastly, from the conception If, then, the glory of Ephraim had vanished at the beginning, the Prophet would not have thus spoken; but as the Lord showed signs of his wrath by degrees, that vengeance at length might reach the highest point, the Prophets in the first place, mentions birth, then the womb;

[57] I offer the following rendering of the original: — 11. 'Ephraim as a bird flieth swiftly away; Their glory is from the birth, and from the womb, and from conception: 12. 'But though they bring up their children, I will yet destroy them, that they shall not be men; Yes, even woe will be to them, when I turn aside from them.' Fruitfulness of progeny was included in Jacob's blessing on Joseph, the father of Ephraim, who especially represented him. "Blessings of the breasts and of the womb" are specifically mentioned, Genesis 49:25. The former of these two verses alludes to this circumstance. Ephraim is compared to a bird, soon fledged and flying away from the nest: and then it is added, that the glory of that people was their rapid increase. It is a declaration, not a denunciation, for this follows in the next verse. Besides, a denunciation comports not with what is said in that verse, nor with the contents of the fourteenth. If their glory had departed from the birth, etc., how was it that the threatening on the next verse is, that their children should not grow up to be men, and that the Prophet should pray God to give them, in verse 14, an abortive womb, etc.? — Ed.

as though he said, ``The glory of Israel shall vanish from the birth, but if they still continue proud, and seem not subdued by this punishment, I will slay them in the womb itself; nay, in the conception, if they repent not; they shall be suffocated as in the very womb.''

He then adds, Though they shall bring up children, I will yet exterminate them, so that they shall not be men, or, before they grow up, as some expound the words. The meaning is, that though Ephraim then flattered himself, yet a dreadful ruin was at hand, which would extinguish the whole seed, so that there would be nothing remaining. But lest they should think that all was over, when the Lord had inflicted on them one punishment, he lays down three gradations; that God would slay them first in the birth, then extinguish them in the womb, and, lastly, before conception; but if he spared them, so that they would raise up children, it would yet be without advantage, inasmuch as God would take away the youths in the flower of their age. Thus, then he threatens entire destruction to the kingdom of Israel.

And, lastly, he closes the verse in these words, And surely woe will be to them when I shall depart from them The Prophet means by these words, that men become miserable and accursed, when they alienate themselves from God, and when God takes away from them his favour. After having mentioned especially the vengeance of Godwhich was at hand, he says here that the cause and occasion of all evils would be, that God would depart from them, inasmuch as they had previously renounced their faith in him. But we must bear in mind the reason why the Prophet added this clause, and that is, because wicked men dream, that though God be displeased, things will yet go on prosperously with them: for they neither ascribe adversities to the wrath of God, nor acknowledge the fountain of all blessings to be God's free and paternal favour. As then profane men do not understand this truth, however much God may proclaim that he is an enemy to them, that he is armed to destroy them, they care nothing, but promise to themselves a prosperous fortune: until they feel the hand of God and the signs of destruction appear, they continue still secure. This is the reason why the Prophet says, that there is woe to men when God departs from them. Forasmuch, then, as Scripture teaches everywhere that every desirable thing comes and flows to us from the mere grace of God and his paternal favour, so the Prophet declares in this place, that men are miserable and accursed when God is angry with them. But it follows ---

Hosea 9:13

13. Ephraim, as I saw Tyrus, [58] is planted in a pleasant place: but Ephraim shall bring forth his children to the murderer.

13. Ephraim, sicut vidi in Tyro plantatam (subaudi arborem) in habitaculo: Ephraim tamen ad educendum (hoc est, educet) ad excidium (vel, mactationem)

[58] Both Horsley and Newcome render 'tyrus,' 'a rock,' and are countenanced by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion; and the Septuagint give not the word 'Tyrus.' But there is a difficulty in this case to fix any meaning to the words rendered in our version, 'as I saw;' and all here have failed to give any satisfaction. Hence the rendering of our translators, and of Calvin, seems on the whole to be the best. And as to the idea of a tree put under cover, it comports well with the passage: only to suppose 'tree' understood seems not necessary: for the word rendered 'planted' is in my view a noun, and means a plant. The verse may be thus translated: — 'Ephraim is, according to what I have seen at Tyrus, A plant in the house: Yet Ephraim is to bring forth to the slayer his children.' — Ed.

filios suos.

Hosea here confirms his previous statements that the Israelites in vain trusted in their present condition, for the Lord could reverse their prosperity whenever it pleased him. Men, we know, harden themselves in their vices, when they enjoy their wishes and when they are sunk in pleasures; for prosperity is not without reason often compared to wine, because it inebriates men; nay, rather it dementates them. We see what happened to the Sodomites and to others; yea, the abuse of God's forbearance has ever been the cause of destruction to almost all the reprobate, as Paul also says. Such pride reigned in the people of Israel, that they heedlessly despised all threatening, as it has been already often stated. To this then the Prophet refers when he says, Ephraim is like a tree planted in Tyrus: yet he shall bring forth his children to the slaughter The Prophet then points out here the indulgences of Israel, and then adds, that in a short time the Lord would draw them forth to judgement, though he had treated them as a precious tree, by fostering them gently and tenderly for a time.

Some render this place thus, ``I have seen Ephraim planted like Tyrus;'' and they render the next word, {בנוה}, benue, ``in pleasantness.'' But since it means a house or a habitation, I am disposed to retain its proper sense. Interpreters, however, vary in their opinion; for some say, ``I have seen Ephraim like Tyrus;'' because an event awaits this people similar to that which happened to Tyrus; for, as punishment was inflicted on Tyrus, so Ephraim shall not escape unpunished. This is the exposition of some, but in my view it is too refined. As, however, there is here a preposition, {ל} ``lamed'', I am inclined to consider ``a tree'' or ``plant,'' or some such word, understood. Ephraim then was, as if one beheld a tree in Tyrus, literally to Tyrus, or in Tyrus. This letter, as a preposition, I allow, is redundant in many places; and yet it preserves some propriety, except when necessity interferes: and in this place what I have already stated is the most suitable rendering, ``Ephraim is like a tree planted in Tyrus, in a dwelling'' or shed. Tyrus, we know, was built on an island in the sea; it had gardens the most pleasant, but not formed without much expense and labour. It was washed on every side by the sea; and unless mounds were set up, the dwellings were confined. Since, then, it was difficult to raise trees there, much work and labour was doubtless necessary, as it is usually the case; for men often struggle with nature. And if we say that Ephraim was planted like Tyrus in a dwelling, what can it mean? We therefore say, that he was like a tree preserved as in a dwelling: for we see that there are some trees which cannot bear the cold air, and are kept during winter in a house that they may be preserved; and it is probable that the Syrians, who were rich and had a lucrative trade, employed much care in rearing their trees.

The meaning is, that Ephraim was like tender trees, preserved by men with great care and with much expense; but that they should hereafter bring forth their children for the slaughter. This bringing forth is set in opposition to the house or dwelling. They had been kept without danger from the cold and heat, like a tender tree under cover; but they would be constrained to draw forth their children to the slaughter; that is, there would be no longer any dwelling for them to protect them from the violence of their enemies, but that they would be drawn forth to the light.

We now see that the words harmonise well with the view, that the people of Israel in vain flattered themselves because they had hitherto been subject to no evils, and that God had preserved them free from calamity. There is no reason, the Prophet says, for the people to be proud, because they had been hitherto so indulgently treated; for though they had been like tender trees, they would yet be forced to draw forth their children to be killed. And this comparison, which he amplifies, is what often occurs in Scripture. `If Jehoiakim were as a ring on my right hand, saith the Lord, I would pluck him thence.' [59] Men are wont to abuse even the promises of God. As king Jehoiakim was of the posterity of David, he thought it impossible that hid enemies could ever deprive him of his kingdom; ``But it shall not be so; for though he were as a ring on my hand, I would pluck him thence.'' So also in this place; ``Though the Israelites had been hitherto brought up in my bosom, and though I have kindly given them all kinds of blessings, and though they have been like tender trees, yet their condition hereafter shall be entirely different.'' Then it follows ---

Hosea 9:14

14. Give them, O Lord: what wilt thou give? give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts.

14. Da illis, Jehova: quid dabis? Da illis valvam abortientem (vel, interficere facientem) et ubera arida.

Interpreters translate these words in a different way: ``Give them what thou art about to give,'' then they repeats ``Give them;'' but, as I think, they do not comprehend the design of the Prophet, and are wholly mistaken; for the Prophet appears here as one anxious and perplexed. He therefore presents himself here before God as a suppliant, as though he said, ``Lord, I would gladly intercede for this people: what then is it that I should chiefly desire for them? Doubtless my chief wish for them in their miserable dispersion is, that thou wouldest give them a killing womb and dry breasts;'' that is, that none may be born of them. Christ says, that when the last destruction of Jerusalem should come, the barren would be blessed (Luke 23:29;) and this he took from the common doctrine of Scripture, for many such passages may be observed in the Prophets. Among the blessings of God, this, we know, is not the least, the birth of a numerous offspring. It is, therefore, a token of dreadful judgement, when barrenness, which in itself is deemed a curse, is desired as an especial blessing. For what can be more miserable than for infants to be snatched from their mothers' bosom? and for children to be killed before their eyes, or for pregnant women to be slain? or for cities and fields to be consumed by fire, so that children, not yet born, should perish together with their mothers? But all these things happen when there is an utter destruction.

We hence see what the prophet chiefly meant: the state of the people would be so deplorable that nothing could be more desirable than the barrenness of the women, that no offspring might be afterwards born, but that the name and memory of the people might by degrees be blotted out.

[59] Jeremiah 22:24. There is a mistake here. The text is, 'Coniah the son of Jehoiakim.' — Ed.

He has, indeed, already denounced punishments sufficiently grievous and dreadful; but we know that the contumacy and hardness of those are very great on whom religion has no hold. Hence all threatening were derided by that obstinate people. This is the reason why the Prophet now takes the part of an intercessor. ``O Lord,'', he adds ``give them;'' that is, ``O Lord, forgive them at least in some measure, and grant them yet something.'' And ``what wilt thou give?'' Here he reasons with himself, being as it were in suspense and perplexity; and he also reasons with God as to what would be the most desirable thing. ``I am indeed a suppliant for my own nation, whom I pity; but what shall I ask? I would wish thee, Lord, to pardon this people; but what shall be the way, what can give me comfort, or what sort of remedy yet remains? Certainly I see nothing better than that they should be barren, that none hereafter should be born of them; but that thou shouldest suffer them to consume and die away; for this will be their chief happiness in a condition so deplorable.'' It was then the Prophet's design here, to strike hypocrites and profane men with terror, that they might understand that God's vengeance, which was at hand, could by no means be fully expressed; for it would be the best thing for them to be deprived of the blessing of an offspring, that their infants might not perish with them, that they might not see women with child cruelly slain by their enemies, or their children led away as a spoil. That such things as these might not take place, the Prophet says, that barrenness ought to be desired by them as the chief blessing. The Prophet, I doubt not, meant this. It now follows ---

Hosea 9:15

15. All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolters.

15. Omne malum eorum in Gilgal, quia illic odium concepi contra eos: super malitia (vel, propter malitiam) operum ipsorum, e domo mea ejiciam eos: non pergam amare eos: omnes principes eorum sunt defectores (perfidi.) Est autem elegans paranomasia in verbo {שרים} et {שוררים}, qua etiam utitur Isaias primo capite.

He says first, that all their evil was in Gilgal; though they thought that they had the best pretence for offering there their sacrifices to God's honour, because it had been from old times a sacred place. He had said before that they had multiplied to themselves altars to sin, and by these to give way to sins; he now repeats the same in other words, All their evil, he says, is in Gilgal; as though he said, ``They indeed obtrude on me their sacrifices, which they offer in Gilgal, and think that they avail to excuse all their wickedness. I might, perhaps, forgive them, if they were given to plunder and cruelty, and were perfidious and fraudulent, provided pure worship had continued among them, and religion had not been so entirely adulterated; but as they have changed whatever I commanded in my law, and turned this celebrated place to be the seat of the basest impiety, so that it is become, as it were, a brothel, where religion is prostituted, it is hence evident, that the whole of their wickedness is in Gilgal.''

It is certain that the people were also addicted to other crimes; but the word {כל}, cal, all, is to be taken for what is chief or principal. The Prophet speaks comparatively,

not simply; as though he had said, that this corruption of offering sacrifices at Gilgal was more abominable in the sight of God than adulteries, or plunder, or frauds, or unjust violence, or any crime that prevailed among them. Their whole evil then was at Gilgal. But why the Prophet speaks thus, I have lately explained; and that is because superstitious men put forth their own devices, when God reproves them, ``O! we have still many exercises of religion.'' They bring forward these by way of compensation. But the Lord shows that he is far more grievously offended with these superstitions, with which hypocrites cover themselves as with a shield, than with a life void of every appearance of religion: for ``these,'' he says, ``I conceived a hatred against them, on account of the wickedness of their works.''

Here again the Prophet condemns what men think to be their special holiness. Who indeed can persuade hypocrites that their fictitious modes of worship are the greatest abominations? Nay, they even extol and imagine themselves to be like angels, and, as it were, cover all their wickedness with these disguises; as we see to be the case with the Papists who think, that when they obtrude on God their many masses and other devised forms, every sort of wickedness is redeemed. Since then hypocrites are thus wont to put on a disguise before God, and at the same time flatter themselves, the Prophet here declares that they are the more hated by God for this very wickedness, of daring to corrupt and adulterate his pure worship.

He then adds, I will eject them from my house When God threatens to eject Israel from his house, it is the same as though he said, ``I will wholly cast you away;'' as when one cuts off a withered branch from a tree, or a diseased member from the body. It is indeed certain that the Israelites were then like bastards; for they were not worthy of any account or station in the Church, inasmuch as they had a strange temple and profane sacrifices; but as circumcision, and the priesthood in name, still remained among them, they boasted themselves to be the children of Abraham, and a holy people; hence the Prophet denounces here such a destruction, that it might appear that they in vain gloried in these superior distinctions, for God would expunge them from his catalogue. We now understand the design of the Prophet: but we shall, to-morrow, notice the remaining portion.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as thou hast freely embraced us in thy only-begotten Son, and made us, from being the sons and race of Adam, a holy and blessed seed, and as we have not hitherto ceased to alienate ourselves from the grace thou hast offered to us, --- O grant, that we may hereafter so return to a sound mind, as to cleave faithfully and with sincere affection of heart to thy Son, and so retain by this bond thy love, and be also retained in the grace of adoption, that thy name may be glorified by us as long as we sojourn in this world, until thou at length gatherest us into thy celestial kingdom, which has been purchased for us by the blood of thy Son. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-sixth

We stated yesterday how God expels from his house those who ought to have been deemed to be already among such as are without: for hypocrites always invent coverings for themselves until the Lord himself openly shows to them their

baseness. It is therefore necessary that what they seem to have, as Christ also declares respecting hypocrites, should be taken away from them, (Matthew 13:12.)

It then follows, --- I will not proceed on to love them A question may be moved here --- why does God speak thus of his love? for he had already ceased to love that people, as it maybe fully gathered from facts. --- Though this saying may not be strictly correct, yet it is not unsuitable. Profane men, and those who are in love with worldly things estimate the love of God by present appearances. When the Lord feeds them well and plentifully, when they enjoy their pleasures, when they have no troubles to bear, they think themselves to be most acceptable to God. Such was the case with this people, as it has been already often stated, as long as the Lord suspended his vengeance; and this was especially the case under king Jeroboam the second, for we know that the Lord then spared and greatly favoured them. It was then a certain kind of love, when the Lord thus cherished them, God allured them to repentance by the sweetness of his goodness. But now, as he sees them to be growing harder and harder, he says, ``I will not continue my love towards them; for I will now really show that I am angry with them, as I see that I have done nothing by my forbearance, which they do in a manner laugh to scorn.'' Thus we see that men are rejected by God nearly in the same way, when he exterminates them from his Church, as when he withdraws his blessing, which is, as it were, the pledge and symbol of his love.

The reason afterwards follows, Because their princes are perfidious: and this is expressly mentioned, for it was needful that the origin of the evil should be stated. The Prophet then shows here that corruptions originated not with the common people, but with the princes. Now we know for what end God would have rank and dignity to exist among men, and that is, that there might be something like a bridle to restrain the waywardness of the multitude. When, therefore, princes become leaders to every wickedness, all things must then go on in the worst manner; for what ought to be a remedy becomes the cause of ruin. This, then, is what the Prophet meant in the first place. But by accusing the princes he does not absolve the people; but, as it has been said in another place, he insinuates that they must have been very blind, when they suffered themselves to be drawn into the ditch by the blind: for the people doubtless went astray of their own accord and willingly, though they had erring leaders; and though, as it has appeared elsewhere, they anxiously sought excuses for their errors. But we may hence learn how frivolous is the excuse of those who at this day exculpate themselves by the pretext of obeying princes and bishops; for the Lord here denounces punishment on the whole people, because the princes were perfidious. If it be so, we see that the whole body is involved, when wicked leaders rule and draw the people from the right way; yea, when they precipitate them into the same transgressions, and carry them along with them. When, therefore, there is such a confusion, universal punishment, which consumes all together, must follow. Let us proceed ---

Hosea 9:16

16. Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up, they shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb.

16. Percussus est Ephraim, radix eorum exaruit, fructum non facient: etiamsi genuerint, tunc interficiam desiderabilia uteri ipsorum.

The Prophet again threatens extreme vengeance to the Israelites. It is no wonder that the same sentence is so often repeated; for hypocrites, we know, too much flatter themselves, and are not frightened even by the most grievous threatening. As then hypocrites are so stupid, they must be often, nay, frequently pricked, and most sharply, that they may at length be awakened out of their torpor. Hence the Prophet repeats the threatening which he had often before announced, and says, that Israel had been so smitten, that their root had dried up The comparison is taken from a tree, which not only has had its branches cut off, but has also been torn from the roots. The meaning is, that God would take such vengeance on this miserable people, as wholly to destroy them, without any hope of recovery. The root then is dried up, they will produce fruit no more.

He then leaves this similitude or metaphor, and says, If they generate, I will slay the desirable fruit of their womb; that is, though some seed be begotten, I will yet destroy it.

We now then apprehend the design of the Prophet, which was to show, that the Lord would no more be content with some moderate punishment, for he had often found that this abandoned people were in vain chastised by paternal love; but that extreme vengeance awaited them, which would consume not only the men, but also their children so that no residue should remain. The reason is afterwards added ---

Hosea 9:17

17. My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations.

17. Abjiciet eos meus Deus, quia non audierunt eum (vel, non obedierunt ei, ut sit clarius,) et erunt vagi inter gentes.

The Prophet, as I have lately hinted, assigns a reason why God had resolved to deal so severely with this people, namely because he saw their unnameable perverseness. For the Prophets always defend the justice of God against the impious complaints of those men who murmur whenever God severely punishes them, and cry out that he is cruel, and exceeds moderation. The Prophets do therefore shut up the mouth of the ungodly, that they may not vomit out their blasphemies against God; and the Prophet is now on this subject. Hence he says, that destruction was nigh the Israelites, because God had rejected them; for the verb {מאס}, mas, means to reject, to cast away, to despise. As long then as the Lord vouchsafed to care for this people, they possessed at least some eminence; but the Prophet says that now they were wholly cast away. What then remained for them but entire ruin?

And he says, My God will cast them away By this expression he claims authority to himself, and thunders against the whole people; for though the whole worship of God was shamefully corrupted in the kingdom of Israel, they yet boasted that they were the holy seed of Abraham, and the name of God was as yet ready in every mouth, as we know that the ungodly take to themselves the liberty of profaning the name of God without any hesitation or shame. Since then this false glorying prevailed as yet among the Israelites, the Prophet says, ``He is no more your God, mine he is.''

Thus he placed himself on one side, and set himself alone in opposition to the whole people. But at the same time he proves that he has more authority than they all; for he brings forward God as the supporter and defender of his doctrine. `My God,' he says, `will cast them away.' So also Isaiah says, when reproving Ahab,

`Is it not enough that ye be troublesome to men, except ye be also troublesome to my God?' (Isaiah 7:13.)

And yet Isaiah was not the only one who worshipped God purely. This is true; but he had respect to the king and his company; and therefore he connected himself with God, and separated them all from himself, inasmuch as they had already by their perfidy separated themselves from him.

Then he says, `My God will cast them away.' So at this day we may safely take the name of God in opposition to the Papists; for they have nothing in common with the true God, since they have polluted themselves with so many abominations: and though they may be proud against us, trusting in their vast multitude, and because we are few; yet we may boldly oppose them, since God, we know, can never be separated nor drawn away from his word, and his word, we know, stands on our side. We may then lawfully reprove the Papists, and say that God is opposed to them, for we fight under his banner.

Because, he says, they have not obeyed me We see that the cause of extreme vengeance is perverseness; that is, when men designedly harden their hearts against God. The Gentiles also perish, indeed, without any instruction; but vengeance is doubled, when the Lord extends his hand to the erring, and seeks to recall them to the way of salvation, and when they obstinately refuse to obey; yea, when they show their heart to be perverse in their wickedness. When, then, such perverseness is added to errors and vicious affections, God must necessarily come forth with his extreme vengeance, as he threatens here by his Prophet.

As, then, they obeyed not, the Lord will cast them away, and they shall be fugitives among the nations This seems to be a lighter punishment than what he had previously stated respecting their seed being destroyed. But we must remember the contrast between the rest given them by God, and this vagrant wandering, of which the Prophet now speaks. The land of Canaan was to them a quiet habitation, where they rested as though God cherished them under his wings; and hence it is even called the rest of God in Psalm 95. [60] But now, when the Israelites wandered as fugitives, and sought rest here and there, and could not find it, it was more evidently a rejection of them; for the Lord proved, every day and every moment, that they were repudiated by him, inasmuch as they were deprived of that rest which he had promised them. Let us proceed ---

[60] Psalm 95:11. — fj.

Hosea 10

Chapter 10

Hosea 10:1

1. Israel is an empty vine, he bringeth forth fruit unto himself: according to the multitude of his fruit he hath increased the altars; according to the goodness of his land they have made goodly images.

1. Vites spoliata Israel, fructum ponet sibi: secundum multitudinem fructus sui multiplicavit altaria (in altaribus multiplicavit;) secundum bonitatem (hoc est, proventum fertilem) terrae suae benefecerunt in statuis (alii, bonas fecerunt statuas; sed prior versio mihi magis probatur.)

Interpreters explain this verse in various ways. Those who think {בוקק}, bukok, here applied to the vine, means ``empty,'' are mistaken; for the Prophet means rather, that Israel was like a vine, which is robbed after the ingathering is come: for the word {בקק}, bekok, means properly to pillage, or to plunder. But the Prophet compares the gathering of grapes to robbing; and this view best suits the place. He says, then, that Israel is like a robbed vine; for it was stripped of its fruit; and then he adds, He will make fruit for himself The verb {שוה}, shue, means to equal; and many render it thus, --- He will equalize fruit to himself, or, ``fruit has been squalled to him.'' But this rendering brings out no clear sense. I rather follow those who render it, ``to lay up.'' This verb means also sometimes ``to lie;'' at least some thus render the clause, ``Fruit will lie to him:'' and though, in the sense of lying, it has a different final letter, {שוה}, shue, it is yet said to be derived from this root, so that there is a change of {א} ``alef'' into {ה} ``he'', as grammarians think: and yet it does not seem probable that {שוא}, shua means to lie. But they elicit this sense, ``Israel is a plundered vine; therefore fruit will lie to him;'' that is, it will bring no produce, for that will happen to it which is wont to be, when robbers have laid waste fields and vineyards. But as I have said already, some more correctly render it, ``to lay up;'' He will lay up fruit for himself Some, however, read the sentence as a question, --- ``Will

Israel lay up fruit for himself?'' Then the sense is, that Israel was so plundered, that no restitution could be hoped for. But these interpreters do not seem to understand the mind of the Prophet.

I collect a different meaning from the words, and that is, that Israel would lay up fruit for himself after the robbing, and sacred history confirms this view: for this people, we know, had been in various ways chastised; so, however, that they gathered new strength. For the Lord intended only to admonish them gently, that they might be healed; but nothing, as it has before appeared, was effected by God's moderation. The case, however, was so, that Israel produced new fruit, as a vine, after having been robbed one year, brings forth a new vintage; for one ingathering does not kill the vine. Thus also Israel did lay up fruit for himself; that is, after the Lord had collected there his vintage, he again favoured the people with his blessing, and, as it were, restored them anew; as vines in the spring throw out their branches, and then produce fruit. [61]

But what did happen? According to the abundance of his fruit, he says, he multiplied his altars Here God complains, that Israel, after having been once gathered, went on in his own wickedness. Chastisements ought at least to have availed so much as to induce Israel to retake himself to the pure worship of God. But God not only reproves the people here for having been always obstinate but also for having, as it were designedly increased their vices. For it was like a horrible conspiracy against God for the people, as soon as they acquired new strength, to multiply altars to themselves, when yet the Lord had already shown, by clear evidences, that fictitious modes. of worship did not please him; nay, that they were to him the greatest abominations. We now apprehend the meaning of the Prophet. Then Israel, a robbed vine, multiplied altars for himself; that is, Israel has indeed been gathered but the Lord restored to him wealth and abundance of provisions, and whatever appertains to a safe and happy condition; has Israel become better through correction? Has he repented after the Lord has so mercifully withdrawn his hand? By no means, he says; but he has multiplied altars for himself, he has become worse than he was wont to be; and according to the goodness of his land, he has been doing good in statues

Now this is a very useful doctrine; for we see how the Lord forbears in inflicting punishments --- he does not execute them with the utmost rigour; for as soon as he lays on a few stripes, he withholds his hand. But how do they act who are thus moderately chastised? As soon as they can recruit their spirits, they are carried away by a more headstrong inclination, and grow insolent against God. We see this

[61] Much difference exists among critics as to the meaning of the two first clauses of this verse. The two words which create the difficulty are {{בוקק and .{שוה} The first word in the three other places, Isaiah 24:1, Jeremiah 51:2, and Nahum 2:2, where it alone occurs, means, ``to empty thoroughly,'' or ``to make wholly empty:'' and when applied to the vine, as here, it seems to signify vine that fully empties itself of its juices, so as to bear fruit abundantly. This view is favored by the Septuagint, {ευκληματουσα}, well-branching, luxuriant, and by Symmachus, {υλομανουσα}, wildly luxuriant, and is adopted by Bishop Horsley, who renders it, ``yielding.'' The other word, ,{שוה} means ``to equal,'' or ``to be equal,'' and in no case, properly, ``to lay up,'' as Calvin takes it. Then the literal rendering of these words, {פרי} {ישוה} ,{לו} is, ``the fruit is equal to it;'' i.e. the fruit is suitable to the vine, or, ``it makes fruit equal to itself:'' and with this meaning correspond the words in the Septuagint, {ὁ} {καρπος} {ευθηνῶν} {αυτης}, --- ``its fruit is exuberant.'' The following appears to be the literal rendering of the verse: --- ``A vine, emptying itself, is Israel, It makes fruit equal to itself: According to the abundance of his fruit, He has abounded toward altars; According to the goodness of his land, He has made statues good.'' Or, if we would coin a word to correspond with the original, the two last lines may be thus translated: --- ``According to the goodness of his land, He has goodnized statues.'' --- Ed.

evil prevalent in the world even in our day, as it has been in all ages. We need not wonder, then, that the Prophet here expostulates with the people of Israel: but it is, at the same time, right for us to apply the doctrine for our own instruction. Though, then, the Lord should spare us, and, after having begun to chastise us, should soon show indulgence, and restore us as it were anew, let us beware lest a forgetfulness of our former sins should creep over us; but let his chastisements exert over us an influence, even after God has put a limit and an end to them. For the import of what the Prophet teaches is this, that men are not to forget the wrath of God, though he may not always, or continually, lay on stripes, but to consider that the Lord deals thus gently that they may have more time to repents and that a truce is granted them that they may more quietly reflect on their sins.

But he says, According to the goodness of their land, they have been doing good in statues I have before stated, that some take this as meaning, that they made good statues, and consider ``good'' to be elegant. But I repeat the preposition {ל}``lamed'' before altars. When the Prophet said that Israel multiplied altars to himself, the literal reading is, that he multiplied in altars, or as to altars; that is, he did much, or very liberally spent money on altars. So also here, it is proper to repeat, that they did good as to statues. But a concession is made in the verb {הימיבו}, eithibu; [62] ; for it is certain that they grievously sinned; they would not have provoked the wrath of God had they not dealt wickedly in altars and statues. But the Prophet speaks ironically of the perverted worship of God, as when we say at this day, that the Papists are mad in their good intentions: when I call intentions good, I concede to them a character which does not rightly belong to them. It is therefore according to their sense that the Prophet speaks here; but he says, ironically, that they did good in statues; that is, that they seemed to themselves to be the most holy worshipers of God; for they made a show of great zeal. It was, as they say, insane devotion. But there appeared here something more than blind hardness, inasmuch as they had so soon forgotten the Lord's displeasure, of which they had been reminded by evident tokens. We now then perceive the object of the Prophet, and what is the application of his doctrine. Let us go on ---

Hosea 10:2

2. Their heart is divided; now shall they be found faulty: he shall break down their altars, he shall spoil their images.

2. Divisum est (vel, se divisit) cor eorum: nunc convicti erunt (alii, peribunt; nam {אשם} utrunque significat; refertur tam ad culpam quam ad poenam: sed mihi probatur eorum sententia qui vertunt, Nunc convicti erunt, hoc est, Nunc erunt scelerati; quemadmodum etiam simile examplum jam vidimus capite 5, nisi fallor: Nunc ergo convicti erunt:) ipse evertet altaria eorum, destruet statuas ipsorum.

He says first that their heart was divided, that is, from God; for this, we know, is principally required, that people should faithfully cleave to their God. ``And now Israel, what does thy God require of thee, but to cleave to him with the whole heart?'' Since God then binds us to himself by a holy union, it is the summit of all wickedness, when our heart is divided from him, as it is when an unchaste and perfidious wife

[62] The final {ו is left out in one copy, and the omission is countenanced by the Septuagint. --- Ed.

alienates her affection from her husband. For as long as the husband keeps the heart of his wife, as it were, tied to himself, conjugal fidelity and chastity continue; but when her heart is divided from her husband, it is all over, and she abandons herself to lewdness. So also the Prophet says here that the heart of the people was divided from God; for they did not devote themselves to God with a pure and sincere affection, as they ought to have done. ``This people then have withdrawn their heart from me.''

But he says, Now they shall be guilty; that is I will now show what they deserve, so that they shall not hereafter, as they are wont to do, sport with their cavils; for the verb {אשם}, ahsem, is not to be referred to the deeds but rather, as, they say, to its manifestation. Then he says that they shall be guilty, for they shall be convicted: as, to be justified means to be absolved, so also to be guilty means to be condemned. The meaning is, that as this people could not perceive the Lord's wrath as long as their condition was easy to be borne, he would inflict such dreadful punishment as would convince them, so that they might no longer deceive and flatter themselves. They shall then be now condemned. How? For the Lord will overturn their altars. This may be referred to the minister of vengeance; but as no name is expressed, I prefer to understand God as being meant. God then shall overturn their altars and destroy, or reduce to nothing, their statues

This was added, because ungodly men, we know, trust in their own devices, and can never be brought to serious fear, except when they understand that they have been deceived by the crafts of Satan, while they gave themselves up to superstitions and idolatry. Hence the Prophet declares that their altars shall be overturned, and their statues reduced to nothing, that hypocrites might lay aside the confidence by which they had hitherto grown proud against God. But a confirmation of this view follows ---

Hosea 10:3

3. For now they shall say, We have no king, because we feared not the Lord; what then should a king do to us?

3. Quia nunc dicent, Non rex nobis, quia non timuimus Jehovam, et rex quid faciet nobis?

He explains more at large what he had briefly referred to, when he said, that the condemnation, which would discover their wickedness, was now near at hand. He now adds, that even they themselves would, of their own accord, say, that they were deservedly punished in being deprived of a king; nay, that a king would avail them nothing, because they had not feared Jehovah. There is always to be understood a contrast between the perverse boasting of the people and the feeling of God's wrath, of which the Prophet now speaks. For as long as God spared the Israelites, they abused his forbearance and his kindness. They did not then think that there was any thing to be reprehended in their life; nay, we know how petulantly they contended with the Prophets: as soon as a severe word came out of the mouth of any Prophet, great contentions arose. ``What! dost thou treat thus the people of God, and the elect race of Abraham?'' Since, then, they so obstinately spurned every instruction, the Prophet says here, ``The time shall come, when they shall say

that they have no king, because they did not fear the Lord.'' The meaning is, that as they did not profit by the word of the Lord, another kind of teaching was soon to be adopted; for the Lord would really show his wrath, and even force them to confess against their will what they now excused: for this confession of sin would have never been expressed, had not the Lord dealt severely with them. They shall therefore say, --- when? even when they shall be taken to another school; for the Lord will not henceforth remonstrate with them in words, but will so strike them with his hand, that they will understand that they have to do with him.

But it must be observed, that the Prophet speaks not here of the repentance of the people, nor relates their words, but rather mentions the thing itself. Hypocrites either clamour against God when he visits their sins, or feignedly own that they are worthy of such punishments, and all the while the same perverseness remains within. But when the Prophet introduces them as speaking, he does not mean that they will say what he relates; but, as I have said already, he rather speaks of the thing itself. Hence They will say, that is, the event itself will declare, that they are deprived of a king, because they feared not Jehovah; yea, that though a king ruled over them, he would be useless. Though, then, the Israelites had never ceased to clamour against God, nor given over openly to vomit forth their blasphemies against him, yet this, which the Prophet says, would have been still true. How so? Because it was sufficient that they were in reality convicted, though God had not extorted from them this confession; yea, they were themselves made to feel that they were justly smitten by the hand of God, however they might obstinately deny this before men.

The Prophet shows here also, that profane men, while any hope on earth is set before them, proudly despise the hand of God, and grow torpid in their own security, as in their own dregs. While Israel saw their king in the midst of them, they thought themselves safe from every harm, and boldly despised all threatening. This, then, is what the Prophet meant. Still further, when the Lord takes away every thing that dazzles the eyes of profane and wicked men, they then begin to own how foolishly they had flattered themselves, and how much they had been deceived by Satan. This is what is meant by Hosea, when he says, that the Israelites shall be constrained to know that they had no king, because they feared not God: but this repentance would be too late, for it would be without advantage. It now follows ---

Hosea 10:4

4. They have spoken words, swearing falsely in making a covenant: thus judgement springeth up as hemlock in the furrows of the field.

4. Loquuti sunt verba, jurando mendaciter, incidendo foedus: germinabit tanquam absynthium super sulcos agri judicium. [63]

[63] There is here a departure from the usual arrangement: the text is interwoven with the exposition, and not given apart. But to preserve uniformity, the text is here given by itself, collected from the comment. The verse may be thus literally rendered: — 'They have spoken words, oaths of falsehood, In making of a covenant: And judgment hath sprung up like the wormwood in the furrows of the field.' Though the doctrine of Calvin is correct, yet his exposition of the last two lines seems too refined. Judgment often means the administration of justice. Instead of being right and for the general good, as it ought to have been, it was like some noxious weed growing naturally and abundantly in the furrows of the field. As the word is literally 'head,' it seems to designate a weed or a herb most natural to the soil, the chief herb, which commonly grows abundantly. So that judgment, or administration of justice, was not like the good seed sown in a prepared ground, but like the noxious weed, natural to the

They have spoken words, they have uttered words. Some give this explanation, that they daringly followed their own counsels, as the despisers of God are wont to settle and determine what comes to their minds according to their own will; for they deign not to inquire of God what is right. Thus they take the meaning to be; but I view it to be different, that is, that they spoke words, or very freely testified, that they would be the best and the most faithful worshipers of God. Then it follows, By swearing falsely. Some refer this to covenants. I will explain the words one by one; for I shall hereafter speak of the real meaning of the Prophet.

Then he says, that they swore falsely, that is, according to some because there was in them much levity and changeableness. And, indeed, I confess it to be true, that they procured for themselves grievous punishments by their perjuries; but the Prophet rather means those who swore falsely to the Lord. It then follows, By cutting a covenant, by making a covenant. Here again the Prophet no doubt reproves them for renewing their covenant with God perfidiously; for it was a mere dissimulation. But it follows, Judgement will germinate as wormwood Some render the word {כראש}, carash as gall; but the similitude is not suitable, since the Prophet speaks here of fields; for he adds, In the furrows of the field; that is, judgement will germinate in the furrows as wormwood or some other bitter plant.

I have thus briefly explained how some understand this verse, namely, that Israel was daring and haughty in their counsels, boldly determining whatever pleased them, as if it were not in the power of God to change what men resolve to do, --- and then, that they implicated themselves in many compacts, that without any faith they violated them with this and that nation, and that at last they had nothing but bitterness. This is their exposition: but I rather think that the cause of God is here pleaded by the Prophet; that is, that the Israelites, as often as they promised some repentance, and gave some sign of it, only dissembled and lied to God. Hence he says They have spoken words, but they were only words; for they were never from a heart touched with any feeling as to God's wrath, so as to abhor themselves for their vices. They therefore uttered words only.

He afterwards expresses the same deceitfulness in other words: They have sworn falsely, he says, and made a covenant; which means, that though they seemed to wish to return to God, it was yet a fallacious pretence; yea, a perjury. When they wished to prove themselves to be especially faithful, they then sinned more grievously by renewing their covenant.

Judgement shall therefore germinate as wormwood in the furrows of the field. Judgement is here to be taken as rectitude, as though the Prophet had said, ``When they exhibit some appearance of religion, and give a colour to their impieties, it seems indeed to be judgement, there seems to be some justice; but it will be at last wormwood, and will germinate in the furrows of the field.''

Interpreters seem not to me to have understood the design of the Prophet. For why does he say, ``in the furrows of the field,'' rather than in the field? Even for this reason, because there is some preparation made, when the field is ploughed, for the good seed to grow. When therefore, noxious herbs grow on the furrows of the land,

soil, when first turned up by the plough. — Ed.

it is less to be endured than when they grow in dry and desert places; for this is what is wont naturally to happen. But when wormwood grows up instead of wheat in the furrows, that is, on lands well cultivated, it is a thing more strange and less to be endured. We now then apprehend what the Prophet meant. They indeed seemed at times to be touched with some feeling of piety, and promised much, and were very liberal in good words; they even swore, and seemed prepared to renew their covenant with God, --- but what was all this? It was the same as if a husband man had prepared his field, and noxious herbs had grown up where he had bestowed much labour and toil. Such was their rectitude, --- a disguised form or shadow of religion; it was nothing else, but like wormwood growing in well-cultivated land.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou dost train us up with so much diligence and assiduous care, and regard us as dear and precious like an hereditary vine, --- O grant, that we may not bring forth wild grapes, and that our fruit may not be bitter and unpleasant to thee, but that we may strive so to form our whole life in obedience to thy law, that all our actions and thoughts may be pleasant and sweet fruits to thee. And as there is ever some sin mixed up with our works, even when we desire to serve thee sincerely and from the heart, grant that all stains in our works may be so cleansed and washed away by the sacrifice of thy Son, that they may be to thee sacrifices of sweet odour, through the same, even Christ Jesus, who has so reconciled us to thee, as to obtain pardon even for our works. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-seventh

Hosea 10:5

5. The inhabitants of Samaria shall fear because of the calves of Bethaven: for the people thereof shall mourn over it, and the priests thereof that rejoiced on it, for the glory thereof, because it is departed from it.

5. Propter vitulas [64] (juvencas) Bethaven pavebunt (ad verbum) incola Samaria (sed mutatio est numeri, pavebunt igitur: alii vertunt, exulabunt incolae Samariae, sed male:) quia lugebit super eum populus suus et sacerdotes ejus, qui super eum exultant (vel, propter eum exultabunt) super gloria ejus, quia transivit ab eo (vel, aversa est ab eo.)

I shall first briefly touch on what I have mentioned in reading over the text; that is, that some interpreters expound this verse of the exile of the people. The word {גור}, gur, signifies to be banished: and it means also to fear; but the context, as we shall see, will not allow it to be taken here in the sense of being banished. Some render the other word {שכן}, shecan, to dwell, but they are mistaken. The Prophet simply means that the inhabitants of Samaria were now glorying in their calves, (for the calves we know, were in Dan and Bethel,) but that in a short time the Lord would strike them with terror, and the cause we shall see hereafter.

I now come to show the real meaning of the prophet The inhabitants of Samaria,

[64] The word rendered "calves" is in the form of a feminine plural: but it is evidently a noun in the singular number, for all the pronouns in the verse, referring to it, are in the singular number. It is a peculiar form, expressive of something huge or great: as {,{בהמות a great beast in Psalm 73:22; and ,{חכמות} chief wisdom, in Proverbs 9:1. And so Bishop Horsley renders it ``great calf.'' The Septuagint has ``calf.'' --- {τω} {μοσχω}. --- Ed.

he says shall fear, because of the calves of Bethaven. The Prophet derides the folly of the people of Israel in worshipping calves, and in thinking that the whole hope of safety was included in them. How so? ``They are constrained'' he says, ``to weep for the exile of their calf; so far is it from being able to bring them any aid, that the citizens of Samaria in vain deplore its captivity.'' By way of contempt, he calls the calves, heifers. He might have used the masculine gender; but the whole of the verse glances at the madness of the people of Israel, because they were so grossly delirious in their superstitions, and yet were wholly insensible. Then the inhabitants of Samaria shall fear for the calves of Bethaven, because idolaters, when they see some danger to their idols, tremble, and would gladly bring aid; and this very fear betrays their stupidity and madness. For why do not the gods help themselves, instead of expecting help from mortals? We now understand the design of the Prophet.

But he says, They will mourn over it The number is here changed. He had said, ``because of the heifers;'' and now he expresses the kind by putting down a relative of the masculine gender {ו}, vau [65] . He therefore returns to ``calves,'' and afterwards uses the singular number; for there was one only at Bethaven, the other was at Dan. But we have already shown why the Prophet called them heifers.

Its people, he says, shall mourn for it, yea, even the priests also. Some think that {כמרים}, camerim, priests were called by this terms because they put on black vestments in celebrating their rites; for the word ``kemer'' means black; but this is a vain conjecture: and the Rabbis, as it often appears, are very bold in their figments; for they regard not what is true, but only make conjectures, and wish that whatever comes to their minds to be counted as oracular; nor do they regard history, but advance without reason what pleases them. Another explanation of the word may be adduced, and one in my judgement more probable; for the word signifies also to ring again or to resound; and the priests, we know, made, in performing their services, great noises and howling; as Elijah says

`Cry aloud, for your Baal is perhaps asleep,'
(1 Kings 18:27.)

If their conjecture is allowable, I would rather say that they were called by this word on account of the noise they made. But I leave the thing undecided. It was, however, a name commonly in use, as it appears from other places. For by this name {כמרים}, camerim were those new priests called, whom Josiah took away, as it is related in 2 Kings 23. But whether they had this name from their noises, or the black colour of their vestments, it is still certain that they were the priests of false gods.

The Prophet now says, that the priests also shall mourn, for the verb {אבל}, abel, is to be repeated. He afterwards adds, {כבודו}-{על} {יגילו}, igilu ol-cabudu; the relative, who, is wanting --- who exult, but it is to be understood after {כמרים}, who exult for it. But why should they mourn? They shall mourn for its glory, because it had departed: they shall now begin to mourn, because the glory of the calf had passed away from it. Here the Prophet teaches that the glorying, by which hypocrites de-

[65] This relative is either masculine or neuter: the Hebrews have only two genders, the masculine and feminine; and the neuter is expressed by the former. — Ed.

ceive themselves, will not be permanent; for the Lord will surely lead them, as we shall see, to sudden and unexpected shame. He then says that there would be mourning for the calves among the citizens of Samaria. They indeed thought that the kingdom was well fortified, for they had erected temples in their borders, to be, as it were, their fortresses. They hence imagined themselves to be safe from every incursion of enemies. The Prophet says, ``Nay, they shall mourn for their calf.'' How so? Truly its own people shall mourn for it. He goes farther, and calls all its worshipers, the people of the calf: and we know that the whole kingdom of Israel was implicated in that superstition. Yea, he says, even the priests, who exult for it, shall mourn. Why? Because its glory shall depart from it. It now follows ---

Hosea 10:6

6. It shall be also carried unto Assyria for a present to king Jareb: Ephraim shall receive shame, and Israel shall be ashamed of his own counsel.

6. Etiam ipse in Assyriam feretur munus regi Jareb: puderem Ephraim accipiet, et pudefiet Israel a consilio suo.

Here the Prophet expresses more clearly the cause of mourning to the priests and to the whole people, The calf, he says, *``shall be carried into Assyria,* and carried as a present to king Jareb''. It is probable, that when extreme danger came, the king of Israel was constrained either to cast the calf into a new form, or to break it in pieces, to redeem peace from the Assyrian king. As then the whole kingdom was reduced to great want, we may infer from this place that the calf or calves, were carried into Assyria for pacifying the king. Since then the Israelites saw that they were stripped of their protection, (for they were now without any hope of safety, as there was no God among them,) the Prophet mentioned above their grief: but he now shows that exile was nigh at hand, not only to the Israelites, but also to the calves which they worshipped and by whose aid they thought themselves to be secure and safe in their country.

There is a particular emphasis in the particle {גם}, gam, as though the Prophet said, ``Not only the Israelites shall migrate, but the very calf shall also be carried into Assyria.'' Of the word ``Jareb,'' we have spoken in the commentary on Hosea 5, it seems to have been the proper name of a man. Some conjecture it to be a city in Assyria, though not noticed by writers. Others think it to be the name of a neighbouring king to the Assyrian, but without reason, and they are refuted by this very passage; for the Prophet doubtless points out here the Assyrian king. He yet calls him Jareb; it may be that he was as yet a private man, or he may have so called him by way of reproach. This is however uncertain. Jerome renders the word, ``avenger.'' But it is sufficiently evident that it was a proper name, not of a city or place, but, as it has been said, of a man. And I am disposed to think, that he calls him king Jareb by way of contempt, for this contempt prevailed among the Israelites as long as they thought themselves strong enough to resist. But the Lord afterwards checked this pride: hence the Prophet says now in a cutting manner, ``The calf shall be carried into Assyria to pacify king Jareb.''

He afterwards adds, Ephraim shall receive shame, or reproach; Israel shall be made ashamed of his counsel. He says the same thing in different ways and not

without reason; for it was difficult at first to persuade the Israelites that what they thought to have been wisely contrived would turn out to their shame. The king Jeroboam the first, when he erected temples did indeed think it the best device to prevent the people, were they to repent, from submitting themselves again to the posterity of David. Hence he thought that the ten tribes were wholly torn away, when he set up that peculiar worship, which had nothing in common with that of the tribe of Judah. And doubtless had the ten tribes worshipped the true God at Jerusalem, this union might have been the means of again reuniting them into one body under one head. Hence the king Jeroboam thought that he had provided well for his kingdom, to render it permanent, by cutting off all communication between the two people: and there was none in Israel who did not approve of this counsel; for they took delight in their wealth, in the number of their men, and in other advantages. Since then the kingdom of Judah was much inferior, the Israelites were vastly pleased with themselves. This is the reason why the Prophet says, Ephraim shall receive shame; Israel shall be made ashamed of his counsel But this, as I have said, could not appear credible at first. For men promise to themselves the success they wish in their own craftiness: and hence it comes also, that they dare to attempt any thing they please without the aid of God. This is the reason why the Prophet repeats the same sentence, ``Ephraim,'' he says, ``shall receive shame; Israel shall be made ashamed,'' --- for what? for their counsel. They think that their own counsel will be most useful to them; yea, they place their safety in their own craftiness. But the Lord will overrule for their shame whatever they have devised. It follows ---

Hosea 10:7

7. As for Samaria, her king is cut off as the foam upon the water.

7. Succisus est Samariae rex suus, sicuti spuma in superficie aquarum (alii {קצץ} volunt corsdticem: sed nomen spumae multo aptius est. [66])

The Prophet proceeds with the same subject, nor ought it to be deemed a useless prolixity. It would have indeed been sufficient by one word to threaten the Israelites, had they been pliable and obedient; but as they were stupid in their perverseness, it was necessary to stun their ears with continual threatening, that they might be at least less excusable before God. Hence the Prophet says now, that the king of Samaria shall be cut off like the foam: and he thus speaks of the king, because the Israelites thought their king, next to their idols, to be to them an invincible fortress. For thus ungodly men, as it has been mentioned before, always imagine their stronghold to be in the world and earthly things. Hence, the Lord denounces a just punishment, by saying that he would cut off the king; for the impious confidence, of which I have spoken, could not be otherwise corrected. Therefore ``the king of Samaria shall be cut off'' --- in what manner? ``Like a foam''. It is a most apt comparison; for the Prophet shows that the condition of the kingdom, which they imagined to be firm and perpetual, had nothing in it but an empty appearance, like the foam, which has nothing substantial. And further, he seems to me to point out another thing, that is, that the kingdom, though it showed itself to be above other kingdoms, was yet but

[66] Samaria is destroyed, Her king is like foam on the waters. This is evidently the correct rendering, and this construction is what Bishop Horsley adopts. — Ed.

an excrement. The foam floats above the waters of the sea, and by its height seems eminent; but what is the foam but the excrement of the water? for whatever is decayed in the waters passes into foam. So Israel thought, that as they were endued with power, and in every way excelled the tribe of Judah, they could ride, as it were, over their heads. The Prophet, on the contrary, says that they were foam, and also their king. ``Your king,'' he says, ``though the king of Judah cannot be compared with him, is yet a foam. By his height he seems indeed wonderful, and hence has arisen your pride, for you are now become hardened against God; but the Lord will cut him off like a foam.'' The Prophet then not only compares the king of Israel to a bubble or to foaming waters; but he says, that with respect to the king of Judah, he is an excrement. We now then understand the meaning of the Prophet.

Hosea 10:8

8. The high places also of Aven, the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed: the thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; and they shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us.

8. Et perierunt (vel, peribunt excelsa Aven, scelus Israel: spina et carduus ascendet super altaria eorum: et dicent montibus, Operite nos; et collibus, Cadite super nos.

We see how much the Prophet dwells on one thing: but, as I have already said, there was need of a strong hammer to beat this iron; for the hearts of the people were iron, or even steel. This hardness could not then be broken except with violence. This is the reason why the Prophet goes on with his threatening and places before their eyes in so many forms the vengeance of God; of which it would have been enough for him briefly to remind them, had they not been so perverse.

And first he says, The high places of Aven have perished, or shall perish. He now calls Bethel Aven, as he called it before Bethaven. We have stated the reason for changing the name. Jeroboam might indeed have disguised the worship, which he had profanely introduced by this pretext, that God had appeared in that place to holy Jacob, and we know its name was given to it by God: but in the meantime, as the people had made a wrong use of the Patriarch's example, the place was called Bethaven. Bethaven, we know, is the house of iniquity; as though the Prophet had said, ``God dwells not in this place, as superstitious men imagine; but it has been corrupted by ungodly worshipers.'' He therefore says, ``The high places of Aven;'' that is, of impiety. But it may be expedient to repeat here what we have before said, namely, that when men degenerate from the pure teaching of God, they in vain cover their profanations with empty names, as we see the Papists doing at this day; for they adorn that profanation, the Mass, with the title of Sacrament, as if it was something allied to it. They wish even their own Mass to be regarded as the Holy Supper, as if it were in their power to abolish what has been prescribed by the Son of God, and to substitute in its place their own inventions. Hence, how much soever the Papists may dignify their profanations with honourable names they effect nothing. How so? Because God loudly proclaims respecting Bethel that it is Bethaven; and the reason is well known, because Jeroboam erected temples, and appointed new sacrifices, without God's command. Whenever, then, men depart from the word of the Lord, it

will avail them nothing to disguise their own dreams; for the Lord approves of nothing but what he himself commands. Hence the high places of Aven have perished, or ``shall perish.''

He adds The sin of Israel This sentence, placed in apposition, belongs to the former. What is meant is, The sin of Israel shall perish. But, as it was said yesterday, the Israelites thought that they performed a service acceptable to God; and hence it was that they were so sedulously attentive to their holy rites; but God, on the contrary, pronounced them to be sin. How so? Because it is profanation and idolatry in men to leave off following God's command, and to give way to their own fancies and inventions. We must then understand, that it is not in the power of men to form any modes of worship they please; nor is it in their power to decide on this or that worship, whether it be lawful or spurious; but nothing remains for us but to attend to what the Lord says. When, therefore, the Lord pronounces that to be profane which pleases us, we ought to acquiesce in his judgement; for it does not become us to dispute with him, and it would be vain to do so.

The thorn and the thistle, he says, shall come up on their altars It may be asked, Ought the Prophet simply, by these tokens, to have reproved the superstition of the people, seeing that the same thing happened to the temple a short time after, though not built by the counsel of men, but by that of God? Since, then, the grass grew where the temple was, was not that worship, which we know was founded by God, exposed to ridicule? It is only the same that can be said of the calves. We grant that the calves were carried into Assyria, as a price from the wretched Israelites to pacify the king, who was angry with them. Was not the ark of the covenant taken also into captivity by enemies? Did not king Nebuchadnezzar take away the vessels of the temple? And was not pious Hezekiah constrained to strip the doors of the temple of their ornaments? Then this seems not to have been fitly spoken by the Prophet. The answer to all this may be readily given: The Israelites promised to themselves what they saw, and found afterwards to be vain as is the case with hypocrites, who securely despise all judgements and all punishments. How so? Because they thought their own perverted worship to be sufficient for their safety; though they were in their whole life abominable yet as some form of religion was observed by them, they thought that God was bound to be with them: such and so supine was the security of that people. Very different was the case with the tribe of Judah. For God, by his Prophets, proclaimed aloud, ``Trust not in words of falsehood; for ye boast continually, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, (Jeremiah 7:4,) but I no longer dwell in that temple:'' and Ezekiel saw the glory of the Lord departing elsewhere, (Ezekiel 10:4.) What is said here could not then apply to the temple, nor to the true and lawful altar, nor to the true worshipers of God; but the Prophet justly reproaches the Israelites for expecting safety from their own altars, while yet they were provoking God's wrath against themselves by such inventions. We ought, then to remember this difference between the tribe of Judah and the ten tribes.

But he adds, --- They shall say to the mountains, Cover us: and to the hills, Fall on us. By this form of speaking, the Prophet intended to express the dreadful vengeance of God; as if he had said, that the destruction, which was at hand,

would be so grievous that it would be better to perish a hundred times than to remain in that state alive. For when men say to hills, Fall on us, and to mountains, Cover us, they doubtless desire a death too dreadful to be spoken of; but it is the same as if the Prophet had said, that life and light, and the sight of the sun and the common air, would become a horror to them, for they would perceive the hand of God to be against them. And further, it is a sign of extreme despair, when men willingly seek the abyss, where they may sink to avoid the presence of God and present destruction. And hence Christ has also transferred this passage to set forth the last judgement, of which he speaks, --- `They shall say to the mountains, Cover us; and to the hills, Fall on us;' [67] that is, what was once said by the Prophet shall then be again fulfilled; that the wicked will prefer a hundred deaths to one life; for both light and the vital air will be hated and detested by them; because they will perceive themselves to be oppressed by the dreadful hand of God. It follows ---

Hosea 10:9

9. O Israel, thou hast sinned from the days of Gibeah: there they stood: the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity did not overtake them.

9. A diebus Gabaa peccasti Israel: illic steterunt; non apprehendit eos in Gibea proelium super filios iniquitatis.

He here reproaches Israel for having been long inured in their sins, and not for being lately corrupted. This is the substance. He had said in the last chapter that they were deep in their sins, as in the days of Gibeah: we then explained why the Prophet adduced the example of Gibeah, and that was, because the Gibeonites had fallen away from all fear of God, as if not a word about the law had ever been heard among them. We indeed know that they abandoned themselves to filthy and monstrous lusts, like the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorra. Seeing, then, that so great obscenity prevailed openly and with impunity in Gibeah, rightly did the Prophet say that the Israelites were then lost and past hope, as the case was at that time. But now he regards another thing, even this, --- that from that time they had not ceased to accumulate evils on evils, and thus to spin, as it were, a continuous rope of iniquity, as it is said in another place, --- From the days then of Gibeah hast thou, Israeli sinned

But this seems an unjust charge; for we know that the whole people united together against the tribe of Benjamin. Since, then, the Israelites revenged that wickedness which was committed in the city of Gibeah, why does the Prophet bring against them the crime of which they had been the avengers? But we know that it often happens, that they who execute the vengeance of God are in no respect better; and we had a remarkable example of this at the beginning in Jehu; for he had been God's minister in punishing superstitions; yet God calls him a robber, and compares the vengeance he executed to robbery; `I will avenge,' he says, `on the head of Jehu the blood of the house of Ahab, which he has shed.' And yet we know that he was armed with the sword of God. This is indeed true; but he acted not with a sincere and upright heart, for he afterwards followed the same example. So now the Prophet says, that the Israelites had sinned even from that time; as

[67] Luke 23:30. — fj.

though he said, ``The Lord by the hand of your fathers took vengeance on the Gibeonites and on the whole tribe of Benjamin: but they were wholly like them. This corruption has from that time overwhelmed, like a deluge, the whole land of Israel. There is then no reason for you to boast that you have been better, inasmuch as it afterwards fully appeared what you were, for you imitated the Gibeonites.'' We now then understand the design of the Prophet, and how justly he brings this charge against the Israelites, that they had sinned from the days of Gibeah. They indeed thought that crime was confined to a small corner of the land; but the Prophet says that the whole land was covered with it, and that they all exposed themselves to God's judgement, and deserved the same punishment with the Gibeonites and their brethren, the whole tribe of Benjamin. `Thou, Israel, hast then sinned from the days of Gibeah:' the Israelites said, that the Benjamites alone sinned; but that sin, he says was common.

There they stood This clause is variously explained. Some think that the people are reproved for wishing to retreat after having twice fought without success. We hence see that their minds were soft and cowardly, since they so soon succumbed to their trial. They therefore think that this want of confidence is pointed out by the Prophet; `There they stood,' he says, that is, retreated from the battle; for as they did not succeed as they wished, they thought that they had been deceived. Hence it is concluded, that they did not ascribe his just honour to God, and were on this account reprehensible. But others say, that God had then testified by a clear proof that the Israelites were equal in guilt to the Gibeonites; for how came it, they say, that when they engaged in battle, they were compelled twice to retreat? All Israel were armed against one tribe; how then was it that they did not immediately overcome? But the Benjamites, we know, were not at last conquered without a great loss. It is then certain that God plainly showed that the Israelites were unworthy of so honourable an office; for the Israelites wished to execute God's judgement, when they were themselves equally wicked. The Lord then openly reminded them, that it was not for them to turn their zeal against others, when they were no less guilty themselves. It seems to others that their obstinacy is here pointed out: `There they stood;' that is, from that time they have been perverse in their wickedness, and `the battle against the children of iniquity did not lay hold on them.' This third exposition is what I mostly approve; that is, that the Israelites, when they became ungodly and wicked, though they professed great zeal and ardour against the tribe of Benjamin, did not yet cease from that time to conduct themselves perversely against God, so that they at last arrived at the highest pitch of impiety.

But what follows, The battle in Gibea against the children of iniquity did not lay hold on them, may also be variously explained. Some say, that the Israelites ought not to have defended themselves with this shield, that God had so severely punished the Gibeonites and their kindred. ``The Lord spared you once, but what then? He has deferred his vengeance for a long time; but will he on that account deal more mildly with you now? Nay, a heavier vengeance awaits you; for from that time he has not forced repentance out of you.'' But others read the sentence as a question, ``Has the battle in Gibeah against the children of iniquity laid hold on you?'' But the simple

sense of the words seems to me to be this, that the battle had not laid hold on the Israelites, because they had not been touched by that example. The judgements of God, we know, are set forth before our eyes, that each of us may apply them for our own benefit. The Prophet now reproves the neglect of the Israelites in this matter, because they disregarded the event as a thing of no moment. Hence the battle did not lay hold on them; that is, they did not perceive that they were warned at the expense of others to repent, and to live afterwards a holier and purer life in subjection to God. And this view is confirmed by the last clause, ``against the children of iniquity;'' for why is this expressly added by the Prophet, except that the Lord testified that they should not be unpunished, who were like the Gibeonites, with whom he dealt so rigidly and severely. Since, then, the Israelites had not been touched, their stupidity was hence proved. And for the same reason Paul says, that the wrath of God shall come on the children of disobedience or of unbelief, (Ephesians 5:6:) for when God takes vengeance on one people or on one man, he doubtless shows himself in that particular judgement to be the judge of the world. This seems to me to be the genuine meaning of the Prophet.

We ought further to bear in mind, that when men go on in their wickedness, whatever sins their fathers have done are justly imputed to them. When we return to the right way, the Lord instantly buries all our sins, and reconciles us to himself on this condition, that he will pardon whatever fault there may be in us: though we may, through our whole life, have provoked his wrath against us, he will yet as I have said, instantly bury the whole. But if we repent not, the Lord will remember, not only our own sins, but also those of our fathers, as it is evident from what is here said by the Prophet.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast once appeared in the person of thy only-begotten Son, and hast rendered in him thy glory visible to us, and as thou dost daily set forth to us the same Christ in the glass of thy gospel, --- O grant, that we, fixing our eyes on him, may not go astray, nor be led here and there after wicked inventions, the fallacies of Satan, and the allurements of this world: but may we continue firm in the obedience of faith and persevere in it through the whole course of our life, until we be at length fully transformed into the image of thy eternal glory, which now in part shines in us, through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-eighth

Hosea 10:10

10. It is in my desire that I should chastise them; and the people shall be gathered against them, when they shall bind themselves in their two furrows. [68]

10. In voto meo est, et castigabo eos, et congregabuntur contra eos populi, ubi colligati fuerint (vel, se colligaverint) in duobus sulcis suis (alii vertunt, in duobus iniquitatibus suis, quasi nomen esset ab {עון})

[68] The word here rendered "furrows" is not so found any where else. The Masoretic points have alone fixed to it this meaning. The Hebrew text has {,{עינתם their spring or fountain; and Keri, the marginal reading, and twelve MSS, have ,{עונותם} their sins or iniquities. The latter reading is countenanced by the Septuagint, the Syriac, and the Vulgate. Then the right translation would be, ``when they are bound to their two iniquities;'' that is, the two alliances with Assyria and Egypt, or the two calves, one in Dan, the other at Bethel. ``When they are chastised for their two iniquities.'' --- Newcome.

When God says that he desires to chastise the people, he intimates that this was his purpose, as when one greatly wishes for anything; and it may be an allowable change in the sentence, if the copulative was omitted, and it be rendered thus, --- It is in my desire to chastise them But to depart from the words seems not to me necessary; I therefore take them apart as they stand, in this sense, --- that God would follow his desire in chastising the people. The sentence seems indeed to be repugnant to many others, in which God declares his sorrow, when constrained to deal severely with his people, but the two statements are not discordant. Passions, we know, belong not to God; but in condescension to men's capacities, he puts on this or that character. When he seems unwilling to indict punishment, he shows with how much love he regards his own people, or with what kind and tender affection he loves them. But yet, as he has to do with perverse and irreclaimable men, he says that he will take pleasure in their destruction; and for this reason also, it is said that God will take revenge. We now then understand the meaning of the Prophet: he intimates, that the purpose which God had formed of destroying the people of Israel could not now be revoked; for this punishment was to him his highest delight.

He further says, I will chastise them, and assembled shall peoples be against them By these words God shows that all people are in his hand, that he can arm them whenever he pleases; and this truth is everywhere taught in the Scriptures. God then so holds all people under his command, that by a hiss or a nod he can, whenever it pleases him, stir them up to war. Hence, as heedless Israel laughed at God's judgement, he now shows how effectual will be his revenge, for he will assemble all people for their destruction.

And for the same purpose he adds, When they shall have bound themselves in two furrows By this clause the Prophet warns the Israelites, that nothing would avail them, though they fortified themselves against every danger, and though they gathered strength on every side; for all their efforts would not prevent God from executing his vengeance. When therefore they shall be bound in their two furrows, I will not on that account give over to assemble the people who shall dissipate all their fortresses. We now apprehend the design of the Prophet. He no doubt mentions two furrows, with reference to ploughing; for we shall see that the Prophet dwells on this metaphor. However much then the Israelites might join together and gather strength, it would yet be easy for God to gather people to destroy them.

Some refer this sentence to the whole body of the people; for they think that the compact between the kingdom of Judah and Israel is here pointed out: but this is a mere conjecture, for history gives it no countenance. Others have found out another comment, that the Lord would punish them all together, since Judah had joined the people of Israel in worshipping the calves: so they think that the common superstition was the bond of alliance between the two kingdoms. There are others who think that the Prophet alludes to the two calves, one of which, as it is well known, was worshipped in Dan, and the other at Bethel. But all these interpretations are too refined and strained. The Prophet, I doubt not, does here simply mention the two furrows, because the people, (as godless men are wont to do,) relying on their own power, boldly and proudly despised all threatening. ``Howsoever,'' he says, ``they

may join themselves together in two furrows, they shall yet effect nothing by their pride to prevent me from executing my vengeance.'' Let us proceed ---

Hosea 10:11

11. And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.

11. Ephraim juvenca est edocta ad diligendum trituram; [69] et ego transivi super pulchritudine colli ejus; equitare faciam Ephraim, arabit Judah, occabit sibi Jacob.

Some read the two words, ``taught,'' and ``loveth,'' separately, {מלמדה}, melamde, and {אהבתי}, aebti; for they think that at the beginning of the verse a reproach is conveyed, as though the Prophet had said, that Ephraim was wholly unteachable: though God had from childhood brought him up under his discipline, he yet now showed so great stubbornness, that he even ceased not to rebel against God, and went on obstinately in his own wickedness. ``Ephraim then is like a trained heifer.'' But this meaning seems too far fetched: I therefore connect the whole together in one context, and follow what has been more approved, Ephraim is a heifer trained to love, or, that she may love, threshing; that is, Ephraim has been accustomed to love threshing.

There is here an implied comparison between ploughing and threshing. There is more labour and toil, we know, in ploughing than in threshing; for the oxen are coupled together, and then they are compelled to obey, and in vain do they draw here and there, when they are joined together. But when oxen thresh, they are loose, and the labour is less toilsome and heavy. The Prophet then means this, --- that Ephraim pretended some obedience, and yet would not take the yoke, so as to be really and in everything submissive to God. Other nations did not understand what it was to obey God; but there was some appearance of religion in Israel; they indeed professed to worship the God of Israel, they had temples among them; but the Lord derides this hypocrisy, and says, --- Ephraim is like a heifer, which will not submit her neck to the yoke, but will only, for recreation's sake, pass through the threshing-floor and tread the corn, as hypocrites are wont to do; for they do not wholly repudiate every truth, but in part receive it; yet, when the Lord presses on them too much, they then fiercely resist, and show that they wish to do according to their own will. Almost the whole world exhibit, indeed, some appearance of obedience, I know not what; but they wish to make a compact with God, that he should not require more then what their pleasure may allow. When one is a slave to many vices, he desires a liberty for these to be allowed him; in other things, he will yield some obedience. We now understand the meaning of the Prophet, and see what he had in view. He then derides the hypocritical service which the Israelites rendered to God; for they were at the same time unwilling to bear the yoke, and were untameable. To the threshing they were not unwilling to come; for when God commanded anything that was easy, they either willingly performed it, or at least discharged their duty somehow in that particular; but they would not accustom themselves to plough.

[69] This is certainly a more literal rendering than our version, though it be not wholly so. The two first lines, word for word, may be thus translated, — "And Ephraim is a trained heifer. Loving to tread the corn." — Ed.

Since it was so, I have passed over, he says, upon her beautiful neck God shows why he treated Ephraim with severity; for he was made to submit, because he was so obstinate. `I have passed over upon the goodness of her neck;' that is, ``When I saw that she had a fat neck, and that she refused the yoke, I tried, by afflictions, whether such stubbornness could be subdued.'' Some refer this to the teaching of the law, and say, that God had passed over upon the beautiful neck of Israel, because he had delivered his law in common to all the posterity of Abraham. But this is foreign to the context. I therefore doubt not but that the mind of the Prophet was this, --- that God here declares, that it was not without reason that he had been so severe in endeavouring to tame Israel, for he saw that he could not be otherwise brought to obedience. ``Since, then, Ephraim only loved the treading, I wished to correct this delusion, and ought not to have spared him. If he had been a wearied ox, or an old one broken down and emaciated, and of no strength, some consideration for him ought to have been had: but as Israel had a thick and fat neck, as he was strong enough to bear the yoke, and as he yet loved his own pleasures and refused the yoke, it was needful that he should be tamed by afflictions. I have therefore passed over upon the goodness, or the beauty, of the neck of Ephraim.''

But as God effected nothing in mildly chastising Israel, he now subjoins, --- I will make him to ride Some render it, ``I will ride:'' but as the verb is in Hiphel, (the causative mood,) it is necessary to explain it thus, that God will make Israel to ride. But what does this mean? They who render it, ``I will ride,'' saw that they departed from what grammar requires; but necessity forced them to this strained interpretation. Others will have {על}, ol, on, to be understood, ``I will make to ride on Ephraim,'' and they put in another word, ``I will make the nations to ride on Ephraim.'' But the sentence will accord best with the context, if we make no change in the words of the Prophet. Nay, they who adduce the comments I have mentioned, destroy the elegance of the expression and pervert the meaning. Thus, then, does God speak, --- ``Since Ephraim loves treading, and the moderate punishments by which I meant to subdue him avail nothing, I will hereafter deal with him in another way: I will make him,'' he says, ``to ride:'' that is, ``I will take him away, as it were, through the clouds.'' The Prophet alludes to the lasciviousness and intemperance of Israel; for lust had so carried away that people, that they could not walk straight, or with a steady step, but staggered here and there; as also Jeremiah says, that they were untameable bullocks, (Jeremiah 31:18.) What does God declare? `I will make them to ride;' that is, I will deal with this people according to their disposition. There is a similar passage in Job; [70] where the holy man complains that he was forcibly snatched away, that God made him to ride on the clouds. `God,' he says, `made me to ride,' (he uses there the same word.) What does it mean? Even that the Lord had forcibly carried him here and there. So also the Prophet says here, --- ``Israel is delicate, and, at the same time, I see so much voluptuousness in his nature, that he cannot take the yoke; nothing then remains for him but to ride on the clouds. But what sort of riding will this be? Such as that, when the people shall be carried away into exile; since they cannot rest quietly in the land of Canaan, since they cannot

[70] Job 30:22. — fj.

enjoy the blessings of God, they shall ride, that is, they shall quickly be taken away into a far country.'' We now then see how God dealt with Israel, when he saw what his disposition required; for he could not be constrained to obedience in his own land; it was then necessary to remove him elsewhere, as it was done.

He afterwards subjoins, Judah shall plough, Jacob shall harrow for himself; that is, the remaining portion of the people shall remain in their afflictions. These punishments were indeed grievous, when considered in themselves; but it was far easier and more tolerable for Judah to plough and to harrow among his people, than if he had to ride. Judah then suffered grievous losses, and the Lord chastised him also with afflictions; but this punishment, as I have said, was much less than the other. It was the same as when an ox, drawn out of the stall, is led into the field, and is forced to endure his daily labour; his toil is indeed heavy and grievous; but the ox at least lives after his work, and refreshes himself by his rest during the night. He also undergoes some toil by harrowing, and grows weary; but he returns to the stall; and then his master is not so cruel, but that he grants his ox some indulgence. We hence see the purport of this comparison, that Judah shall plough, and that Jacob, that is, the remaining part of the people, shall harrow; which means, that the rest of the people shall break the clods, --- for to harrow among the Latins is to break the clods --- but that the Lord will make Ephraim to ride. This, I doubt not, is the genuine sense of the passage; but I leave to others their own free judgement. It now follows ---

Hosea 10:12

12. Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.

12. Seminate vobis ad justitiam, colligite (metite) ab mensuram (vel pro mensura) clementiam (vel, bonitatem;) arate vobis aratinem (alii vertunt, Novate vobis novale, sicuti Jeremiae 4: caeterum quia idem est sensus, ego relinquo hoc liberum:) et tempus inquirendi Jehovam, donec veniat, et pluere faciat justitiam vobis (quanquam megis recepta versio est, Doceat vos justitiam.)

He exhorts here the Israelites to repentance; though it seems not a simple and bare exhortation, but rather a protestation; as though the Lord had said, that he had hitherto laboured in vain as to the people of Israel, because they had ever continued obstinate. For it immediately follows ---

Hosea 10:13

13. Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have reaped iniquity; ye have eaten the fruit of lies: because thou didst trust in thy way, in the multitude of thy mighty men.

13. Arastis impietatem, iniquitatem messuistes; comedistis fructum mendacii: quia confisus es in via tua, in multitudine fortium tuorum.

The reason is here found, why I thought that the Prophet did not simply exhort the people, but rather charged them with obduracy for not growing better, though often admonished. He then relates how much God had previously done to restore the people to a sound mind; for it had been his constant teaching, Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap, in proportion, kindness, or according to the proportion of kindness; plough a ploughing for yourselves; it is the time to seek the Lord Though then

the people heard these words daily, and had their ears almost stunned by them, they did not yet change for the better, nor made themselves pliable; nay, as it were with a fixed purpose, they ploughed, he says, ungodliness, they reaped iniquity; they therefore did eat the fruit of falsehood, for they sustained just punishments, or satiated themselves with falsehood and treachery. We now apprehend the meaning of the Prophet: I will come to particulars.

Sow for yourselves righteousness He shows that the salvation of this people had not been neglected by God; for he had tried whether they were healable. The remedy was, that the people were to know that God would be pacified towards them, if they devoted themselves to righteousness. The Lord offered his favour: ``Return only to me; for as soon as the seed of righteousness shall be sown by you, the harvest shall be prepared, a reward shall be laid up for you; ye shall then reap fruit according to your kindness.''

But if any one asks, whether it be in the power of men to sow righteousness, the answer is ready, and that is that the Prophet explains not here how far the ability of men extends, but requires what they ought to do. For whence is it that so many of God's curses often overwhelm us, except that we sow seed similar to the produce? that is, God repays us what we have deserved. This then is what the Prophet shows, when he says, ``Sow for yourselves righteousness:'' he shows that it was their fault, if the Lord did not cherish them kindly and bountifully, and in a paternal manner; it was because their impiety suffered him not.

And the Prophet only speaks of the duties of the second table, as also the Prophets do, when they exhort men to repentance: they often begin with the second table of the law, because the perverseness of men with regard to this is more palpable, and they can thereby be more easily convicted.

But what he afterwards subjoins, {ניר} {נירו}, niru nir, plough the ploughing, is not, I confess, in its proper place; but there is in this nothing inconsistent: for after having exhorted them to plough, he now adds, that they were like uncultivated and desert fields, so that it was not right to sow the seed until they had been prepared. The Prophet then ought, according to the order of nature, to have begun with ploughing; but he simply said what he wished to convey, that the Israelites received not the fruit they desired, because they had only sown unrighteousness. If they now wished to be dealt with more kindly, he shows the remedy, which is to sow righteousness. If it was so, that they were already filled with wickedness, he shows that they were like a field overgrown with briers and thorns. When therefore a field has long remained uncultivated, thorns and thistles and other noxious herbs grow there, and a double ploughing will be necessary, and this double labour is called Novation; [71] and Jeremiah speaks of the same thing, when he shows that the people had grown hardened in their wickedness, and that they could not bear any fruit until the thorns were torn up by the roots, and until they had been well cleansed from the vices in which they had become fixed; and hence he says, ---

`Plough again your fallow-ground,' (Jeremiah 4:3.)

[71] Novatio, which means the second ploughing — the ploughing of the fallow-ground — of the ground once before ploughed, the novale. — Ed.

And it is the time for seeking Jehovah, until he come Here the Prophet offers a hope of pardon to the people, to encourage them to repent: for we know that when men are called back to God, they are torpid and even faint in their minds, until they are assured that God will be propitious to them; and this is what we have treated of more fully in another place. The Prophet now handles the same truth, that it is the time for seeking the Lord. He indeed uses the word {עת}, ot, which means a seasonable time. It is then the time for seeking the Lord; as though he said, ``The way of salvation is not yet closed against you; for the Lord invites you to himself, and he is of his own self inclined to mercy.'' This is one thing. We are, however, at the same time, taught that there ought to be no delay; for such tardiness will cost them dear, if they despise so kind an invitation of God, and go on in their own obstinacy. It is then the time for seeking Jehovah; as Isaiah also says

`Seek the Lord while he may be found,
call on him while he is nigh:
Behold, now is the time of good-pleasure;
behold, now is the day of salvation,'
(Isaiah 55:6.) [72]

So also in this place, the Prophet testifies that God will be easily entreated, if Israel returned to the right way; but that, if they continued obstinately in their sins, this time would not be perpetual; for the door would be shut, and the people would cry in vain, after having neglected this seasonable invitation, and abused the patience of God.

It is then the time, he says, for seeking the Lord, until he come This last clause is a confirmation of the former; for the Prophet here expressly declares that it would not be useless labour for Israel to begin to seek God --- `He will come to you.' He at the same time warns them not to be too hasty in their expectations; for though God may receive us into favour, he does not yet immediately deliver us from all punishments or evils. We must, then, patiently wait until the fruit of reconciliation appears. We hence see that both points are here wisely handled by the Prophet; for he would have Israel to hasten with deep concern, and not to delay long the time of repentance, and also to remain quiet, if God did not immediately show himself propitious, and show tokens of his favour; the Prophet wished, in this case, the people to be patient.

And rain righteousness upon you. The word {ירה}, ire, means indeed ``to teach,'' and also ``to throw;'' but as the word {מורה}, mure, derived from this verbs as it is well known, means the rain, I could not explain it here otherwise than ``he will rain righteousness upon you.'' What, indeed, could the teaching of righteousness mean? For the Prophet alludes to the harvest; and the people might say, ``Are we sure of provision, if we seek God?'' ``Certainly,'' he says; ``he will come --- he will come to you, and will rain righteousness, or the fruit of righteousness, upon you.'' In short, the Prophet here shows, that whenever God is sought sincerely and from the heart by sinners, he comes forth to meet them, and shows himself kind and merciful. But as he had spoken of ploughing and sowing, the fruit or the harvest was now to be mentioned; that he might therefore hold forth a promise that they who had sown

[72] Isaiah 49:8, 55:6; 2 Corinthians 6:2. — fj.

righteousness would not lose their expense and toil, he says, the Lord will rain upon you the fruit of righteousness.

Now follows the other verse, which, as I have said, completes the passage, Ye have ploughed ungodliness, iniquity have ye reaped: ye have eaten the fruit of falsehood The Prophet shows that the people had in vain been daily admonished, and so kindly and sweetly allured by the Lord; for they had not only slighted wholesome warnings, but had, in their perverse wickedness, abandoned themselves to a contrary course: ye have ploughed, he says, impiety; God has exhorted you to sow righteousness, --- what have ye sown? Impiety; and then ye have reaped iniquity. Some think that the punishments which the people had to bear are pointed out here; as though the Prophet had said, ``God has returned to you such a produce as was suitable to your sowing; ye are therefore satiated with falsehood --- that is, with your own false confidence.'' But he seems rather to pursue the same strain of thought, and to say, that they had ploughed impiety --- that is, that they had been from the beginning ungodly; and then, that they had reaped iniquity --- that is, that they had continued their wickedness to the very harvest, and laid up their fruit as it were in a storehouse, that they might satiate themselves with treachery. The Prophet, I think, speaks in this sense; but let there be a free choice. I only show what seems to me most suitable.

For it follows then, For thou hast trusted in thine own way, in the multitude of thy valiant ones Here the Prophet points out the chief spring-head of all sins; for the Israelites, trusting in their own counsels, gave no ear to the word of God: and then, being fortified by their own strength, they dreaded not his judgements, nor fled to his pledged protection to defend them. This pride is not then named here by the Prophet without reason as the chief source of all sins. For when one distrusts his own wisdom, or is afraid, being conscious of his weakness, he can be easily subdued; but when pride possesses man's minds so that he thinks himself wise, nothing will then prevail with him, neither counsel nor instruction. It is the same when any one greatly extols his own strength, and is inflated with pride, he cannot be made tractable, were he admonished a hundred times. The Prophet then defines here the falsehood, the impiety, and the iniquity of which he had been speaking. For though the people sinned in various ways, the fountain and root was in this lie or falsehood, that they were wont to set up their own strength in opposition to God, and thought themselves so endued with wisdom, that they had no need of teachers. Since, then, the people were so blinded with their own pride, the Prophet shows here that it was this lie with which they had satiated themselves. It follows ---

Hosea 10:14-15

14. Therefore shall a tumult arise among thy people, and all thy fortresses shall be spoiled, as Shalman spoiled Betharbel in the day of battle: the mother was dashed in pieces upon her children.

14. Et (vel, ideo, copula enim illativam particulam valet, ideo) surget tumultus in populis tuis; et unaquaeque munitionum tuarum vastabitur, secundum vastationem Salman Beth-arbel: in die proelii mater super filios allidetur.

15. So shall Bethel do unto you because of your great wickedness: in a morning shall the king of Israel utterly be cut off.

15. Secundum (hoc modo) faciet vobis Bethel a facie malitiae, malitiae vestrae: in aurora pereundo peribit rex Israel.

The Prophet here denounces punishment, having before exposed to view the sins of the people, and sufficiently proved them guilty, who by subterfuges avoided judgement. He now adds, that God would be a just avenger. A tumult then shall arise among thy people Thou hast hitherto satiated thyself with falsehood; for hope in thine own courage has inebriated thee, and also a false notion of wisdom; but the Lord will suddenly stir up tumults among thy people; that is, a tumult shall in one moment arise on every side. He intimates that its progress would not be slow, but that the tumult would be each as would confound things from one corner of the land to the other. A tumult then, or perdition, shall arise among thy people; for the word {שאון}, shaun, ``on'' means perdition or destruction; but I prefer ``tumult,'' as the verb, {קאם} ``kam'' seems to require. ``Every one of thy fortresses,'' he says, ``shall be demolished.'' He shows that whatever strength the people had would be weak and wholly useless, when the Lord had begun to raise a tumult; for this tumult would reduce to ruin all their fortified cities.

He then adds an instance, which some refer to Shalmanezar. He only mentions Shaman; and Shalmanezar is indeed a compound name; but it is not known whether the Prophet had put down here his name in its simple form, Shaman: and then he mentions Betharbel, a city, referred to in some parts of Scripture, which was, with respect to Judea, beyond Jordan. If we receive this opinion, it seems that the Prophet wished to revive the memory of a recent slaughter, ``Ye know what lately happened to you when Shalmanezar marched with so much cruelty through your country, when he laid waste your villages and towns and cities, and ye especially know how fierce the battle was in Betharbel, when a carnage was made, when mothers were violently thrown on their children, when the enemy spared neither sex nor age, which in the worst wars is a most cruel thing.'' Such, then, may have been the meaning of the Prophet. But others think that he relates a history, which is nowhere else to be told. However this may be, it appears that the Prophet spake of some slaughter which was in his day well known. Then the report of it was common enough, whether it was a slaughter made by Shalmanezar, or any other, of which there is no express mention found. We now see the meaning of the Prophet; but we cannot finish to-day.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we remain yet in our own wickedness, though often warned and sweetly invited by thee, and as thou prevailest not with us by thy daily instruction, --- O grant, that we may, in a spirit of meekness, at length turn to thy service, and fight against the hardness and obstinacy of our flesh, till we render ourselves submissive to thee, and not wait until thou puttest forth thy hand against us, or at least so profit under thy chastisements, as not to constrain thee to execute extreme vengeance against us, but to repent without delay; and that we may indeed, without hypocrisy, plough under thy yoke, and so enjoy thy special blessings, that thou mayest show thyself to us not only as our Lord, but also as our Father, full of mercy and kindness, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Twenty-ninth

We explained yesterday Hosea 10:14, in which the Prophet denounced the vengeance of God on his people, such as they had experienced either when the country was laid waste by the army of Shalmanezar, or when some other slaughter was made. From the words, we certainly learn that a battle had been fought in Arbel, which was a town, as we have said, beyond Jordan. But the Prophet shows also how much had been the atrocity of that battle, and how grievous and dreadful would be that slaughter which he now threatens to the people, by saying that even the mother had been violently thrown upon her children. And the Prophet also shows that God's vengeance would be just, because the Israelites had provoked God by their superstitions.

He then points out in the last verse the cause why the Lord would deal so severely with his people; and his manner of speaking ought to be observed. So, he says, shall Bethel do unto you He might have said, `So will God do unto you;' but he more distinctly shows that the evil, or the cause of the evil, was in themselves; Bethel, he says, shall do this unto you. It is certain that the war did not arise from Bethel; but as they had corrupted the worship of God by worshipping the calf, the Prophet says, that the Assyrian was not, properly speaking, the author of this slaughter, but that it was to be imputed to that corruption which had arisen in Bethel. Bethel then shall do this unto you

But he adds, Because of wickedness --- of your wickedness Some give this explanation, ``Because of the wickedness of wickedness,'' by which is expressed something extreme, as the genitive case is often used by the Hebrews in the place of the superlative degree; but it may be viewed as a simple repetition, ``This shall be for wickedness --- your wickedness, and it shall be so, that ye may not be able to transfer the blame to any other cause; for ye are yourselves the authors of all the evils.''

He says, in the last place, In a morning shall the king of Israel be utterly cut off, or, by perishing shall perish. The Prophet means by these words, that the Lord would so punish the people of Israel, that it would appear plain enough, that it was not done by man or by chance; for the Lord would suddenly overturn that kingdom which had been so well fortified, which flourished so much in wealth and power. Cut off then in a morning, or in one morning, shall be the king of Israel. Some read, ``as the morning,'' instead of, ``in a morning,'' {כשחר}, cashicher, {בשחר}, beshicher. `The king of Israel shall perish like the dawn;' for the dawn, we know, immediately disappears when the sun rises: the sun brings with it the full day, and then the dawn immediately passes away. But the other is the more correct reading, as it has also been more commonly received, that is, ``In a morning, or in one morning, shall the king of Israel perish;'' as we say in French, Cela n'est que pour un desiuner For that proud people thought that no adversity could happen to them for many years, as they had a blind confidence in their own strength. The Prophet derides this madness, and says, that the slaughter would be sudden, that the king would in a moment be destroyed, though he thought himself well supplied with soldiers and all other defences. Now follows ---

Hosea 11

Chapter 11

Hosea 11:1

1. When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.

1. Quia puer Israel, et dilexi eum (hoc est, Quando adhuc puer erat Israel; {כי} non accipitur hic causaliter, sed adverbium est temporis: Quum ergo puer erat Israel, tunc dilexi eum;) et ex Egypto vocavi filium meum (ad verbum est, clamavi ad filium meum.)

God here expostulates with the people of Israel for their ingratitude. The obligation of the people was twofold; for God had embraced them from the very first beginning, and when there was no merit or worthiness in them. What else, indeed, was the condition of the people when emancipated from their servile works in Egypt? They doubtless seemed then like a man half-dead or a putrid carcass; for they had no vigour remaining in them. The Lord then stretched forth his hand to the people when in so hopeless a state, drew them out, as it were, from the grave, and restored them from death into life. But the people did not acknowledge this so wonderful a favour of God, but soon after petulantly turned their back on him. What baseness was this, and how shameful the wickedness, to make such a return to the author of their life and salvation? The Prophet therefore enhances the sin and baseness of the people by this circumstance, that the Lord had loved them even from childhood; when yet, he says, Israel was a child, I loved him The nativity of the people was their coming out of Egypt. The Lord had indeed made his covenant with Abraham four hundred years before; and, as we know, the patriarchs were also regarded by him as his children: but God wished his Church to be, as it were, extinguished, when he redeemed it. Hence the Scripture, when it speaks of the liberation of the people, often refers to that favour of God in the same way as of one born into the world. It is not therefore without reason that the Prophet here reminds the people that they had been loved when in childhood. The proof of this love was, that they had been

brought out of Egypt. Love had preceded, as the cause is always before the effect.

But the Prophet enlarges on the subject: I loved Israel, even while he was yet a child; I called him out of Egypt; that is, ``I not only loved him when a child, but before he was born I began to love him; for the liberation from Egypt was the nativity, and my love preceded that. It then appears, that the people had been loved by me, before they came forth to the light; for Egypt was like a grave without any spark of life; and the condition this miserable people was in was worse than thousand deaths. Then by calling my people from Egypt, I sufficiently proved that my love was gratuitous before they were born.'' The people were hence less excusable when they returned such an unworthy recompense to God, since he had previously bestowed his free favour upon them. We now understand the meaning of the Prophet.

But here arises a difficult question; for Matthew, accommodates this passage to the person of Christ. [73] They who have not been well versed in Scripture have confidently applied to Christ this place; yet the context is opposed to this. Hence it has happened, that scoffers have attempted to disturb the whole religion of Christ, as though the Evangelist had misapplied the declaration of the Prophet. They give a more suitable answer, who say that there is in this case only a comparison: as when a passage from Jeremiah is quoted in another place, when the cruelty of Herod is mentioned, who raged against all the infants of his dominion, who were under two years of age,

`Rachel, bewailing her children, would not receive consolation, because they were not,' (Jeremiah 31:15.)

The Evangelist says that this prophecy was fulfilled, (Matthew 2:18.) But it is certain that the object of Jeremiah was another; but nothing prevents that declaration should not be applied to what Matthew relates. So they understand this place. But I think that Matthew had more deeply considered the purpose of God in having Christ led into Egypt, and in his return afterwards into Judea. In the first place, it must be remembered that Christ cannot be separated from his Church, as the body will be mutilated and imperfect without a head. Whatever then happened formerly in the Church, ought at length to be fulfilled by the head. This is one thing. Then also there is no doubt, but that God in his wonderful providence intended that his Son should come forth from Egypt, that he might be a redeemer to the faithful; and thus he shows that a true, real, and perfect deliverance was at length effected, when the promised Redeemer appeared. It was then the full nativity of the Church, when Christ came forth from Egypt to redeem his Church. So in my view that comment is too frigid, which embraces the idea, that Matthew made only a comparison. For it behaves us to consider this, that God, when he formerly redeemed his people from Egypt, only showed by a certain prelude the redemption which he deferred till the coming of Christ. Hence, as the body was then brought forth from Egypt into Judea, so at length the head also came forth from Egypt: and then God fully showed him to be the true deliverer of his people. This then is the meaning. Matthew therefore most fitly accommodates this passage to Christ, that God loved his Son from his first childhood and called him from Egypt. We know at the same time that Christ is

[73] Matthew 2:15. — fj.

called the Son of God in a respect different from the people of Israel; for adoption made the children of Abraham the children of God, but Christ is by nature the only-begotten Son of God. But his own dignity must remain to the head, that the body may continue in its inferior state. There is then in this nothing inconsistent. But as to the charge of ingratitude, that so great a favour of God was not acknowledged, this cannot apply to the person of Christ, as we well know; nor is it necessary in this respect to refer to him; for we see from other places that every thing does not apply to Christ, which is said of David, or of the high priest, or of the posterity of David; though they were types of Christ. But there is ever a great difference between the reality and its symbols. Let us now proceed ---

Hosea 11:2

2. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images.

2. Vocarunt illos (vel, clamaverunt ad illos:) sic ambulaverunt a facie illorum: Baalim sacrificia obtulerunt, et sculptilibus suffitum fecerunt.

The Prophet now repeats the ingratitude of the people in neglecting to keep in mind their redemption. The word, ``called,'' is here to be taken in a different sense. For God effectually called, as they say, the people, or his Son, from Egypt: he has again called by the outward voice or teaching through his Prophets. Hence, when he said before that he called his Son from Egypt, it ought to be understood, as they say, of actual liberation: but now when he says, They have called them, it is to be understood of teaching. The name of the Prophets is not expressed; but that they are intended is plain. And the Prophet seems designedly to have said in an indefinite manner, that the people had been called, that the indignity might appear more evident, as they had been called so often and by so many, and yet had refused. Hence they have called them When he thus speaks, he is not to be understood as referring to one or two men, or to a few, but as including a great number of men, doing this everywhere. Even thus now have they called them; that is, this people have been called, not once or twice, but constantly; and God has not only sent one messenger or preacher to call them, but there have been many Prophets, one after the other, often thus employed, and yet without any benefit. We now perceive what the Prophet meant.

They have called them, he says, so they went away from their presence [74] The particle so, {כן}, can, is introduced here to enliven the description; for the Prophet points out, as by the fingers how wickedly they conspired to execute their own counsels, as if they wished purposely to show in an open manner their contempt. So they went away; when the Prophets called them to one course, they proceeded in an opposite one. We then see, that to point out thus their conduct was not superfluous, when he says, that they in this manner went away: and then he says, from their face Here he shows that the people sought hiding-places and shunned the light. We may indeed conclude from these words, that so great was the perverseness of the people, that they not only wished to be alienated from God, but also that they would have

[74] Horsley, Newcome, and others, have unnecessarily divided here the compounded word, {,{מפניהם ``from their presence,'' and have thereby destroyed the force of the passage, as it appears from subsequent remarks. --- Ed.

nothing to do with the Prophets. It is indeed a proof of extreme wickedness, when instruction itself is a weariness, and ministers cannot be endured; and no doubt the Prophet meant to set forth this sin of the people.

He afterwards says, that they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burnt incense to graven images In the former clause, he shows the contumacy of the Israelites, that they deigned not to give ear to God's servants. He now adds, that they made incense to graven images, and also offered worship to their idols. By Baalim, as it has been already stated, the Prophet means the inferior gods. For no such stupidity prevailed among the people as not to think that there is some chief deity; nay, even profane Gentiles confessed that there is some supreme God. But they called their advocates (patronos) Baalim, as we see to be the case at this day under the Papacy, this same office is transferred to the dead; they are to procure for men the favour of God. The Papists then have no grounds for seeking an evasion by words; for the very same superstition prevails at this time among them, as prevailed formerly among Gentiles and the people of Israel. Here the Prophet enhances the wickedness of the people; for they not only contemptuously neglected every instruction in religion, but also openly perverted the whole worship of God, and abandoned themselves to all abominations, so as to burn incense to their own idols. Let us go on ---

Hosea 11:3

3. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them.

3. Et ego ad pedes deduxi eum (vel, ad pedes deducto mea) ad Ephraim attollendum (vel, sustulit) supra brachia sua, [75] et non cognoverunt quod sanaverim eos.

Here again God amplifies the sin of the people, by saying, that by no kindness, even for a long time, could they be allured, or turned, or reformed, or reduced to a sound mind. It was surely enough that the people of Israeli who had been brought by the hand of God from the grave to the light of life, should have repudiated every instruction; it was a great and an atrocious sin; but now God goes on farther, and says, that he had not ceased to show his love to them, and yet had attained nothing by his perseverance; for the wickedness and depravity of the people were incurable. Hence he says, I have led Ephraim on foot [76] Some are of opinion that it is a noun, from {רגל}, regel, foot, and it seems the most suitable. For otherwise there will be a change of a letter, which grammarians do not allow in the beginning of a word; for {ת}, tau, in this case would be put instead of {ה}, he; and put so as if it was of frequent occurrence in Hebrew; but no such instance can be adduced. So they who are skilful in the language think that for this reason it is a noun, and with them I agree. They, however, who regard it as a verb, give this view, --- ``I have led him on foot, {תרגלתי}, teregelti; that is, as a child who cannot yet walk with a firm foot, is by

[75] One MS. and the earlier versions have “my arms,” and this reading is adopted by Newcome. — Ed.

[76] The word occurs no where in Scripture but here. Gesenius in his Lexicon gives it as a quadriliteral verb, and says that it means “to teach to go,” or, “to guide the steps.” But Parkhurst is of the same opinion with Calvin, and renders it “a footing,” or, “going on foot,” and translates this passage thus: — “And as for me, my footing was for Ephraim;” q.d., “I footed after him, I attended him pn foot, as a nurse does a child.” Buxtorf considers that {{ת is put for ,{ה} and regards it as a Hiphil of the verb ,{רגל} ``I have footed,'' or, ``taught Ephraim how to foot or walk.'' Newcome is of the same opinion. --- Ed.

degrees accustomed to do so, and the nurse, or the father, or the mother, who lead him, have a regard for his infancy; so also have I led Israel, as much as his feet could bear. But the other version is less obscure, and that is, My walking on foot was for him; that is, I humbled myself as mothers are wont to do; and hence he says, that he had carried the people on his shoulders; and we shall presently see the same comparison used. And Moses says in Deuteronomy, [77] that the people had been carried on God's wings, or that God had expanded his wings like the eagle who flies over her young ones. With regard to the matter itself the meaning of the Prophet is not obscure; for he means, that this people had been treated by God in a paternal and indulgent manner; and also, that the perseverance of the Lord in continuing to bestow his blessings on them had been without any fruit.

He afterwards adds, To carry on his arms Some render the expression, {סחכ}, kochem, ``He carried them,'' as if the verb were in the past tense; and they consider the word, Moses, to be understood. But it is God who speaks here. Some think it to be an infinitive --- ``To carry,'' as when one carries another on his shoulders; and this seems to be the most suitable exposition. There is in the sense no ambiguity; for the design of the Prophet is what I have already stated, which is to show that this people were most wicked in not obeying God, since they had been so kindly treated by Him. For what could they have expected more than what God had done for them? As he also says by Isaiah, [78] `What, my vine, ought I to have done more than what I have done?' So also in this place, My walking has been on foot with Ephraim; and for this end, to carry them, as when one carries another in his arms. `They yet,' he says, `did not know that I healed them;' that is, ``Neither the beginning of my goodness, nor its continued exercise, avails anything with them. When I brought them forth from Egypt, I restored the dead to life; this kindness has been blotted out. Again, in the desert I testified, in various ways, that I was their best and most indulgent Father: I have in this instance also lost all my labour.'' How so? ``Because my favour has been in no way acknowledged by this perverse and foolish people.'' We now then see what the Prophet meant: and he continues the same subject in the next verse.

Hosea 11:4

4. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them.

4. In funibus hominum traham eos (hoc est, traxi eos) in vinculis amoris: et fui illis sicuti qui attollunt jugum super maxillas: et attuli super eos cibum (vel, feci eos comedere) quiete. (Dicemus postea de utroque sensu.)

The Prophet states, first, that this people had not been severely dealt with, as either slaves, or oxen, or asses, are wont to be treated. He had said before, that the people of Israel were like a heifer, which shakes off the yoke, and in wantonness loves only the treading of corn. But though the perverseness of the people was so great, yet God shows here that he had not used extreme rigour: I have drawn him, he says, with human cords and lovely bands By the cords of man, he means humane government. ``I have not,'' he says, ``treated you as slaves, but dealt with

[77] Deuteronomy 32:10-12. — fj.
[78] Isaiah 5:4. — fj.

you as with children; and I have not regarded you as cattle, I have not driven you into a stall; but I have only drawn you with lovely bands.'' The sum of the whole is, that the government which God had laid on the people was a certain and singular token of his paternal favour, so that the people could not complain of too much rigour, as if God had considered their disposition, and had used a hard wedge (as the common proverb is) for a hard knot; for if God had dealt thus with the people, they could have objected, and said, that they had not been kindly drawn by him, and that it was no wonder if they did not obey, since they had been so roughly treated. ``But there is no ground for them,'' the Lord says, ``to allege that I have used severity: for I could not have dealt more kindly with them, I have drawn them with human cords; I have not otherwise governed them than as a father his own children; I have been bountiful towards them. I indeed wished to do them good, and, as it was right, required obedience from them. I have at the same time laid on them a yoke, not servile, nor such as is wont to be laid on brute animals; but I was content with paternal discipline.'' Since then such kindness had no influence over them, is it not right to conclude that their wickedness is irreclaimable and extreme?

He then adds I have been to them like those who raise up the yoke upon the cheeks [79] ``I have not laden you,'' he says, ``with too heavy burdens, as oxen and other beasts are wont to be burdened; but I have raised up the yoke upon the cheeks. I have chosen rather to bear the yoke myself, and to ease these ungodly and wicked men of their burden.'' And God does not in vain allege this, for we know that when he uses his power, and vindicates his authority, he does this not to burden the people, as earthly kings are wont to do; but he bears the burden which he lays on men. It is no wonder then that he says now, that he had lifted the yoke upon the cheeks of his people, like one who wishes not to burden his ox, but bears up the yoke himself with his own hands, lest the ox should faint through weariness.

He afterwards adds, And I have made them to eat in quietness, or, ``I have brought meat to them.'' Some think the verb {אוכיל}, aukil to be in the future tense, and that {אוכיל}, aukil is put for {אאכיל}, aakil; that is, I will cause them to eat; and that the future is to be resolved into the past: and it is certain that the word {אט}, ath, means tranquil sometimes. Then it will be, ``I have caused them quietly to eat.'' But another exposition is more commonly received; as the word {אט}, ath, is derived from {נטה}, nathe, to raise, it is the same as though the Prophet had said, that meat had been brought to them.

God then does here in various ways enhance the ingratitude and wickedness of the people, because they had not acknowledged his paternal kindness, when he had himself so kindly set forth his favour before their eyes; I have, he says, extended meat to them; that is, ``I have not thrown it on the ground, nor placed it too high for them; they have not toiled in getting it; but I have, as it were, brought it with mine own hand and set it before them, that they might eat without any trouble.'' In short, God declares that he had tried in every way to find out, whether there was any meekness or docility in the people of Israel, and that he had ill bestowed all his

[79] "It is very probably that the words refer to the custom of raising the yoke forward to cool the neck of the laboring beast." — Newcome.

blessings; for this people were blind to favours so kind, to such as clearly proved, that God had in every way showed himself to be a Father. It follows ---

Hosea 11:5

5. He shall not return into the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be his king, because they refused to return.

5. Non revertetur in terram AEgypti; Assur dominabitur ipsis, quia noluerunt converti (renuerunt ad convertendum.)

Here the Prophet denounces a new punishment, that the people in vain hoped that Egypt would be a place of refuge or an asylum to them; for the Lord would draw them away to another quarter. For the Israelites had cherished this hope, that if by any chance the Assyrians should be too powerful for them, there would yet be a suitable refuge for them in Egypt among their friends, with whom they had made a treaty. Since, then, they promised themselves a hospitable exile in Egypt, the Prophet here exposes their vain confidence: ``This their expectation,'' he says, ``that they shall find a way open to Egypt, shall disappoint the people: it is shut up,'' he says, They shall not return to the land of Egypt, but the Assyrian shall be their king. By saying, that the Assyrian shall rule over them, he means that the people would become exiles under the Assyrians, which indeed happened. He then anticipates here all the vain hopes by which the people deceived themselves, and by which they hardened themselves against all the threatening of God. ``There is no reason for them,'' he says, ``to look towards Egypt; for the Lord will not allow them to go there; for he will draw them to Assyria.''

He afterwards gives the reason, Because they have been unwilling, he says, to return This ``return'' is to be taken in another sense: but there is here a striking similarity in the words. They thought that there would be to them a free passage into Egypt; and yet they had been unwilling to pass over unto God, when he had so often called them. The Prophet therefore says that a return into Egypt was now denied them, inasmuch as they had been unwilling to return to God. The import of what is said is, that when men perversely resist God, they in vain hope for any free movements either to this or that quarter; for the Lord will hold them tied and bound. As it is wont to be done to wild beasts, who, when they show too much ferocity, are shut up in cages or bound with chains, or as it is usually done to frantic men, who are bound with strong bands; so also the Lord does with obstinate men; he binds them fast, so that they cannot move a finger. This, then, is the meaning of the Prophet.

There is, at the same time, to be understood, an implied comparison between the former bondage they endured in Egypt, and the new bondage which awaited them. They had known of what sort was the hospitality of Egypt, and yet so great a blindness possessed their minds, that they wished to return there. Their fathers had been kindly enough received; but their posterity were grievously burdened; nay, they were not far from being entirely destroyed. What madness was this, to wish of themselves to return to Egypt, when they knew how great was the ferociousness and cruelty of the Egyptians? But as I have said, something more grievous awaited them; they were not worthy to return to Egypt. To return there would have been indeed a dreadful calamity; but the Lord would not, however open a way for them

to go there; for he would force them to pass to another country; yea, they were to be by force dragged away by their conquerors into Assyria. The drift of the whole is, that though the people had been cruelly treated in Egypt, there was now drawing nigh a more grievous tyranny; for the Assyrians would double the injuries, and the violence, and all kinds of wrongs and reproaches, which had been exercised against this people.

Some think that it was added for consolation, that God, though greatly provoked by the people, was yet unwilling to lead them again into Egypt, lest the former redemption should be made void; but that a middle course was prepared by which he would chastise the ungrateful and yet retain them as his peculiar possession. But I have already shown what I mostly approve. At the same time, whichever view is taken, we see how grievous and severe was the denunciation of the Prophet.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast deigned to choose us before the foundations of the world were laid, and included us in thy free adoption when we were the children of wrath and doomed to utter ruin, and afterwards embraced us even from the womb, and hast at length favoured us with a clearer proof of thy love, in calling us by thy gospel into a union and communion with thy only-begotten Son, --- O grant, that we may not be unmindful of so many and so singular benefits, but respond to thy holy calling, and labour to devote ourselves wholly to thee, and labour, not for one day, but for the whole time designed for us here, both to live and to die according to thy good pleasure, so that we may glorify thee to the end, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Thirtieth

Hosea 11:6

6. And the sword shall abide on his cities, and shall consume his branches, and devour them, because of their own counsels.

6. Et cadet gladius in urbes ejus, et consumet vectes ejus (alii vertunt, ramos, vel, membra) et vorabit, propter consilia eorum.

As it was difficult to persuade proud people that the overthrow was at hand, which Hosea had foretold, seeing, as they did, that they were furnished with many defences, it is therefore now added, that their fortified cities would not prevent the enemy to break through, and to devastate the whole country, and to lead away the people captive. We now understand how this verse is connected with the last. The Prophet had threatened exile; but as the Israelites thought themselves safe in their nests, he adds, that there was no reason for them to trust in their fortresses, for the Lord could by the sword destroy all their cities.

He therefore says, The sword shall fall on their cities. The verb {חול}, chul, means to abide, and to encamp, and sometimes to fall or rush upon: and this second sense is more suitable to this place. Some, however, render it, The sword shall abide on the cities until it consume them. But as to the meaning, there is not much difference. I will, however, briefly state what I deem the right view. The sword then shall fall, or rush, upon his cities; and further, it shall consume his bars The Hebrews often call bars or bolts {בדים} ``badim'', still oftener, branches, or members, --- the branches

of a tree, or the members of man. Hence some take the word metaphorically, as meaning towns and villages; for they are, as it were, the branches or members of cities. Others, however, explain it as signifying sons, who grow from their parents as branches from the tree: but this seems too far-fetched. I do not disapprove of the opinion, that the Prophet refers here to towns and villages, which are, as it were, the appendages of cities, as branches spread out here and there from the tree. The sense then is not amiss, that the sword will consume and devour towns and villages, when it shall fall on the cities. But what I have already said of bolts seems more suitable to the design of the Prophet. We must at the same time consider the word {בדים}, bedim, as including a part for the whole; for bolts were only a part of the fortifications; but the gates, being closed and fastened, render the cities strong. So this place, by taking a part for the whole, may be thus expounded, that the sword, when it fell on cities, would consume and destroy whatever strength and defence they possessed.

He at the same time mentions the cause, Because, he says, of their own counsels No doubt, he added this expression, because the Israelites thought themselves wise; for ungodly men arrogate to themselves much prudence; and this they do, that they may, as it were, from their height look down on God, and laugh at every instruction. Since then they who despise God seem to themselves to be very wise, and to be fortified by their good counsels, the Prophet shows that the cause of ruin to the Israelites would be, that they were swollen with this diabolical prudence, and would not condescend to obey the word of the Lord.

Hosea 11:7

7. And my people are bent to backsliding from me: though they called them to the most High, none at all would exalt him

7. Et populus meus suspensi ad aversionem (alii vertunt, conversionem) et ad excelsum vocabunt (id est, vocant) simul non extollet (id est, nemo extollit.)

This verse is variously rendered. Some explain the word {תלואים}, teluaim, as signifying ``perplexed;'' as though the Prophet had said, that the people would suffer a just punishment through being anxious and looking around them, and yet finding no comfort; for this would be the reward of their defection or apostasy. Hence he says, My people are in suspense; that is, there is no wonder that the Israelites are now tormented with great anxiety, and find no end to their evils; for they who have rebelled against the Lord are worthy of being thus bound fast by him. It is the fruit of their defection that they are now so full of sorrow, and also of despair. This is one exposition. Others say that God here complains of the wickedness of the people, as of those who deliberated whether they ought to repent. They then take suspense for doubt, My people are in suspense; that is, they debate on the subject as on a doubtful matter, when I exhort them to repent, and they cannot at once decide what to do, but alternate between divers opinions, and now incline to one thing and then to another; as if truly the subject itself made it necessary for them to deliberate. Doubtless what is right is in no way hid from them: but as they are unwilling, they seek for themselves, by evasions, some excuses for doubting; for the Prophets cry to them, and no one extols them. This is the second exposition.

It must at the same time be observed, that the word {משובת}, meshubat, is variously taken; for the first render it, ``turning away,'' and the ``jod'' that is affixed must then be expounded passively, and must mean their turning away from God, because the Israelites had fallen away from him; as in Isaiah chapter 56 [80] he calls that the house of his prayer in which the people were wont to pray. Then the turning away from God, according to them, is to be taken passively, because the people were alienated from him. Others render it, ``conversion.'' But the Hebrew doctors will have this word to be ever taken in a bad sense, and affirm that there is no place where it signifies any thing but rebellion or apostasy. Since it is so, I am inclined to consider it to be turning away; and thus the second sense, that the people deliberated whether they ought to hear the admonitions of the Prophets, will not stand.

The Prophet also seems to me to mean what is different from what I have referred to in the first place, as the opinion of those who say, My people are in suspense; that is, they anxiously torment themselves on account of their defection, because I punish them for their apostasy; through which it has happened, that, forsaking me, they have wandered after their own inventions. But I take the passage otherwise, as I have already said, My people are fastened; that is, my people have not only once departed from me, but they are, as it were, fastened in their defection. He says, that they were fastened, not that they were sorrowful and endured great tortures, and found their affairs perplexed; but that they were fastened, because they remained obstinate; as when one says, that a man is fastened to a thing, when he cannot be moved. This being fastened, is indeed nothing else but the obstinacy of the people. They were then fastened to defection.

He afterwards adds, To him on high they call them; none at all rises up What an indefinite sentence signifies we stated yesterday. The Prophet means that instruction had been given the people, and that many witnesses or preachers had been sent by the Lord, but that all this had been wholly useless. Hence he says, They call them to him on high, no one raises up himself. Some indeed consider the word, God, to be understood; and this is the commonly received opinion; but in my judgement they are mistaken; for the Prophet, speaking of the Israelites, doubtless means that they remained in the same state, and were not moved by any instruction to make any progress, or to show any sign of repentance. Hence, no one rises up. He uses the singular number, and puts down the particle {יחד}, ichad, as though he said, ``There is no one, from the first to the last, who is touched with grief, for they continue obstinate in their wickedness.'' And when he says, No one raises up himself, he seems to allude to the word, fastened. They are then fastened to their defection; and when the Prophets cry and diligently exhort them to repent, they do not rise up; that is, they do not aspire to God; and this indeed they neglect with one consent, as if they all alike blindly united in one and the same wickedness.

In this verse then the Prophet brings again to view the sins of the people, that it might more fully appear that God threatened them so dreadfully not without a cause; for they who were so perversely rebellious against God were worthy of the most grievous punishment. This is the sum of the whole. Let us now proceed ---

[80] Isaiah 56:7. — fj.

Hosea 11:8-9

8. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.

8. Qumodo ponam te Ephraim? Tradam te Israel? Quomodo ponam te sicut Sodomam? Statuam te sicut Zxeboim? Inversum est in me cor meum, simul revolutae sunt (alii, incaluerunt; nam {כמר} illud significat, simul ergo revolutae sunt) poenitudines meae.

9. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee: and I will not enter into the city.

9. Non faciam (id est, non exequar) furorem irae meae, non revertar ad perdendum Ephraim: quia Deus ego, et non homo, in medio tui sanctus; et non ingrediar urbem.

Here God consults what he would do with the people: and first, indeed, he shows that it was his purpose to execute vengeance, such as the Israelites deserved, even wholly to destroy them: but yet he assumes the character of one deliberating, that none might think that he hastily fell into anger, or that, being soon excited by excessive fury, he devoted to ruin those who had lightly sinned, or were guilty of no great crimes. That no one then might assign to God an anger too fervid, he says here, How shall I set thee aside, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee up, Israel? How shall I set thee as Sodom? By these expressions God shows what the Israelites deserved, and that he was now inclined to inflict the punishment of which they were worthy and yet not without repentance, or at least not without hesitation. He afterwards adds in the next clause, This I will not do; my heart is within me changed; I now alter my purpose, and my repenting are brought back again; that is it was in my mind to destroy you all, but now a repenting, which reverses that design, lays hold on me. We now apprehend what the Prophet means.

As to this mode of speaking, it appears indeed at the first glance to be strange that God should make himself like mortals in changing his purposes and in exhibiting himself as wavering. God, we know, is subject to no passions; and we know that no change takes place in him. What then do these expressions mean, by which he appears to be changeable? Doubtless he accommodates himself to our ignorances whenever he puts on a character foreign to himself. And this consideration exposes the folly as well as the impiety of those who bring forward single words to show that God is, as it were like mortals; as those unreasonable men do who at this day seek to overturn the eternal providence of God, and to blot out that election by which he makes a difference between men. ``O!'' they say, ``God is sincere, and he has said that he willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live.'' God must then in this case remain as it were uncertain, and depend on the free-will of every one: it is hence in the power of man either to procure destruction to himself, or to come to salvation. God must in the meantime wait quietly as to what men will do, and can determine nothing except through their free-will. While these insane men thus trifle, they think themselves to be supported by this invincible

reason, that God's will is one and simple. But if the will of God be one, it does not hence follow that he does not accommodate himself to men, and put on a character foreign to himself, as much as a regard for our salvation will bear or require. So it is in this place. God does not in vain introduce himself as being uncertain; for we hence learn that he is not carried away too suddenly to inflict punishment, even when men in various ways provoke his vengeance. This then is what God shows by this mode of speaking. At the same time, we know that what he will do is certain, and that his decree depends not on the free-will of men; for he is not ignorant of what we shall do. God then does not deliberate as to himself, but with reference to men. This is one thing.

But we must also bear in mind what I have already said, that the Prophet here strikes with terror proud and profane despisers by setting before their eyes their own destruction, and by showing how little short they were of the lot of Gomorra and other cities. ``For what remains,'' the Lord says, ``but that I should set you as Sodom and Zeboim? This condition and this recompense awaits you, if I execute the judgement which has been already as it were decreed.'' Not that God would immediately do this; but he only reminds the Israelites of what they deserved, and of what would happen to them, except the Lord dealt mercifully with them. Thus much of the first part of the verse.

But when he says that his heart was changed, and that his repentings were brought back again, the same mode of speaking after the manner of men is adopted; for we know that these feelings belong not to God; he cannot be touched with repentance, and his heart cannot undergo changes. To imagine such a thing would be impiety. But the design is to show, that if he dealt with the people of Israel as they deserved, they would now be made like Sodom and Gomorra. But as God was merciful, and embraced his people with paternal affection, he could not forget that he was a Father, but would be willing to grant pardon; as is the case with a father, who, on seeing his son's wicked disposition, suddenly feels a strong displeasure, and then, being seized with relenting, is inclined to spare him. God then declares that he would thus deal with his people.

Then follows an explanation of this sentence, I will not execute the fury of my wrath: by which figurative mode of speaking he sets forth the punishment which was suitable to the sins of men. For it must ever be remembered, that God is exempt from every passion. But if no anger is to be supposed by us to be in God, what does he mean by the fury of his wrath? Even the relation between his nature and our innate or natural sins. But why does Scripture say that God is angry? Even because we imagine him to be so according to the perception of the flesh; for we do not apprehend God's indignation, except as far as our sins provoke him to anger, and kindle his vengeance against us. Then God, with regard to our perception, calls the fury of his wrath the heavy judgement, which is equal to, or meet for, our sins. I will not execute, he says, that is, ``I will not repay the reward which you have deserved.''

What then? I will not return to destroy Ephraim The verb {אשוב}, ashub, seems to have been introduced for this reason, because God had in part laid waste the kingdom of Israel: he therefore says, that the second overthrow, which he would

presently bring, would not be such as would destroy the whole of Israel, or wholly consume them. I will not then return to destroy Ephraim; that is, ``Though I shall again gird myself to punish the sins of the people, I shall yet restrain myself so that my vengeance shall not proceed to the destruction of the whole people.'' The reason is subjoined, For I am God, and not man.

As he intended in this place to leave to the godly some hope of salvation, he adds what may confirm this hope; for we know that when God denounces wrath, with what difficulty trembling consciences are restored to hope. Ungodly men laugh to scorn all threatening; but those in whom there is any seed of piety dread the vengeance of God, and whenever terror seizes them, they are tormented with marvellous disquietude, and cannot be easily pacified. This then is the reason why the Prophet now confirms the doctrine which he had laid down: I am God, he says, and not man; as though he had said, that he would be propitious to his people, for he was not implacable as men are; and they are very wrong who judge of him, or measure him, by men.

We must here first remember, that the Prophet directs not his discourse promiscuously to all the Israelites, but only to the faithful, who were a remnant among that corrupt people. For God, at no time, suffered all the children of Abraham to become alienated, but some few at least remained, as it is said in another place, (1 Kings 19:18.) These the Prophet now addresses; and to administer consolation, he moderates what he had said before of the dreadful vengeance of God. This saying then was not to relieve the sorrow of hypocrites; for the Prophet regarded only the miserable, who had been so smitten with the feeling of God's wrath, that despair would have almost swallowed them up, had not their grief been mitigated. This is one thing. But further, when he says that he is God, and not man, this truth ought to come to our minds, that we may taste of God's gratuitous promises, whenever we vacillate as to his promises, or whenever terror possesses our minds. What! Do you doubt when you have to do with God? But whence is it, that we with so much difficulty rely on the promises of God, except that we imagine him to be like ourselves? Inasmuch then, as it is our habit thus to transform him, let this truth be a remedy to this fault; and whenever God promises pardon to us, from which proceeds the hope of salvation, how much soever he may have previously terrified us by his judgements, let this come to our mind, that as he is God, he is not to be judged of by what we are. We ought then to recumb simply on his promises. ``But then we are unworthy to be pardoned; besides, so great is the atrocity of our sins, that there can be no hope of reconciliation.'' Here we must take instant hold on this shield, we must learn to fortify ourselves with this declaration of the Prophet, He is God, and not man: let this shield be ever taken to repel every kind of diffidence.

But here a question may be raised, ``Was He not God, when he destroyed Sodom and the neighbouring cities?'' That judgement did not take away from the Lord his glory, nor was his majesty thereby diminished. But these two sentences are to be read together; I am God, and not man, holy in the midst of thee. When any one reads these sentences apart, he does wrong to the meaning of the Prophet. God, then, does not only affirm here that he is not like men, but he also adds, that he is

holy in the midst of Israel. It is one view of God's nature that is here given us, and what is set forth is the immense distance between him and men, as we find it written by Isaiah the Prophet,

`My thoughts are not as yours: as much as the heaven is distant from the earth, so distant are my thoughts from your thoughts,' (Isaiah 55:8.)

So also in this place, the Prophet shows what God is, and how much his nature differs from the dispositions of men. He afterwards refers to the covenant which God made with his people: and what was the purport of that covenant? Even that God would punish his people; yet so as ever to leave some seed remaining.

`I will chastise them,' he says, `with the rod of men;
I will not yet take away from them my mercy,'
(2 Samuel 7:14,15.)

Since God then had promised some mitigation or some alleviation in all his punishments, he now reminds us, that he will not have his Church wholly demolished in the world, for he would thus be inconsistent with himself: hence he says, I am God, and not man, holy in the midst of thee; and since I have chosen thee to myself to be my peculiar possession and inheritance, and promised also to be for ever thy God, I will now moderate my vengeance, so that some Church may ever remain.''

For this reason he also says I will not enter into the city Some say, ``I will not enter another city but Jerusalem.'' But this does not suit the passage; for the Prophet speaks here of the ten tribes and not of the tribe of Judah. Others imagine an opposite meaning, ``I will not enter the city,'' as though he said, that he would indeed act kindly towards the people in not wholly destroying them; but that they should hereafter be without civil order, regular government, and other tokens of God's favour: `I will not enter the city;' that is, ``I will not restore you, so that there may be a city and a kingdom, and an united body of people.'' But this exposition is too forced; nay, it is a mere refinement, which of itself vanishes. [81] There is no doubt but that the similitude is taken from a warlike practice. For when a conqueror enters a city with an armed force, slaughter is not restrained but blood is indiscriminately shed. But when a city surrenders, the conqueror indeed may enter, yet not with a sudden and violent attack, but on certain conditions; and then he waits, it may be for two days, or for some time, that the rage of his soldiers may be allayed. Then he comes, not as to enemies, but as to his own subjects. This is what the Prophet means when he says, `I will not enter the city;' that is, ``I will make war on you and subdue your and force you to surrenders and that with great loss; but when the gates shall be opened, and the wall demolished, I will then restrain myself, for I am unwilling wholly to destroy you.''

If one objects and says, that this statement militates against many others which we have observed, the answer is easy, and the solution has already been adduced in

[81] There is another exposition, which Calvin probably did not think it worth his while to mention. It is an old one of Jerome, revived by Castallio, adopted by Lowth and Newcome, and highly praised by Horsley: and yet it seems to have neither point nor meaning, and certainly comports not with this place. The proposed rendering is this— "Although I am no frequenter of cities." God is not a frequenter of cities!! How odd and meaningless is this when compared with the view given by Calvin of the passage? There is another explanation approved of by Dathe, which, as to the meaning, agrees with that of Calvin. He takes {,{עיר rendered ``city,'' to mean ``anger,'' and then the version would be, ``I will not come in anger.'' The Septuagint is, literally, ``I will not come into the city.''

another place, and I shall now only touch on it briefly. When God distinctly denounces ruin on the people, the body of the people is had in view; and in this body there was then no integrity. Inasmuch, then, as all the Israelites had become corrupt, had departed from the worship and fear of God, and from all piety and righteousness, and had abandoned themselves to all kinds of wickedness, the Prophet declares that they were to perish without any exception. But when he confines the vengeance of God, or moderates it, he has respect to a very small number; for, as it has been already stated, corruption had never so prevailed among the people, but that some seed remained. Hence, when the Prophet has in view the elect of God, he applies then these consolations, by which he mitigates their terror, that they might understand that God, even in his extreme rigour, would be propitious to them. Such is the way to account for this passage. With regard to the body of the people, the Prophet has already shown, that their cities were devoted to the fire, and that the whole nation was doomed to suffer the wrath of God; that every thing was given up to the fire and the sword. But now he says, ``I will not enter;'' that is, with regard to those whom the Lord intended to spare. And it must also be observed, that punishment was mitigated, not only with regard to the elect, but also with regard to the reprobate, who were led into captivity. We must yet remember, that when God spared them for a time, he chiefly consulted the good of his elect; for the temporary suspension of vengeance increased his judgement on the reprobate; for whosoever repented not in exile doubled, as it is evident, the wrath of God against themselves. The Lord, however, spared his people for a time; for among them was included his Church, in the same way as the wheat is preserved in the chaff, and is carried from the field with the straw. Why so? Even that the wheat may be separated. So also the Lord preserves much chaff with the wheat; but he will afterwards, in due time, divide the wheat from the chaff. We now understand the whole meaning of the Prophet, and also the application of his doctrine. It follows ---

Hosea 11:10-11

10. They shall walk after the Lord: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west.

10. Post Jehovam ambulabunt, et quasi leo ruget: quum ipse ruget, tunc pavebunt filii a mari (vel, occidente; mare enim vocatur occidentalis regio, respectu ipsius Judeae.)

11. They shall tremble as a bird out of Egypt, and as a dove out of the land of Assyria: and I will place them in their houses, saith the Lord.

11. Pavebunt quasi passer (vel, avis; tam species est quam genus) ab Aegypto; et quasi columba a terra Assur (hoc est, ab Assyriis) et habitare eos faciam in dominibus suis, dicit Jehova.

When the Prophet says, that they shall walk after Jehovah, he proceeds farther than before; for here he refers not to the mitigation of punishment, but promises restoration. He had said before, that though the Lord would deal severely with his people, there would yet be some moderation in his wrath, so that he would not destroy the whole people. Now, it follows, that God, after having thus restrained himself, will extend his favour even to the restoration of the people, and bring to

life those who seemed to have been dead. We now then perceive what the Prophet means.

But to expound this, --- they shall walk after Jehovah, of the obedience of the people, as it is done by interpreters, does not seem right to me. It is indeed certain that no people can be restored except they repent; yea, it is the main beginning of God's favour, when he chastises men and heals them of their wickedness. But here the Prophet handles another thing, even that the Lord will show himself a leader to his people, who had been for a time dispersed. As long as the people were scattered in Assyria and in other distant lands, they were without any head, as a mutilated body. But when the ripened time of restoration came, the Lord revolved to deliver them, and proclaimed himself the leader of his people; and in this manner the people were gathered to God. This is what the Prophet now means when he says, after Jehovah: that is, for a time, indeed, God will forsake them, that they may languish in their dispersion; but at length he will gather them, and show himself as their leader in their journey, that he may restore them to their country. They shall then, he says, follow Jehovah, and he shall roar as a lion: when he shall roar, then children from the sea shall tremble''; that is, God will be formidable to enemies so that none will hinder the return of his people. Many, indeed, will be the enemies, many will labour to set up opposition: but the people shall nevertheless come forth free. How so? For the Lord will fill all with dread, and restrain all the efforts of their enemies; so that they shall be constrained to withdraw from the Assyrians, as well as from the Egyptians. Though, on one side, the Egyptians may resist, and, on the other, the Assyrians, they shall not yet impede the return of the people. Why? Because the Lord will put them to flight, and he will be to them as a lions and fill them all with terror. But the rest we shall defer.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are too secure and torpid in our sins, thy dread majesty may come to our minds, to humble us, and to remove our fear, that we may learn anxiously to seek reconciliation through Christ, and so abhor ourselves for our sins, that thou mayest then be prepared to receive us: and that unbelief may not shut the door against us, enable us to regard thee to be such as thou hast revealed thyself, and to acknowledge that thou art not like us, but the fountain of all mercy, that we may thus be led to entertain a firm hope of salvation, and that, relying on the Mediator, thy only-begotten Son, we may know him as the throne of grace, full of compassion and mercy. O grant, that we may thus come to thee, that through him we may certainly know that thou art our Father, so that the covenant thou hast made with us may never fail through our fault, even this, that we are thy people, because thou hast once adopted us in thy only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Lecture Thirty-first

In the last lecture, we began to explain what the Prophet means by saying, that the Israelites shall come after the Lord: that is, that when the time of the exile shall be completed, God will be the leader of his people in their journey, that they might return safe to their country. And for this reason, he also subjoins, that the Egyptians

as well as the Assyrians would be timid; and hence he compares them to doves and sparrows, or birds; for when the nations should attempt to hinder the return of the people, and strive against them with great forces and great efforts, God would break down their courage. For as God had determined to redeem his people, his decree could not have been nullified, no, not by the whole world. Whatever then, the Assyrians, and also the Egyptians, might attempt to do, though powerful in forces, it would yet avail nothing; nay, God would strike into both such fear and dread, that they should not make any stir when the Lord restored his people. There is a similar mode of speaking in Joel, [82] except that he does not introduce the similitudes that they would be like birds and doves. But he speaks of the roaring of God, as though he said, that the power of God would be terrible and invincible, so that he would defend and protect his people, and no one would dare to rise up against him; and that if one should dare, he would be constrained instantly to succumb. Let us now proceed ---

Hosea 11:12

12. Ephraim compasseth me about with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit: but Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the saints.

12. Circumdedit me mendacio Ephraim, et fraude domus Israel: Judah autem adhuc dominatur (vel, principatum tenet) cum Deo, et cum sanctis fidelis est.

I shall not stay now to recite the opinions of others; nor does it seem necessary. I might have indeed referred in the last verse to what some say respecting the roaring of God, --- that his voice will roar through the Gospel: but as this and the like are refinements of which I think the Prophet never thought, it is enough to understand the simple meaning of the Prophet, and not to accumulate the sentiments of others. I indeed know that this makes a great display, and there are some who are delighted with a mass of opinions; but I regard what is more useful.

I come now to the last verse, in which the Lord complains, that he had been compassed with the falsehood and fraud of the people By these words he means that he had in every thing found the multiplied perfidy of the Israelites; for this is the import of the word, ``compassed''. We now then perceive that the Prophet means that the Israelites, not only in one way, or in one thing, acted unfaithfully towards God, and used frauds: but that it was the same, as when one besieges an enemy with a great army; so that they were thus full of innumerable frauds, with which on every side they surrounded God. And this is what hypocrites are wont to do; for not only in one thing do they endeavour to deceive God, but they transform themselves in various ways, and ever seek some new subterfuges. When they are caught in one sin, they pass into another; so that there is no end to their deceit. This subject the Prophet now takes up, that is, that the Israelites never ceased to act deceitfully towards God.

And he speaks of frauds and falsehood; for they thought that they escaped, provided they covered themselves with some disguise whenever the Prophets reproved them. But God here testifies, that they gained nothing by their craftiness, as though he said, ``Ye think indeed that your coverings will avail with me, but they are vain.

[82] Joel 3:16. — fj.

I indeed see myself as it were encompassed by your falsehoods, for on every side ye attempt to cover your sins; but they are false coverings.'' In short, the Prophet reprobates those specious excuses, by which people think that they are absolved before God, so as to elude through this confidence all the threatening and reproofs of the Prophets. ``I see,'' the Lord says, ``what the Israelites bring forward for themselves; but they are only falsehoods and frauds.'' This passage then teaches, that men in vain make excuses before God; for when they contrive pretences to deceive God, they are themselves greatly deceived; for he clearly perceives their guiles and falsehoods.

He afterwards subjoins, that Judah still ruled, or, held sovereignty, with God, and was faithful with the saints By saying that he held sovereignty with God, he declares, I doubt not, that the kingdom of Judah was legitimate, because it was connected with a pure and lawful priesthood. For whence did arise the corruptions in the other kingdom, but because the people had revolted from the family of David? Hence it was that the new king changed both the law and the worship of God, and erected new temples. Israel then did not rule with God, for the kingdom was spurious, and the beginning of the dispersion, so that the people forsook God. But of Judah the Prophet speaks much otherwise, that he still ruled with God, because the posterity of David, though we know that they laboured under many vices, had not yet changed the worship prescribed by the law, except that Ahab had erected an altar like one at Damascus, as the sacred history relates, (2 Kings 16:11,12;) but yet pure religion always prevailed at Jerusalem. But the Prophet speaks comparatively, as it will be presently seen: for he does not wholly excuse the Jews, but says that in comparison with Israel they yet ruled with God; for the kingdom and the priesthood, as we have said, were joined together in Judah, and both had been divinely instituted.

He says further, that he was faithful with the saints By saints some understand God. The word {קדושים}, kodushim, we know, is plurals and sometimes an epithet of the singular number is joined to it, though not often. In the last chapter of Joshua [83] we have these words, {הרא} {קדושים}, kodushim eva, holy is he But as I have said, these examples are rare. And here I know not whether or not the Prophet means God. I would rather refer this word to the holy fathers or to the whole Church; so that the Prophet calls here {קדושים}, kodushim, saints, Abraham and others who justly deserved to be counted among the children of God; and I am inclined to include the angels. But of the sanctuary we do not find this word anywhere used; when the Scripture refers to the sanctuary, the letter {מ}, mem, is added. He uses indeed the plural number, though one may suppose that both the sanctuary and its worship are here intended. But as this application would be strained, and without example, I am satisfied with this plain meaning --- that Judah was faithful with the saints; that is, that he retained faith in God together with the fathers, and departed not from the pure worship which had been delivered to him, according to which God had made his covenant with Abraham and his seed.

But the Prophet here praises the tribe of Judah, not because he wished to flatter them; but, as it has been stated in a former place, he had regard to the office deputed

[83] Joshua 24:19. — fj.

to him. When we at this day cry against our domestic evils, when we say that things are better ordered elsewhere, under what supposition is this done? We take it as granted, that others have their own teachers by whom they are reproved and if there be any vices prevailing, there are those who are to apply the remedy. This consideration then ought often to be remembered by us, that we may, by way of reproach, bring forward the conduct of others, when we wish deeply to wound those, the care of whom has been committed to us by God. Even so our Prophet did: at the same time, those who then taught at Jerusalem did not spare the Jews; they cried boldly and vehemently against their vices. But Hosea, as we have said, does here attend to his own vocation; and hence he exposes the sin of the ten tribes in having departed from the legitimate worship of God, when they had at the same time a well-known and memorable example in the tribe of Judah, who had continued in obedience to the law. This is the meaning. Let us now go on ---

Hosea 12

Chapter 12

Hosea 12:1

1. Ephraim feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt.

1. Ephraim pascitur vento, et sequitur orientem: quotidie mendacium et vastitatem multiplicat: foedus cum Assyrio percutiunt, et oleum in Aegyptum portatur.

The Prophet here inveighs against the vain hopes of the people, for they were inflated with such arrogance, that they despised all instruction and all admonitions. It was therefore necessary, in the first place, to correct this vice, and hence he says, Ephraim feeds on wind For when one gulps the wind, he seems indeed to fill his mouth, and his throat, and his chest, and his whole stomach; but there is nothing but air, no nourishment. So he says that Israel entertained indeed much confidence in their crafty ways, but it was to feed only on the wind. They dreamt that they were happy, when they secured confederacies, when they had both the Assyrians and the Egyptians as their associates. They are only blasts, says the Prophet; nay, he says, they are noxious blasts; for by the East he understands the east wind, which blows from the rising of the sun; and this, as they say, is in Judea a dry and often a stormy wind. Other winds either bring rain or some other advantage: but this wind brings nothing but drought and storms. It hence then appears that the Prophet meant that Israel, through this their vain confidence, procured for themselves many sorrows and ever remained void and empty. Ephraim then feeds on the wind, and further, he follows after the east wind

Hosea explains afterwards his mind more clearly, He daily multiplies falsehood and desolation, he says. By falsehood he glances, I have no doubt, at the impostures by which the people deceived themselves, as hypocrites do, who, by sharpening their wits to deceive God, involve themselves in many fatal snares. So also is

Israel said to have multiplied falsehood; for they made themselves so obstinate, as to become quite hardened against God's teaching; and this obstinacy is called falsehood for this reason, for unbelieving men, as we see, fabricate for themselves many excuses; and though they be impostures, they yet think themselves safe against all the threatening of God, provided they set up, I know not what, something which they think will be sufficiently available. Hence the Prophet repeats again, that there was nothing but falsehood in all their crafty decrees.

He then presses the point still more, and says, that it was ``desolation'', that is, the cause of desolation. He then first derides the vain confidence of the people, because they thought that they could blind the eyes of God by their vain disguises; ``This is falsehood,'' he says ``this is imposture.'' Then he presses them more heavily and says ``This is your perdition: you shall at last perceive, that you have gained nothing by your counsels but destruction.''

How so? Because they made a covenant. I take this latter clause as explanatory: for if the Prophet had only spoken generally, the impiety of the people would not have been sufficiently exposed; and the masks of secure men must be torn away, and their crimes, as it were, painted, that they may be ashamed; for except they are drawn forth as it were before the public, and their turpitude exposed to the view of all, they will ever hide themselves in their secret places. This then is the reason why the Prophet here specifically points out their frauds, which he had before mentioned. Behold, he says, they made a covenant with the Assyrian, and carry their oil into Egypt; that is, they hunt for the friendship of the Assyrian on one side, and on the other they conciliate with great importunity the Egyptians; nay, they spare not their own goods, for they carry presents in order to gain them. We now then understand how Israel had multiplied falsehood and desolation; for they implicated themselves in illicit compacts. But why it was unlawful for them to fly to the Assyrians and Egyptians, we have explained elsewhere, nor is it needful here to repeat at large what has been said: God wished the people to be under his protection; and when God promised to be the defender of their safety, they ought to have been satisfied with his protection alone: but when they retook themselves to Egypt and to Assyria, it was a clear evidence of unbelief; for it was the same as to deny the power of God to be sufficient for them. And we also know that the Israelites never went to Assyria or to Egypt, except when they meditated the destruction of their own brethren; for they often laboured to overturn the kingdom of Judah: they only sought associates to gratify their own cruelty. But this one reason, however, was abundantly sufficient to condemn them, that they fortified themselves by foreign aids, when God was willing to keep them as it were inclosed under his own wings. Whenever then we attempt to provide for ourselves by unlawful means, it is the same thing as if we denied God; for he calls and invites us to come under his protection: but when we run in our thoughts here and there, and seek some vain helps, we grievously dishonour God: it is, as it were, to fly into Egypt or into Assyria. And for this purpose ought the doctrine of this verse to be applied. It follows ---

Hosea 12:2

2. The Lord hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according

to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him.

2. Contentio Jehovae cum Jehudah, et ad visitandum super Jacob: secundum vias ejus, secundum opera ejus rependet ei.

It may seem strange that the Prophet should now say, that God had a controversy with Judah; for he had before said, that Judah stood faithful with the saints. It seems indeed inconsistent, that God should litigate with the Jews, and yet declare them to be upright and separate them from the perfidious and ungodly. What then does this mean? The Prophet, as we have said, spake comparatively of the tribe of Judah, when he said that they remained faithful with the saints: for he did not intend wholly to exculpate the Jews, who were also full of grievous evils; but he intended to praise the worship which as yet prevailed at Jerusalem, that the impiety of the ten tribes might appear less excusable, who of their own accord had departed from the rule which God had given.

When any one at this day reproves the Papists, they say, that another mode of worship is unknown to them, and that they have been thus taught by their forefathers, and that the worship which they observe has so continued from antiquity, that they dare not either to change it or to deviate from it. Such might have been the excuse made by the Israelites. But the prophet charges them with voluntary defection, for the temple which God had chosen for himself stood in their sight; there the face of God was in a manner to be seen; for all things were arranged according to the heavenly pattern which had been shown to Moses in the mount. Since then pure religion was before their eyes, was not their sin proved by this very fact, that having neglected the word of God, they gave themselves up to new and fictitious modes of worship? The Prophet then had before praised the worship, but not the manners, of the tribe of Judah; and he now comes to their manners, and says, that there were many things in Judah which God would chastise.

The Lord then hath a controversy with Judah; and he will begin with that tribe, and will then come down to the house of Jacob The Prophet, however, speaks here only in passing of the house of Judah, and touches but lightly on the controversy he had with that portion of the people. How was this? Because he was not a teacher, as it has been said already, set over the kingdom of Judah, but only over the Israelites. He now refers only to that kingdom for the purpose of striking terror into his own people: as though he said ``Think ye that the forbearance of God is to be forever, because he has hitherto borne with you? Nay, God will begin to contend with the tribe of Judah. I have said, indeed, that they are innocent compared with you; but yet they shall not escape punishment; for in a short time God will summon them to judgement. If he will not spare the Jews, how can your great crimes go unpunished? For certainly you deserve hundred deaths in comparison with the Jews, among whom at least some integrity and uprightness exist; for they have made no change in the worship of God. Their life is corrupt; but yet the law of God and religion are not despised by them as they are by you. If then God will not spare them, much less will he spare you.''

We now understand for what purpose the Prophet says that God had a controversy with Judah; for it was not his design to terrify the Jews themselves, or to exhort

them to repentance, except it may be by the way; but his object was to present an example to the Israelites, that they might fear; for they ought to have thought within themselves, ``If this shall be done in the green, what shall become of the dry tree? (Luke 23:31.) If God will exercise with so much severity his vengeance against our brethren the Jews, among whom pure religion as yet exists, what sort of end and how dreadful is that which awaits us, who have departed from the law, the worship, the teaching, and the obedience of God, who are become truce-breakers, and degenerate, and in every way profane?''

Hence he immediately adds, And will punish Jacob ``God will indeed begin with the tribe of Judah; this will be the prelude, and he will treat the Jews more mildly than you; but against you he will thunder in full force. It will not then be a remonstrance to draw you to repentance, but a punishment such as ye deserve; for he has already contended with you more than enough.''

According to his ways. according to his doings, will he recompense him. He sets down here ways and doings, with no superfluous repetition, but to show that the repentance of this people had been already more than sufficiently looked for; for they had not ceased for a long time to pursue their own wickedness. The Prophet then, no doubt, condemns here the Jews for their perverse wickedness, that they never left off their sins, though they had now for a long time been admonished, and had been often reproved by the Prophets. It now follows ---

Hosea 12:3-5

3. He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God:

3. In utero apprehendit plantam fratri suo; et in fortitudine sua dominatus est cum Deo (quanquam nomen {אלהים}, Aleim, transfertur etiam saepe ad Angelos.)

4 Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us;

4 Et dominatus est cum Angelo (vel, adversus Angelum; vel, luctatus est, si quis malit, quanquam ad verbum ita habetur; sed quia sequitur {יוכל}, iucal, praevaluit, ideo libenter admitto luctandi verbum, non quod proprie conveniat, sed rem potius respicio quam verba) et praevaluit; flevit et rogavit eum: in Bethel invenit eum, et illic locutus est cum eo;

5 Even the Lord God of hosts; the Lord is his memorial.

5 Et Jehova Deus exercituum; Jehova memoria ejus.

In all this discourse the Prophet condemns the ingratitude of the people; and then he shows how shamefully they had departed from the example of their father, in whose name they yet took pride. This is the substance. Their ingratitude is showed in this, that they did not acknowledge that they had been anticipated, [84] in the person of their father Jacob, by the gratuitous mercy of God. The first history is indeed referred to for this end, that the posterity of Jacob might understand that they had been elected by God before they were born. For Jacob did not, by choice or design, lay hold on the heel of his brother in his mother's womb; but it was an

[84] Praeventum fuisse. This is a most difficult word to render correctly and intelligibly. To prevent, in the sense of going before, is not current. The meaning here is, that they did not own that in the case of Jacob free mercy was previous to any good on his part. — Ed.

extraordinary thing. It was then God who guided the hand of the infant, and by this sign testified his adoption to be gratuitous. In short, by saying that Jacob held the foot of his brother in his mother's womb, the same thing is intended, as if God had reminded the Israelites, that they did not excel other people by their own virtue or that of their parents; but that God of his own good pleasure had chosen them. The same is alleged against them by Malachi,

`Were not Jacob and Esau brethren? Yet Jacob I loved, and Esau I regarded with hatred,' (Malachi 1:2,3.)

For we know wish what haughtiness this nation has ever exalted itself. ``But whence have ye arisen? Look back to your origin: ye are indeed the children of Abraham and Isaac. In what then do ye differ from the Idumeans? They have certainly been begotten by Esau; and Esau was the son of Isaac and the brother of Jacob, and indeed the first-born. Ye then do not excel as to any dignity that may exist in you. Own then your origin, and know that whatever excellency may be in you proceeds from the mere favour of God, and this ought to bind you more and more to him. Whence then is this pride?''

Even thus does our Prophet now speak, Jacob held the foot of his brother in his mother's womb; that is, ``You have a near relationship with Esau and his posterity; but they are detested by you. Whence is this? Is it for some merit of your own? Boast when you can show that any thing has proceeded from you which could gain favour before God. Nay, your father Jacob, a most holy man indeed, while yet in his mother's womb, laid hold on the foot of his brother Esau; that is, when he became superior to his brother and gained primogeniture, he was not grown up, and could do nothing by his own choice or power, for he was then inclosed in his mother's womb, and had no worthiness, no merit. Your ingratitude is now then the more base, for God had put you under obligations to him before ye were born; in the person of the holy patriarch he chose you for his possession. But now, having forsaken him, and relinquished the worship which he has taught in his law, ye abandon yourselves to idols and impious superstitions. Bring now your pretences by which ye cover your impiety! Is not your baseness so gross and palpable, that you ought to be ashamed of it?'' We now then understand the end for which the Prophet said that Esau's foot was laid hold on by Jacob in his mother's womb

Moreover, this passage clearly shows that men do not gain the favour of God by their free-will, but are chosen by his goodness alone before they are born, and chosen, not on account of works, as the Papists imagine, who concede some election to God, but think that it depends on future works. But if it be so, the charge of the Prophet was frigid and jejune. Now since God through his good pleasure alone anticipates men, and adopts those whom he pleases, not on account of works, but through his own mercy, it hence follows that those who have been chosen are more bound to him, and that they are less excusable when they reject the favour offered to them.

But here someone may object and say, that it is strange that the posterity of Jacob should be said to have been elected in his person, and yet they had in the meantime departed from God; for the election of God in this case would not be

sure and permanent; and we know that whom God elects he also justifies, and their salvation is so secured, that none of them can perish; all the elect are also delivered to Christ as their preserver, that he may keep them by his divine power, which is invincible, as John teaches in chapter 10. [85] What then does this mean? Now we know, and it has been before stated, that the election of God as to that people was twofold; for the one was general, and the other special. The election of holy Jacob was special, for he was really one of the children of God; special also was the election of those who are called by Paul the children of the promise, (Romans 9:8.) There was another, a general election; for he received his whole seed into his faith, and offered to all his covenant. At the same time, they were not all regenerated, they were not all gifted with the Spirit of adoption. This general election was not then efficacious in all. Solved now is the matter in debate, that no one of the elect shall perish; for the whole people were not elected in a special manner; but God knew whom he had chosen out of that people; and them he endued, as we have said, with the Spirit of adoption, and supplied with his own grace, that they might never fall away. Others were indeed chosen in a certain way, that is, God offered to them the covenant of salvation; but yet through their ingratitude they caused God to reject them, and to disown them as children.

But the Prophet subjoins, that Jacob by his strength had power with God, and had prevailed also with the angel He reproaches here the Israelites for making a false claim to the name of Jacob, since they had nothing in common with him, but had shamefully departed from his example. He had then power with the angel and with God himself; and he prevailed over the angel. But what sort of persons were they? As the heathen Poets called the Romans, when they became degenerated and effeminate, Romulidians, and said that they had sprung from those remarkable and illustrious heroes, whose prowesses were then well known, and for the same reason called them Scipiadians; so also the Prophet says, ``Come now, ye children of Jacob, what sort of men are ye? He was endued with a heroic, yea, with an angelic power, and even more than angelic; for he wrestled with God and gained the victory: but ye are the slaves of idols; the devil retains you devoted to himself; ye are, as it were, in a bawdy house; for what else is your temple but a brothel? And then ye are like adulterers, and daily commit adultery with your idols. Your abominations, what are they but filthy chains, and which grove that there is no knowledge and no heart in you? For you must have been fascinated, when ye forsook God and adopted new and profane modes of worship.'' This difference between the holy patriarch Jacob and his posterity must be marked, otherwise we shall not understand the object of the Prophet; and it will avail but little to collect various opinions, except first we know what the Prophet meant, and what was the purport of this upbraiding, and of this narrative, that Jacob had power with God and the angel.

But it must be noticed, that God and angel are here mentioned in the same sense; we may, indeed, render it angel in both places; for {אלהים}, Aleim, as well as {מלאך}, melac, signifies an angel. But, however, every doubt is removed by the Prophet, when he at last adds, Jehovah, God of hosts, Jehovah is his name, for here the Prophet

[85] John 10:25-30. — fj.

expressly mentions the essential name of God, by which he testifies, that the same was the eternal and the only true God, who yet was at the same time an angel. But it may be asked, How was he the eternal God, and at the same time an angel? It occurs, indeed, so frequently in Scripture, that it must be well known to us, that when the Lord appeared by his angel, the name of Jehovah was given to them, not indeed to all the angels indiscriminately but to the chief angel, by whom God manifested himself. This, as I have said, must be well known to us. It then follows that this angel was truly and essentially God. But this would not strictly apply to God, except there be some distinction of persons. There must then be some person in the Deity, to which this name and title of an angel can apply; for if we take the name, God, without difference or distinction, and regard it as denoting his essence, it would certainly be inconsistent to say, that he is God and an angel too; but when we distinguish persons in the Deity, there is no inconsistency. How so? Because Christ, the eternal Wisdom of God, did put on the character of a Mediator, before he put on our flesh. He was therefore then a Mediator, and in that capacity he was also an angel. He was at the same time Jehovah, who is now God manifested in the flesh.

But we must, on the other hand, refute the delirium, or the diabolical madness of that caviller, Servetus, who imagined that Christ was from the beginning an angel, as if he was a phantom, and a distinct person, having an essence apart from the Father; for he says, that he was formed from three untreated elements. This diabolical conceit ought to be wholly discarded by us. But Christ, though he was God, was also a Mediator; and as a Mediator, he is rightly and fitly called the angel or the messenger of God, for he has of his own accord placed himself between the Father and men.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that inasmuch as thou showest thyself to us at this day so kindly as a Father, having presented to us a singular and an invaluable pledge of thy favour in thy only begotten Son, --- O grant, that we may entirely devote ourselves to thee, and truly render thee that free service and obedience which is due to a Father, so that we may have no other object in life but to confirm that adoption, with which thou hast once favoured us, until we at length, being gathered into thy eternal kingdom, shall partake of its fruit, together with Christ Jesus thy Son. Amen.

Lecture Thirty-second

Yesterday we explained how it seemed proper to call him who appeared to holy Jacob in Bethel both God and an angel; for the name, Jehovah by which is expressed the eternal power, essence, and majesty of God, could not be transferred to a mere angel. It is hence certain that he was the only true God. But it could not be, that he was simply and without any distinction called an angel; but as Christ even then sustained the character of a Mediator, he was not inconsistently called an angel; and yet we know that he is the eternal God. So this passage is worthy of being remembered, as it bears testimony to the divinity of Christ; for the Prophet clearly affirms that he is Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, and that he is so by his own power; and that he does not subsist in another, as all creatures do. Since then he is so, his sovereignty is proved, so that he is not inferior to the Father.

But he says, that this is his memorial, or remembrance. This expression has reference to men; the Prophet then means, that this wonderful and magnificent name would be well known in the world, when Christ should be revealed. The people, indeed, even then acknowledged that the true God appeared to their father Jacob; but the knowledge of a Mediator was hitherto obscure. The Prophet then seems to have respect here to the coming of Christ; as though he said, that the name, Jehovah, would be widely known to all, when the Mediator would be more clearly exhibited. But I will come now to the other parts of the passage.

The Prophet says that he was a prince, or had power, by his strength with God. What this saying imports, I shall shortly explain. The name, Israel, was given to Jacob, because of the victory he obtained in that noble wrestling, of which mention is made in Genesis 32: [86] for the holy man had not a contest with a mortal being, but with God himself; and he overcame in that combat, and is hence called the conqueror of God. As this mode of speaking is harsh, some have endeavoured by a comment to turn it to something more moderate, that is, that Jacob was a prince with God, meaning, that God approved of his unwonted courage. But God meant to express something more, when he gave this name to his servant; for he confessed that he gave way, being, as it were, overcome, and yielded the palm of victory to holy Jacob. And this ought not to appear strange to us; for we know that whenever God proves our faith, and tries us by temptations, these are so many combats by which he contends with us; for he seeks to find out what is the strength of our faith. Now? when we are said to wrestle with God, and the issue of the contest be such, that God leaves the victory to us, we are not then improperly called conquerors, yea, even of God himself. But how? Because God works wonderfully in his saints, so that by his own power he casts down himself; and while he wrestles with us, he supplies us with strength, by which we are enabled to bear the weight and pressure of the contest. Were God to assail us, what would he find but weakness? But when he calls us to the struggle, he at the same time supplies us with the necessary arms.

And it is a wonderful marshalling of the contest, when God on one side makes himself an antagonist, and, on the other, fights in us against his own temptations, or against all those wrestlings by which he tries our faith. Hence God is said to be overcome by us, when, by the power and aid of his own Spirit, he strengthens and renders us unconquerable; yea, when he makes us to triumph over temptations, and when we consider everything, such is the state of the case, that God will have the greater portion of strength to be on our side, and that he only takes the weaker portion to tempt and try us. There is not indeed, in this case, to be imagined by us, any such separation, as if God was divided against himself; but we know, that when he tries our faith, he comes forth as if he were a contender, or as if he challenged us to the contest. This is indeed certain. For what are temptations, or what is their object, but to afford us an occasion to exhibit, as on a field of battle, an example and proof of our strength and firmness? But this could not be done without an adversary; for what advantage would it be to fight with a shadow? or when no one engages with us? Hence God is like an adversary whenever he tries our faith; and, as it has been

[86] Genesis 32:24-30. — fj.

said before, we have this contest not with men, but with God himself. We have indeed to contend with the devil; for Paul says, that we have to fight not (only) with flesh and blood, but with mighty powers, (Ephesians 6:12.) This is doubtless true; but the Lord, at the same time, holds the first place, as that remarkable passage in Job testified, `The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away,' (Job 1:21.) So, then, we must engage with God himself. How so? Because he tries and proves us. But he does not tempt us, as James says, (James 1:13,14;) for a person is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust. He does not tempt us to evil; he does not instil into us corrupt desires, which grow up spontaneously, and which are innate in our nature: but he tempts, that is, proves us, as he is said to have tempted Abraham, (Genesis 22:1.)

Since it is so, we must now wrestle with God; but for what end? That we may conquer: for God intends not to overwhelm us, while he is making known our faith and constancy of obedience; but, on the contrary, he builds a theatre, on which to show his gifts. We therefore come to the struggle with the hope of overcoming. That we may overcome, he, as I have said, not only exhorts us to be strong, but supplies us also with arms, endues us with strength, and also fights himself, in a manner, with us, and is powerful in us, and enables us to overcome our temptations. For this reason, Jacob is said to have power with God, or to have been God's conqueror.

But what the Prophet adds may seem strange, that this was done by his strength. He had power with God, he says, by his own strength. But if Israel had fought by his own valour, he could not have borne even the shadow of God, for he must have fallen. He must have been brought to nothing, had he not power greater than that of man. What, then, does this mean, that he was a conqueror by his own strength? We grant, that this strength, of which the Prophet speaks, may be ascribed to holy Jacob when he gained dominion. There is no better title, as they commonly say, than that of donation; and God is wont to transfer to us whatever he bestows, as if it were our own. It is then necessary to distinguish wisely here between the strength which man has in himself, and that which God confers on him. The Papists, as soon as any mention is made of the strength or power of man, instantly lay hold on it, and say, ``If there is no freewill in man, there is no strength, or there is no power to resist.'' But they betray their own stupidity and thoughtlessness, inasmuch as they cannot distinguish between the intrinsic strength which is in man himself by nature, and the adventitious strength with which God endues men, and which is the gift of the Holy Spirit. And the Prophet, when he here commends the strength of holy Jacob, does not extol his free-will, as though he derived strength from himself, by which he overcame God; but he means that he was divinely endued with unconquerable power, so that he came forth a conqueror in the contest. We now then apprehend the meaning of the Prophet.

And since this was especially worthy of being remembered, he repeats, that he had power with the angel, and prevailed. But we have already said how Jacob prevailed not indeed of himself, but because God had so distributed his power, that the greater part was in Jacob himself. I am therefore wont, when I speak of the wrestling and of the daily contests with which God exercises the godly, to adduce this similitude, --- That God fights with us with his left hand, and defends us with his right

hand, that is, he assails us in a weak manner, (so to speak,) and at the same time stretches forth his right hand to defend us: he displays, in the latter instance, his greater power, that we may become victorious in the struggle. And this mode of speaking, though at the first view it seems harsh, does yet wonderfully set forth the grace and goodness of God, inasmuch as he deigns to humble himself for our sake, so as to choose to concede to us the praise of victory; not indeed that we may become proud of ourselves, but that he may be thus more glorified, when he prefers exercising his power in defending us rather than in overwhelming us, which he could do with one breath of his mouth. For he has no need of making any effort to reduce us to nothing: if he only chooses to blow on the whole human race, the whole world would in a moment be extinguished. But the Lord fights with us, and at the same time suffers us not to be crushed; nay, he raises us up on high, and, as I have already said, concedes to us the victory. Let us now go on.

The Prophet adds, that he wept and entreated: He wept, he says, and made supplication unto him Some explain this clause of the angel; but I know not whether weeping was suitable to him. The saying may be indeed defended that the angel was as it were a suppliant, when he yielded up the conquest to the holy man; for it was the same as though he who owns himself unequal in a contest were to throw himself on the ground. Then they explain weeping thus, ``The angel entreated the patriarch when he said, `Let me go;' and this was a confession of victory.'' The sense would then be, that the patriarch Jacob did not gain any ordinary thing when he came forth a conqueror in the struggle; for God was in a manner the suppliant, for he conceded to him the name and praise of a conqueror. But I prefer explaining this of the patriarch, and to do so is, in my judgement, more suitable. It is not indeed said that Jacob wept; that is, it is not, I own, stated distinctly and expressly by Moses; but weeping may be taken for that humility which the faithful ever bring to the presence of God: and then weeping was meet for the patriarch; for he so gained the victory in the combat, that he did not depart without grief and loss, inasmuch as we know that his leg was put out of joint, and that his thigh was dislocated so that he was lame all his life. Jacob then obtained the victory, and there triumphed with God's approbation: but yet he departed not whole, for God had left him lame. He felt then no small grief, since this weakness in his body continued through life. Hence weeping did not ill become the holy man, who was humbled in the struggle, though he carried away the palm of victory.

And this ought to be carefully noticed; for here the Prophet meets all calumnies, when he so moderates the sentence, that he takes away nothing from God and his glory, though he thus splendidly adorns the victory of the patriarch. He was then a prince with God; he prevailed also, he became a conqueror, --- but how? He yet wept and entreated him; which means, that there was no cause for pride that he carried away the palm of victory from the contest, but that God led him to humility even by the dislocation of his thigh or leg: and so he entreated him. The praying of Jacob is related by Moses, which he made, when he asked to be blessed. But the less, as the Apostle says, is blessed by the greater, (Hebrews 7:7.) Then Jacob did not exalt himself, as blind men do, who claim merit to themselves; but he prayed

to God, and asked to be blessed by Him, who owned himself to be overcome. And this ought to be carefully observed, especially the additional circumstance; for we hence learn that there is no cause why they who are proved by temptations should flee away from God, though our flesh indeed seeks ease, and desires to be spared.

But when a temptation is at hand, we withdraw ourselves, and there is no one who would not gladly make a truce, and also hide himself at a distance from the presence of God. Inasmuch then as we desire God to be far from us, when he comes forth as an antagonist to try our faith, this praying of Jacob ought to be remembered; for though he had his leg disjointed, though he was worn out with weariness, he did not yet withdraw himself, he did not wish the departure of the angel, but retained him as it were by force: ``Thou shalt bless me; I would rather contend with thee, and be wholly consumed, than to let thee go before thou blesses me.'' We hence see that we ought to seek the presence of God; though he may severely try us, though we may suffer much, though our strength fail, though we may be made lame through life, we ought not yet to shun the presence of God, but rather embrace him with both arms, and retain him as it were by force; for it is much better to groan under our burden, and to feel his power who is above us, than to continue free from toil, and to rot in our pleasures, as they do whom God forsakes. And we see how much such an indulgence ought to be dreaded by us; for unless we are daily sharpened by various temptations, we immediately gather rust and other evils. It is therefore necessary, in order that we may continue in a sound state, that our contests should be daily renewed: and hence I have said, that we ought to seek the presence of God, however severe the wresting may be.

It follows, He found him in Bethel To remove every ambiguity, I would render it, ``In Bethel he had found him.'' It is indeed a verb in the future tense; but it is certain that the Prophet speaks of the past. But when we take the past tense, ambiguity in the language still remains; for some thus understand the place, that God had afterwards found Jacob in Bethel, or, that Jacob had found God; that is, when the name of Israel was confirmed to him, after the destruction of the town of Sichem; for, to console his grief, God appeared to him there again. They then explain this of a second vision in that place. But it seems to me that the Prophet had another thing in view, even this, that God had already found Jacob in Bethel, that he had met him when he fled to Syria, and went away through the fear of his brother. It was then for the first time that God appeared to his servant, and exhorted him to faithfulness: he promised to him a safe return to his own country. The Prophet then means, that Jacob gained the victory, because God had long before began to embrace him in his love, and also testified his love when he had manifested himself to him in Bethel. Hence he found him in Bethel. This might indeed be referred to Jacob, ``He found him in Bethel;'' that is, he found God. But as it is immediately added, There he spake with us, and as this cannot be applied to any other than to God himself, I am inclined to add also, that God had found Jacob in Bethel. And the Prophet commends to us again the gratuitous goodness of God towards Jacob, because he deigned to meet him on his way, and to show that he was the leader of Jacob on his journey: for he did not think previously that God was nigh him, as he says himself,

`This is the house of God, and the gate of heaven,
and I knew it not,' (Genesis 28:16,17.)

When therefore the holy man thought himself to be as it were cast away by God, and destitute of all aid, when he was alone and without any hope, God is said to have found him; for of his own good will he presented himself to him, when the holy man hoped no such thing, nor conceived such a thing in his mind. Hence God had already found his servant in Bethel; and there he spake, or (that the same strain may be continued) had spoken to him.

There he had spoken with us. Some take {עמנו}, omnu, for {עמו}, omu [87] , he had spoken with him; and they do this, being forced by necessity; for they find no sense in the words that God spake with us in Bethel. But there is no need to change the words contrary to rules of grammar. Others who dare not to depart from the words of the Prophet, imagine a sense wholly different. Some say, ``He spake with us there;'' that is, ``The Lord speaks by me, Hosea, and by Amos, who is my colleague and friend: for we denounce on you, by his authority, utter ruin and destruction; and God has made known to us at Bethel whatever we bring to you.'' But how strained is this, all must see: this is to wrest Scripture, and not to explain it. Others also speak still more frigidly: ``There he spake with us,'' as though the angel had said, ``Wait, the Lord will speak with us; I have called thee Israel, but the Lord will at length come, who will ratify what I now say to thee:'' as if he was not indeed the eternal God; but this he immediately expresses when he says Jehovah is his memorial, Jehovah of hosts But thus the Jews trifle, who are like irrational beings whenever there is a reference made to Christ.

There does not seem, however, to be any great reason why we should toil much about the Prophet's words: and some even of the Rabbis (not to deprive them of their just praise) have observed this to be the meaning, That the Lord had so spoken with Jacob, that what he said belonged to the whole people. For doubtless whatever God then promised to his servant appertained to the whole body of the people, and all his posterity. Why then do interpreters so greatly torment themselves, when it is evident that God spake through the person of one man with all the posterity of Abraham? And this agrees best with the context; for the Prophet now applies, so to speak, to the whole people what he had hitherto recorded of the patriarch Jacob. That they might not then think that the history of one man was related, he says that it belongs to all. How so? Because the Lord had so spoken with holy Jacob, that his voice ought to resound in the ears of all. For what was said to the holy man? Did God only reveal himself to him? Did he promise to be a Father only to him? Nay, he adopted his whole seed, and extended his favour to all his posterity. Since then he had so spoken to all the Israelites, they ought now to be more ashamed of their defection, inasmuch as they had so much degenerated from their father, with whom they were yet connected. For there was a sacred bond of unity between Jacob and his children, since God embraced them all in his love, and favoured them all with his

[87] This is an instance in which critics, from not understanding the drift of a passage, have suggested emendations, which seem plausible, and yet take away an important meaning, as we shall see in the present case, from Calvin's explanation. Horsley takes the same view with Calvin, though Newcome does not. — Ed.

adoption. We now perceive the mind of the Prophet. Let us proceed ---

Hosea 12:6-7

6. Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgement, and wait on thy God continually.

6. Et tu ad Deum tuum convertere; bonitatem et judicium custodi; et spera in Deo tuo semper.

7. He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.

7. Chanaan! In manu ejus statera fraudis (vel, dolosa;) praedari diligit.

The Prophet is now here urgent on the people. Having referred to the example of the patriarch, he shows how unlike him were his posterity, with whom God could avail nothing by sound teaching, though he was constantly solicitous for their salvation, and stirred up his Prophets to bring back the lost and scattered to the way of safety. Since then it was so, the Prophet accuses them of ingratitude. But he speaks first of repentance; and then he shows that he and other ministers of God had laboured in vain; for such was the perversity of the people, that teaching had no effect. His sermon is short, but yet it contains much.

Turn, he says, to thy God. He glances here at the apostasy of the people, by bidding them to turn to their God, and, at the same time, condemns whatever the Israelites were wont to set up as a defence, when the Prophets reproved them. For they wished their own fictitious modes of worship to come in as a reason; they wished the gods devised by themselves to occupy the place of the true God. The Prophet cuts off the handle from subterfuges of this kind by commanding the people to turn to their God. ``Why,'' he says, ``you do indeed worship gods, and greatly weary yourselves in your superstitions; but confess that you are apostates, who have rejected the law delivered to you by the true God. Return, then, to your God.'' And he calls God the God of Israel, not to honour them, but to-reproach them, because they had willingly and designedly cast off the worship of the true God, who had made himself known to them.

There is afterwards shown the true way of repentance. The beginning of the verse, as I have already said, requires the people to repent; but as we know that men trifle with God when they are called to repentance, it is not in vain that a definitive, or, at least, a short description of repentance, is added by which is made evident what it is to repent, or to turn to God. Then the Prophet says, --- Keep mercy, or kindness and judgement He begins with the second table, and then he adds piety towards God. But he lays down two things only, in which he included the whole teaching of the second table. For what is God's design, from the fifth to the last commandment, but to teach us to shape our life according to the rule of love? We are then taught in the second table of the law how we ought to act towards our brethren; or if one wishes to have a shorter summary, in the second table of the law are shown the mutual duties of men. But the Prophet begins here with the second part of the law; for the Prophets are not wont strictly to observe order, Nor do they always observe a regular method; but it is enough with them to mention the main things by which they explain their subject; and hence, it is no wonder that the Prophet here, according to his usual manner, mentions love in the first place, and then goes on

to the worship of God. This order, as I have said, is not indeed either natural or legitimate; but this is of no importance; nay, it was not without the best reason that the Prophets usually did this; for repentance is better tested by the observance of the second table, than by that of divine worship. For as hypocrites dissemble, and hide themselves with wonderful coverings, the Lord applies a touchstone, and this he does whenever he draws them to the light, and exposes to public view their frauds, robberies, cruelty, perjuries, thefts, and such like vices. Since, then, hypocrites can be better convicted by the second table of the law, the Lord rightly appeals to this when he speaks of repentance; as though he said, ``Let it now be made evident what your repentance is, whether it be feigned or sincere; for if you act justly and uprightly towards your neighbours, if you observe equity and rectitude, it is a sure evidence of your repentance.''

At the same time, the Prophet overlooks not the worship of God; for he adds, --- Hope always in thy God By the word, hope, he first requires faith, and then prayer, which arises from it, and thanksgiving, which necessarily follows. Thus the whole worship of God is briefly included, as a part for the whole, in the word, hope. The meaning of the Prophet then is, that Israel, forsaking their own superstitions, should recumb on the one true God, and place all their salvation on him, that they should fly to him, and ascribe to him alone the praise due for all blessings. By so doing, they would restore the pure worship of God, and cast away all their adulterous superstitions. He had spoken already of the second table of the law.

We hence see that repentance is nothing else but a reformation of the whole life according to the law of God. For God has explained his will in his law; and as much as we depart or deviate from it, so much we depart from the Lord. But when we turn to God, the true proof is, when we amend our life according to his law, and begin with worshipping him spiritually, the main part of which worship is faith, from which proceeds prayer; and when, in addition to this, we act kindly and justly towards our neighbours, and abstain from all injuries, frauds, robberies, and all kinds of wickedness. This is the true evidence of repentance.

But while the Prophet exhorted the Israelites to repentance, he adds, that such was their perverseness, that it was done without any fruit. Canaan! he says; I read this by itself; for what some consider to be understood is frigid, as, ``He was assimilated to, or was like Canaan, in whose hand,'' etc.. But, on the contrary, the Prophet here condemns the Israelites by one word; as though he said, that they were wholly aliens, and unworthy to be called the children of Abraham. And thus what we say is often abrupt, when we speak indignantly. The Prophet then calls them ``Canaan'' through indignation; which means this, ``Ye are not the children of Abraham; ye falsely boast of his name, which cannot be suitable to you; for ye are Canaan.''

He afterwards adds In his hand is the balance of fraud, he loves to plunder, or to spoil. Literally it is, he loves to spoil. But the sense is clear, that they loved to plunder; that is, they were carried away with all greediness to acts of robbery. It must first be noticed, that the Prophet here exposes to infamy the carnal descendants of Abraham by calling them Canaan, and this imputation is often to be met with in the

Prophets. And the reason why they were thus addressed was, that these senseless men were wont proudly to set up as their shield the distinction of their race. ``What! we are a holy people.'' Since by this pretence they rejected all the warnings of the Prophets, God casts back this reproach, ``Ye are not the children of Abraham; but ye are Canaan:'' as though he said, ``Nothing in that nation has as yet changed, the Israelites are always like themselves.'' The Lord had once cleansed the land of godless men: but when the descendants of Abraham became like the Canaanites, they were called the seed of Canaan; as though the same nation, which was there formerly, had still remained; for there was no difference in their manners, for they were equal or the same in depravity.

But the reason follows why he calls them the race of Canaan even because they carried in their hand a deceitful balance, and devoted themselves with all avidity to plunder. The deceitful balance may be extended to their dissimulations, fallacies, and falsehoods, by which God, as he had before complained, was surrounded; but as it immediately follows, He loves robberies, I prefer to understand here those two modes of doing injury which include almost every kind of wickedness; for men either craftily defraud when they injure others, or they do harm to their neighbours by open force. Since, then, they who wrong their neighbours do either openly injure them, or circumvent the simple by their frauds and crafty dealings, Hosea lays down here, in the first place, the deceitful balance, and then he adds their greediness in spoiling or plundering. It is then the same as if he had said that they were fraudulent, and that they were also robbers who proceeded with open violence. He means that they were, without law or any restraint, addicted to acts of wrong and injustice, and were so intent on doing mischief, as to do it either by craft or by open force. There is then no wonder that they were called an uncircumcised race. Why? Because they had nothing to do with God, inasmuch as they had thus departed from his law; yea, they abhorred kindness and mercy. It also follows that they were void of all piety, since they were thus unmindful of all equity towards their neighbours. This is the meaning.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou appearest not now to us in shadows and types, as formerly to the holy fathers, but clearly and plainly in thy only-begotten Son, --- O grant, that we may be wholly given to the contemplation of thine image, which thus shines before us; and that we may in such a manner be transformed into it, as to make increasing advances, until at length, having put off all the filth of our flesh, we be fully conformed to that pure and perfect holiness which dwells in Christ, as in him dwells the fulness of all blessings and thus obtain at last a participation of that glory which our Lord has procured for us by his resurrection. Amen.

Lecture Thirty-third

Hosea 12:8

8. And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.

8. Et dixit Ephraim, Attamen ditatus sum; inveni opes mihi: in omnibus laboribus meis non invenient mihi iniquitatem, quia scelus (vel, piaculum.)

Here God complains by his Prophet, that the Israelites flattered themselves in their vices, because their affairs succeeded prosperously and according to their wishes: and it is a vice too common, that men felicitate themselves as long as fortune, as they commonly say, smiles on them, thinking that they have God then propitious to them. Since then the condition of the people was such, they despised all the Prophets and their reproofs. Of this hardihood the Lord now complains. Ephraim has said I am yet become rich There is an emphasis to be noticed in the adversative particle {אך} ``ach''. It is sometimes in Hebrew a simple affirmative; but here the Prophet meant to express another thing, even this, that the Israelites laughed at all reproofs, because God seemed to be propitious to them, as though he manifested his favour by prosperity. ``I am, however, become rich; and therefore I care nothing for what the Prophets may say, for I am contented with my lot.'' This, as I have said, is a common evil; and hence this passage ought to be carefully noted, lest when the Lord spares us for a time, we may think that we are innocent before him; for there is nothing more to be feared than the dazzling of our eyes by a prosperous and desirable state of things. Though the Lord then may bear with us, and not immediately draw forth his vengeance against us, but, on the contrary, cherish us as it were kindly in his bosom; yet if he reproves us by his word, we ought to attend to his threatenings.

But they further add, All my labours shall not find iniquity, or, they shall not find iniquity in all my labours. Many read simply as the words are, ``My labours shall not find iniquity:'' but as the expression seems stiff, I have tried to render it smoother, as others also have done, ``They shall not find iniquity in all my labours.'' This boasting went farther, for the Prophet shows that the people were not only secure, because the Lord gave them some tokens of his paternal favour; but that they were also inebriated with this impious confidence, that God would not have favoured them had they not been exempt from every fault and vice: and this second clause ought to be carefully noticed. Now it is a depravity that is by no means to be endured, when men begin to despise God, because he deals kindly with them, and when they abuse his levity so as to condemn all his teaching and all his threatening; this is indeed a very great perversion: but when to all this is added such a pride, that ungodly and reprobate men persuade themselves that they are just, because God does not immediately punish them, --- this is, as it were, a diabolical madness; and yet we see that it is a common thing. For godless men are not only proud of their wealth, they are not only inflated with their own power; but they also think that God is in some way under obligations to them. ``Why! it must be that God regards me innocent, and pure from every vice, for he favours me: he then does not find in me what is worthy of punishment.'' Thus the wicked raise up their horns against God, while he indulges them, and appears not so severe towards them as they have deserved.

When at the present day we perceive these evils prevailing among the greater portion of mankind, there is no reason to feel astonished: but we ought at the same time to profit by the instruction of the Prophet, so that we may not be blinded by prosperity, and despise reproofs, and flatter ourselves in our sin; and also, that we may not accumulate for ourselves a store of God's wrath, when he deals kindly with us. Let us not then abuse his forbearance; let us not think that we are innocent

before him, because he does not immediately execute his judgements; but let us rather learn to make a scrutiny of ourselves, and to shake off our vices, so that we may humble ourselves under his hand, though he restrains himself from inflicting punishment. This is the application of the present doctrine.

But we must notice what the Prophet adds, They shall not find iniquity in my labours; that is, iniquity shall not be found in my labours, because this is wickedness or a crime requiring expiation. I wonder that interpreters explain this place so frigidly; for they say, that there shall not be found in my labours iniquity or sin. But the Prophet does not set down a copulative, but uses the particle {אשר}, asher, which is to be taken here exegetically. And the meaning is, that hypocrites, while they claim to themselves the praise of innocence, for the sake of dissembling, detest ostensibly every wickedness and crime. ``Iniquity shall not be found in my labours, for this is wickedness; far be it that I should be discovered to be a wicked person in my doings; for I am without fraud in all my dealings.'' But is this the case? By no means; but as they judge of God's favour by prosperous fortune, they think that God would not be so kind to them unless he regarded them as just and pure. Hence we see how securely hypocrites mock God, when they begin to despise his teaching and warnings. We need not then wonder that at this day so much perverseness prevails everywhere in the world. But let us also use this mode of teaching which the Prophet sets before us. Let us now proceed ---

Hosea 12:9

9. And I that am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast.

9. Ego autem Jehova Deus tuus a terra Aegypti: habitare te faciam in tabernaculis, sicut diebus conventus.

In the first clause God reproaches the Israelites for having forgotten the benefit of his redemption, the memory of which ought ever to have prevailed and flourished among them. I yet, he says, am thy God from the land of Egypt; that is, ``It is strange that you are so forgetful that your redemption does not come to your mind, which yet ought to be well known, and be ever, as it were, before your eyes.'' That was, as we know, a memorable instance of God's kindness. But when he says that he is the God of that people from the land of Egypt, he points out the end of redemption, as though he said, ``I redeemed thee for this end, that thou mightest be forever bound to me.'' For we know that when he delivered that people from their cruel tyranny, he at the same time acquired for himself an eternal kingdom; he was then sanctified in his elect people. The end of redemption is then to be observed in the words of the Prophet, ``I am,'' he says, ``thy God from the land of Egypt; how otherwise couldest thou have come forth from thy grave?'' For they were like the dead, when God stretched out his hand to them. From the land of Egypt then I am thy God, which means this: ``Since thou hast been so wonderfully restored from death to life by my favour, am not I thy God from that day? Thou owest then thyself and all thine to me; for I purchased thee for myself as a peculiar possession. When now thou detest petulantly to reject my Prophets, who speak in my name, it is surely an ingratitude not to be endured, that thou forgettest thy redemptions and the end for which I made

known to thee my power and grace.''

But as to the second clause, interpreters vary; some explain it in this way, that God would not cease to show mercy to the Israelites, however unworthy they were, I will make thee to dwell in thy tabernacles; and they take tabernacles, not strictly proper, for houses. Then they say, according to the days of Moed, that is, of ancient agreement, or, according to appointed days; for God had promised to give the land of Canaan to the posterity of Abraham for their perpetual rest. But this exposition seems not suitable. Others say, that the Israelites are here reproved, because they neglected the command of God, who had instituted a festal-day, on which they were to commemorate yearly their redemption. We indeed know that there was the annual feast of tabernacles: so they think the meaning of the Prophet to be this ``I not only once redeemed thee, but I also wished that there should be a memorial of this favour; and for what purpose have I commanded you to keep a yearly festival, except that ye might retain in your memory what otherwise might have been forgotten? But I have effected nothing by this rite, for I am now rejected, and my prophets possess no authority among you.'' But this sense also is frigid. Some think that the Prophet here threatens the Israelites, as though he said, ``God will again drive you out, that you may dwell in tents as you did formerly in the desert.'' Though I do not reject this opinion, yet I think there is something more emphatical in the Prophet's words, that is, that God here says in an indirect way, that there was need of a new redemption, that he might bind the people more to himself; as though he said, ``I see that you are unmindful of my former redemption; for I see that you esteem it as nothing, as if it were obsolete; I must then lose all my labour, except the memory of my ancient favour be renewed: I will therefore make thee to dwell again in tents. It is necessary to eject thee again from thy heritage, and to restore thee again, and that in a manner unusual and least expected, that thou mayest understand that I am thy Redeemer.

We now then apprehend what the Prophet meant. After God had said that he was the God of Israel from the land of Egypt, he then adds, ``Inasmuch as your former redemption has lost all its influence through your wicked forgetfulness, I will become again your Redeemer; I will therefore make thee to abide or dwell in tents as formerly; as your first redemption avails nothing, I will add a second, that you may at length repent, and know how much you are indebted to me.'' The days of Moed he takes for their manner of proceeding in the desert as described by Moses; for they assembled together for sacrifices from their camps. Hence God does not speak here of the convention he had made with his people, as if he pointed out some perpetual compact; but he calls those the days of Moed on which the Israelites were assembled, when they were located in their camps according to the account given by Moses. It now follows ---

Hosea 12:10

10. I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

10. Et locutus sum super Prophetas, et ego visionem multiplicavi, et in manu Prophetarum assimilavi (vel, similitudines posui.)

The Prophet amplifies the sin of the people in having always obstinately opposed

God, so that they were without any pretext of ignorance: for men, we know, evade God's dreadful judgement as long as they can plead either ignorance or thoughtlessness. The Prophet denies that the people had fallen through want of information, for they had been often, nay, continually warned by the Prophets. It then appears that this people were become, as it were, wilfully rebellious against God; for they had ever despised the Prophets, not once or twice, but when the Lord sent them in succession: I have spoken, he says, upon my prophets, or, by my Prophets; for {עַל}, ol, is variously taken: `I have spoken upon my Prophets,' that is, I have deposited with them the doctrine which ought to have restored you to the right way; and not only so, but I have multiplied visions; it has not been in one way that I have tried to gather you, but I have accumulated many visions: and then he says, In the hand of Prophets I have placed similitudes; that is, I have endeavoured in every way possible to restore you to a sound mind; for God speaks after the manner of men. He might indeed, if he chose, effect this by the secret movement of his Spirit; but it is enough to take away every excuse from men to allege the fact, that they obey not the word, and offer not themselves to God as submissive and teachable, when he by his Prophets cohorts them to repentance. It is then an enhancing of sin worthy of being noticed, when God remonstrates, and says, that he had uselessly spent all his efforts to collect the dispersed Israel, though he had constantly employed the labours of his Prophets.

But this reproach may be also applied to us at this day; yea, whatever the Prophet has hitherto said may justly be turned against us. For we see how the world hardens itself against all warnings; and we see also how long the Lord suspends his judgements, and tolerates men who scoff at his forbearance. Then the same depravity rages now in the world, which the Prophet describes in this place. Besides, God has not only redeemed us from Egypt, but from the lowest hell, and we know that we have been redeemed by Christ for this end, --- that we may be wholly devoted to God; for Christ died and rose again for this purpose, --- that he might be the Lord of the living and of the dead. But we see how much is the perverseness of men, and how with impunity they grow wanton against God. Who among us remember that they are no longer their own, because they have been purchased by the blood of Christ? Few think of this. And not only this only true and perpetual redemption ought to be kept in mind by us; for the Lord again redeemed us when we were sunk in the gulf of Popery; and daily also does he renew the same kindness towards us; and yet we are so forgetful, that often the grace of God is not remembered by us. We now see how necessary is this doctrine even for our age.

Besides, God, as I have already said, ceases not daily to stimulate and urge us; he multiplies prophecies and similitudes; that is, he in various ways accommodates himself to us; for by similitudes he means all forms of teaching. And doubtless we see that God in a manner transforms himself in his word, for he speaks not according to his own majesty, but as he sees to be suitable to our capacities and weakness; for the Scriptures set before us various representations, which show to us the face of God. Since God then thus accommodates himself to our rudeness, how great is our ingratitude, when no fruit follows? Let us then remember that the Prophet

so reproved the men of his age, that he also speaks to us at this day. Let us now proceed ---

Hosea 12:11

11. Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields.

11. An in Gilead iniquitas? (vel, an Gilead coepit peccare?) certe vanitas (vel, mendacium) fuerunt in Gilgal (alii disjungunt istud {בגלגל}, ut contexant cum sequentibus) boves sacrificarunt, etiam altaria eorum sicut acervi super sulcos agrorum.

It is an ironical question, when the Prophet says, Is there iniquity in Gilead? and he laughs to scorn their madness who delighted themselves in vices so gross, when their worship was wholly spurious and degenerated. When they knew that they were perfidious towards God, and followed a worship alienated from his law, they yet were so perverse, that they proudly refused all admonitions. Since then they were blinded in their vices, the Prophet asks them ironically, Is there iniquity in Gilead? They are as yet doubtful, forsooth, whether they are guilty before God, whether they bear any blame. Surely, he says, they are vanity; that is, ``How much soever they may seek specious pretences for themselves, and deny that they are conscious of doing wrong, and also introduce many reasons for doubt, that they may not be forced to own their sin, they yet, he says, are guilty of falsehood; all their glosses contain nothing solid, but they are mere disguises, which avail nothing before God.'' We now then apprehend the meaning of the Prophet.

But there is no doubt but that he also condemns here their perverted worship, by which the Israelites at the same time thought that they rendered the best service to God. But obedience, we know, is better than all sacrifices. The Prophet then inveighs here against all fictitious modes of worship, devised without God against the authority of God's law. But at the same time, as we have just hinted, he indirectly exposes their thoughtlessness for imagining themselves excusable, provided they set up their own good intention, as it is commonly done, and say, that they built altars with no other design than to make known everywhere the name of God, to preserve among themselves some tokens of religion. Since, then, they thus raised up a cloud of smoke to cover their impiety, the Prophet says, ``They indeed still inquire, as of a doubtful thing, whether there is iniquity in Gilead; let them inquire and dispute; surely,'' he says, ``they are vain;'' literally, surely they have been falsehood: but he means that they foolishly brought forward those frivolous excuses, by which they tried to escape the crime and its punishment. How was it that they were vain? Because God values his own law more than all the glosses of men, and he will have all men to obey, without dispute, his own word: but when they thus licentiously depart from his commandments, it is what he cannot endure. They are then false and deceive themselves, who think that their own inventions are of any value before God. He then lays down their crimes

In Gilgal, he says, have they sacrificed oxen Jerome translates, ``They sacrifice to oxen,'' and thinks that the Israelites are reprehended here for sacrificing to the calves: but this seems too remote from the words of the Prophet. The Prophet then

mentions their sin --- that they sacrificed oxen and multiplied altars. And yet it seemed to be a diligence worthy of praise, that they increased many altars, that they worshipped God everywhere, that they spared neither expense nor labour, that they were not content with few sacrifices, but added a great number; --- all this seemed to deserve no common praise: but the Lord, as it has been already said, valued not these corrupt practices; for he would have himself to be alone worshipped by his people, and would have their piety to be attested by this single evidence --- their obedience to his word. When we then turn aside from God's word, nay, when we with loose reins abandon ourselves to new inventions, though we may plausibly profess that our object is to worship God, yet all this is a vain and fallacious pretence, as the Prophet here declares.

Jerome is mistaken in thinking that Gilgal was a town in the tribe of Judah; and the supposition cannot suit this place: for Judah, we know, was then free from those gross pollutions; Judah was not as yet polluted with the defilements which the Prophet here condemns in the kingdom of Israel. It is then certain, that Gilgal was a town of Israel; and we know that a celebrated temple and altar were there: hence he especially points out this place.

But he afterwards adds, Their altars are as heaps on the furrows of the field There was then we know, only one legitimate altar; and God would not have sacrifices offered to him, except in one place. Hence the more active the Israelites were in multiplying altars, the more they provoked the vengeance of God: how much soever it was their purpose to worship God, yet God spurned that foolish affectedness. We then see why the Prophet here compares the altars then erected in the kingdom of Israel to heaps of stones; as though he said ``As one gathers stones into a heap, when the land is stony, that he may drive his plough more easily, so every one forms an altar for himself, as though he were raising up a hillock in his own field: thus it comes, that they perversely corrupt the pure and lawful worship which I have appointed.'' We now then understand the meaning of the Prophet to be, that superstitious men gain nothing, when they boldly and openly boast that they worship God; for whatever disguise they may invent for themselves and others, the Lord yet abominates every thing that is contrary to his word: and our mode Of worshipping God is alone true and lawful, when we only follow what he prescribes, and allow to ourselves nothing but what is according to his command and appointment. This is the meaning. Let us proceed ---

Hosea 12:12-13

12. And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep

12. Et fugit Jacob in agrum Syriae, et servivit Israel in uxore (hoc est, pro uxore,) et pro uxore custodivit (id est, custos fuit gregis.)

13. And by a prophet the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.

13. Et per Prophetam eduxit (ascendere fecit) Jehova Israelem ex Aegypto, et per Prophetam servatus est.

The Prophet now employs another kind of reproof, --- that the Israelites did not

consider from what source they had proceeded, and were forgetful of their origin. And the Prophet designedly touches on this point; for we know how boldly and proudly the people boasted of their own eminence. For as a heathen gloried that he was an Athenian, so also the Jews think that all we are brute animals, and imagine that they have a different origin from the rest of mankind, because they are the posterity of Abraham. Since then they were blinded by such a pride as this God meant to undeceive them, as he does here: ``Jacob your father, who was he? What was his condition? What was his nobility? What was his power? What was his dignity and eminence according to the flesh? Yea, truly, he was a fugitive from his own country: had he always lived at home, his father was but a sojourner; but he was constrained to flee into Syria. And how splendidly did he live there? He was indeed with his uncle; but he was treated no better than if he had been some worthless slave: He served for a wife And how did he serve? He was a keeper of sheep. Go then now and boast of your dignity, as if ye were nobler than others, as if your condition were better than that of the common sort of people.'' God then brings against them the condition of their father, in whose name they gloried, but who was an abject person and a fugitive, who was like a worthless slave, who was a keeper of sheep; who, in short, had nothing which could be deemed reputable among men.

And God, he says, brought you up by a Prophet from Egypt, and by a Prophet you have been preserved This was, as it were, their second nativity. Some think that the comparison is between their first origin and their deliverance; as though Hosea had said, ``Though you were born of a very poor and ignoble man, yet God has favoured you with singular privilege; for he gave Moses to be the minister of your liberation.'' But in my judgement the Prophet speaks in a more simple way; for, first, he shows what was the first origin of the people, that they were from Jacob; and then he shows what was their second origin; for God had again begotten them when he brought them out of Egypt. And they were there, as it is well known, very miserable, and they did not come out by their own valour, they did not attain for themselves their liberty; but Moses alone extended his hand to them, having been sent for this end by God. Since the case was so, it was strange that they now provoked God, as he says in the last verse, by their altars.

And it very frequently occurs in the Prophets, that God reminds the Israelites whence or from what source they had arisen, ``Look to your origin, to the stone from which ye were cut off; for Abraham was alone and childless, and his wife also was barren;'' and yet God multiplied their race, (Isaiah 51:2.) This was said, because the Israelites did not look to God, but in their adversity despaired, when no way appeared by which they could be restored; but in their prosperity they became proud, and regarded as nothing the favour of God. We then see what the Prophet had in view. The Lord says, ``Acknowledge what you owe to me; for I have chosen Jacob your father, and have not chosen him because he was eminent for his great dignity in the world; for he was a fugitive and a keeper of sheep, and served for his wife. I afterwards redeemed you from the land of Egypt; and in that coming forth there was nothing that you did; there is no reason why you should boast that liberation was obtained by your velour; for Moses alone was my servant in that deliverance.

I did then beget you the second time, when I redeemed you. How great is your ingratitude, when you do not own and worship me as your Redeemer?'' We now then see that the Prophet thus treated the people of Israel, that it might in every way appear that they were unworthy of so many and so great benefits bestowed on them by God; for they had perverted all the works of God, and so perverted them, that they did not think that any thing, belonged to him, and they returned no thanks to God; nay, they extolled themselves, as if God had never conferred on them any kindness.

But I will not dwell on the history of Jacob, for it is not necessary for elucidating the meaning of the Prophet, and it is well known: it is enough to refer only to what is suitable to this place. Jacob then fled into the country of Syria; and then he says, Israel served for a wife He mentions the name, Israel, after Jacob. The name, Israel, was noble and memorable; yea, it was given by God to the holy patriarch: but at the same time Jacob did not in himself or in his own person excel; he nevertheless served, and was in a most humble condition, and he served for a wife; that is, that he might have a wife; for we know how he made an agreement with his uncle Laban.

Further, By a Prophet he brought them out of Egypt This was their second nativity: and by a Prophet Israel was preserved There is an allusion here to the word {שמר}, shimer; for I take the word {נשמר}, nushimer, passively. He had said before that Jacob kept sheep; and he says now, {נשמר}, nushimer, kept was Israel by a Prophet; as though he said, ``Ye now see that God has given you a reason for humility in your father, since he was suffered to be so miserably distressed; and shen he preserved you beyond the hope of men, and by no human means except by Moses, who was also a fugitives and who came forth as from a cave, for he was also a keeper of sheep. Since, then, ye have been thus kept by the favour of God, how comes it that your present condition fascinates you, and that ye consider not that you were once redeemed by the Lord for this end, that ye might be wholly devoted to him forever?'' Now he adds --- (I will also run over this verse, for there will be no lecture to-morrow, nor the day after) ---

Hosea 12:14

14. Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.

14. Provocavit Ephraim excelsis suis, et sanguis ejus super eum manebit (vel, fundetur:) et opprobrium ejus reddet illi Dominus suus.

The Prophet says first, that Ephraim had provoked God by his high places Some, however, take the word {תמרורים}, tamerurim, for bitternesses. Then it is, ``Israel or Ephraim have provoked God to bitterness.'' But since this word in other places as in the thirty-first of Jeremiah, is taken for high places and as it clearly appears that the Prophet here inveighs avowedly against Israel and their vicious worship, I doubt not but that he points out these high places in which the Israelites appointed their false and impious modes of worship. Ephraim then have provoked him with their high places: [88] Ephraim having in so many ways immersed themselves in their

[88] Calvin is not correct as to the meaning of this word. There is no instance in which it means "high places;" in Jeremiah 31:21, to which reference is made, it means obelisks or pillars set up as way-marks. There is no doubt but that the word signifies here what is expressed in our

superstitions, provoked God in their high places.

Then his blood shall remain on him. As the word {נתש}, nuthesh, signifies ``to pour out,'' and signifies also to ``remain,'' some render it, ``His blood shall remain;'' others ``Shall be poured upon him.'' But this makes but a little difference as to what is meant; for the Prophet intends to show, that Ephraim would have to suffer the punishment of their impiety; as though he said, ``They shall not at last escape from the hand of God, they shall receive the wages of their iniquities.''

And his reproach shall his Lord return unto him Here he calls God himself the Lord of Israel, though Israel had shaken off the yoke, and alienated themselves from the service of God. They cannot, he says, escape the authority of God, though they have spurned his law; though they have become wanton in their superstitions, they shall yet know that they remain under the hand and power of God, they shall know that they effect nothing by this their petulance; though they thus wander after their abominations, yet the Lord will not lose his right, which he had obtained for himself by redeeming Israel. Their Lord then shall render to them their own reproach, of which they are worthy.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we have not only been created by thee, but when thou hast placed us in this world, thou hast also enriched us with abundance of all blessings, --- O grant, that we may not transfer to others the glory duo to thee, and that especially since we are daily admonished by thy word, and even severely reproved, we may not with an iron hardness resist, but render ourselves pliable to thee, and not give ourselves up to our own devices, but follow with true docility and meekness, that rule which thou hast prescribed in thy word, until at length having put off all the remains of errors, we shall enjoy that blessed light, which thou hast prepared for us in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

version. Gesenius says, that it is to be taken here adverbially, and with him Newcome and most critics agree. Horsley renders the clause thus, — “Ephraim has given bitterest provocation.”

Hosea 13

Chapter 13

Lecture Thirty-fourth

Hosea 13:1

1. When Ephraim spake trembling, he exalted himself in Israel; but when he offended in Baal, he died.

1. Quam loqueretur Ephraim, tremor: extulit se ipse in Israel, et peccavit in Baal, et mortuus est.

Interpreters agree not in their view of this verse. Some say that trembling was excited in Israel when Ephraim, that is, Jeroboam, who was born of that tribe, exhorted the people to worship the calves. By the word {רתת}, retat, ``trembling,'' they understand, that the people were so astonished, that they without thought immediately obeyed the will, or rather the humour, of their impious king. And if this sense be approved, the word, trembling, may be in another way explained, even in this, --- that the people did not immediately embrace that perverted worship, but dreaded, as is wont to be the case with regard to new things, and which seem to have nothing reasonable in their favour. But these expounders wholly depart, in my judgement, from the intention of the Prophet; for, on the contrary, he sets forth here the twofold state of the kingdom of Israel, that it might hence be manifest that the ten tribes had been through their own fault rejected by the Lord, and had thus fallen from that dignity unto which the Lord had raised them.

He therefore says, When Ephraim spake formerly, his voice dreaded, [89] and he raised himself in Israel; that is, among the whole race of Abraham. But now he is dead, or is fallen, after he has begun to sin in Baal. Then, in the first sentence, the Prophet records the honours with which God had favoured that tribe. Ephraim, we know, was the younger of the sons of Joseph. Manasseh ought not only to have had

[89] Horsley appears to have adopted Calvin's view of this sentence. His version is this, — "When Ephraim spake, there was dread."

the pre-eminence, but also to have reigned alone in that family; for the people were divided into twelve tribes. But God intended to raise up two chiefs in the house of Joseph, and preferred the younger to the first-begotten. Hence Ephraim, who had increased in number and power, and had at length obtained the royal dignity, ought to have acknowledged the singular favour of God. And by way of reproach, the Prophet here says, that all trembled at the single voice of Ephraim; that is, when he became endued with authority, and then, that he was exalted in Israel. He ought to have been deemed of no account, he ought to have been inferior to his brother, who was the first-born, and yet he excelled all the tribes. Since, then, God had conferred so much honour on the tribe of Ephraim, the more grievous was his fault, that he afterwards had fallen away unto idols; yea, that he began his reign with superstition, when God was pleased to choose and anoint Jeroboam king. And surely that he, when raised beyond all hope to the throne by the hand of God, should, instead of testifying his gratitude, immediately corrupt the whole worship of God, this was extremely inconsistent.

But the Prophet says, in the second place, that they died from the time they had thus fallen away from true and lawful worship, in order that they might understand that they received the just reward of their impiety when God's hand was opposed to them, when they were oppressed by adversity. We now perceive the obvious meaning, of the Prophet to be, that the Israelites formerly flourished, especially the tribe of Ephraim, from whom Jeroboam arose, so that, by their voice alone, they subdued all their neighbours, and that beyond the expectation of men, they suddenly emerged and erected a new kingdom among the children of Abraham.

He afterwards adds, that after they had sinned by Baal, they became dead: for God deprived the tribe of Ephraim of the power with which he had before adorned him, so that they were but little short of being destroyed. For though his kingdom had not wholly fallen, it had yet come to such an extremity that the Prophet might justly say that they, who were so far removed from their former state, were dead. But when he says that they sinned by Baal, he does not mean that this was the beginning of their idolatry; for Jeroboam at first made the calves, and it was his successor who built Baal, and borrowed that superstition, as it is supposed, from the neighbouring Sidonians. But God records here what is more grievous, and less excusable, --- that the Israelites polluted themselves with the filth of the Gentiles, so that they differed nothing from the profane and unbelieving, who had no acquaintance with sound doctrine.

We are moreover taught in this place, that when kings are endued with any authority, when they are strong in power, all this comes from God; for unless God strikes terror into men, no one would receive the yoke of another, at least all would desire equality, or one would raise himself above others. It is then certain, that when any one excels among many in power, this is done through the secret purpose of God, who constrains to order the common people, and causes them not to deny obedience to the command of one man. This is what Hosea now teaches, when he upbraids the tribe of Ephraim with respect to this terror; for if Ephraim had been formidable through his own power, there would have been no room for the Prophet's

reproof: but as this was the peculiar gift of God, the Prophet justly says, that the tribe of Ephraim were in great honour until they had fallen into superstition. Let us now proceed ---

Hosea 13:2

2. And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves.

2. Et nunc addunt ad peccandum (hoc est, pergunt peccare,) et fecerunt sibi conflatile ex argento suo, secundum intelligentiam suam, idola opus artificum omnis (vel, omne:) ipsis ipsi dicunt sacrificantes hominem, vitulos osculentur.

In this verse the Prophet amplifies the wickedness of the people, and says, that they had not only in one day cast aside the pure worship of God, and entangled themselves in superstitions; but that they had been obstinate in their own depravity. They have added, he says, to their sin, and have made a molten thing of their silver When Israel, as we have said, departed from the worship of God, they made calves, and made them under a specious appearance; but when many superstitions were added, one after another, there was, as it were, an accumulation of madness, as if the Israelites designedly wished to subvert the law of God, and to show that they cared nothing for the only true God, by whom they had been redeemed. This is the reason why the Prophet says that they made progress in wickedness, and observed no moderation in sinning, and this is what usually happens, unless God draws men back. As soon as they fall away, they rush headlong into evil; for they take a greater liberty in sinning, after they have turned their back on God.

Hence this reproof of the Prophet ought to be noticed, for he inveighs against the obstinate wickedness of Israel; and says, that they made for themselves of their silver a molten thing As we have seen above, they abused the gifts of God by devoting to superstition what the Lord had destined for their use. The end for which God has bestowed silver, we know, is, that men may carry on commerce with one another, and apply it also to other useful purposes. But when they make to themselves gods of silver, there is an astonishing stupidity in their ingratitude, for they pervert the order of nature, and forget that silver is given for another end, and that is as we have said for their use. The Prophet at the same time intimates, that the Israelites were less excusable, inasmuch as when they were enriched, they became proud of their wealth. Satiety, we know, is the cause of wantonness, as, it will be shortly stated again.

But what the Prophet adds ought to be especially observed, According to their own understanding Here he severely reproves the Israelites, because they had not subordinated all their thoughts to God, but, on the contrary, followed what pleased themselves. It was then according to their own invention The word which the Prophet uses is not unsuitable, though ``understanding,'' the word which the Prophet adopts, is among the Hebrews taken in a good sense. But what is treated of here is the worship of God, with respect to which all the prudence, all the reason, all the wisdom of men, and, in short, all their senses, ought to be suspended: for if, in this case, they of themselves adopt any thing, be it ever so little, they inevitably vitiate the

worship of God. How so? Because obedience, we know, is better than all sacrifices. This then is the rule, as to the right worship of God, --- that men must become foolish, that they must not allow themselves to be wise, but that they are only to give ear to God, and to follow what he commands. But when men's presumption intrudes, so that they devise a new mode of worship, they then depart from the true God, and worship mere idols. The Prophet then by the word, understanding, condemns here whatever pleases the judgement and reason of men; as though he said, ``The true rule of religion, as to the worship of God, is, that nothing human is to be mingled, that no one is to bring forward what is his own, or what seems good to himself.'' In short, the understanding of men is here opposed to the command of God; as though the Prophet said, ``One great difference between the true worship of God and all fictitious and degenerated modes of worship, is obedience to the word of God; if we be wise according to our own judgement, all we do is corrupt.'' How so? Because whatever men devise of themselves is a pollution of divine worship. Hence Paul, in Colossians 2, [90] refutes all the fancies of men by this one argument, ``They are,'' he says, ``the traditions of men, though they may have the show of wisdom.''

We now apprehend what the Prophet meant, and why he added the word ``understanding;'' it was, that the Israelites might learn, that all the worship which was in use among them, was perverted and vicious; for it was not founded on the command of God, but flowed from a different source, even the understanding of men. It then follows, as we have said before, that in religion nothing is to be attempted by us, but we are to follow this one law in worshipping God --- simply to obey his word.

He afterwards adds, Idols, the work of artificers altogether The Prophet, in the second place, derides the grossness which had fascinated the minds of the people, as they worshipped in the place of God the works of men. For it is usual with all the Prophets, in order to render the stupidity of men as it were palpable, to show that it is wholly unreasonable to worship idols; for a material cannot with any propriety be worshipped. When there is before us a great mass or a great heap of gold or silver, no one imagines that there is in it any divinity: when one passes through a wood, he transfers not to trees the glory due to God; and the same may be said of stones. But when the hand of the artificer is applied, the plate of gold begins to be a god; so also the trunk of a tree seems to put on the glory of God, when it receives a certain form from the workman; and the same is the case with other things. Now it is extremely absurd to suppose that an artificer, as soon as he has hewn some wood, or as soon as he has melted gold or silver, can make a god, and convey divinity to a dead thing; and yet it is well known that this is thought everywhere to be the case. Superstitious men allege in excuse, that this does not proceed from the hand of the artificer, but that as they wish for some sign of God's presence, and as they cannot otherwise set forth what God is, God is in that form. But this still remains true, that workmen by their skill make gods of lifeless things, to which no honour can belong. Since it is so, the Prophet now justly says, that what the people of Israel worshipped was the work of artifices; and he said this, that they might know that they became shamefully foolish, when they left the true God, the Creator of heaven and earth,

[90] Colossians 2:22,23. — fj.

and prostrated themselves before idols made by hands.

But he adds, that they say to one another while they sacrifice men, Let them kiss the calves [91] Though this place is in various ways explained, I am yet content with the obvious meaning of the Prophet. He again derides them for exhorting one another to worship the calf: For by kissing he means by a figure a profession of worship or adoration, as it is evident from other parts of Scripture. It is said in 1 Kings, [92] I have preserved for myself seven thousand men, who have not bent the knee before Baal, nor kissed him. To kiss Baal then was a sign of reverence. And this practice, we see, has been retained by the superstitious, as the case is at this day with the Papists, who observe this special custom of kissing their idols. But what does the Prophet now say? They encourage one another, he says, in the worship of the calves, and in the meantime ``they sacrifice men''. The Prophet doubtless condemns here that abominable and savage custom of parents sacrificing their children to Moloch. It was utterly repugnant to the feeling of nature for parents to immolate their own children. For though this was once commanded to Abraham, we yet know that the design was, that God intended by this proof to try the obedience of his servant: but Abraham was not at last suffered to do what he purposed.

They then immolated men. If it was right to sacrifice men, surely such a service ought to have been rendered at least to the only true God. If it was lawful to sacrifice man for the sake of man, it was certainly ridiculous to do so to conciliate the calf; and it was especially strange, when parents hesitated not to appease dead statues by the blood of their children. This absurdity then the Prophet now points out as with the finger, that he might try to make the Israelites ashamed of their base conduct. ``See,'' he says, ``how brutish ye are; for ye immolate to the calves and kiss them, and more still, ye sacrifice men. Is there so much worthiness in the calf, that man, who far excels it, must be killed before it? Is not this wholly inconsistent with every thing like reason?'' We now understand what the Prophet meant. They say then one to another, while they immolate men, Let them kiss the calves

But we learn from this and similar places, that we ought to notice those absurdities in which wretched men involve themselves, when they are lost in their own devices, after having left the word of God: for this word is to be to us as a bridle to keep us from going astray with them in their monstrous devices; for when we observe these delirious things which even nature itself abhors, it is evident that God thereby restrains and preserves us as it were by his outstretched hand. With this design the Prophet now shows how stupid the Israelites were, and how prodigious was their frenzy when they kissed the calves with great reverence, and also sacrificed men. So at this day with respect to those under the Papacy, we ought not only to adopt this argument, that they departed from the true God when they sought for themselves new and strange modes of worship, without the warrant of his word, but we ought also to bear in mind that their puerilities are to be ascribed to the same cause. And we see how God has given them up to a reprobate mind, so that they throw aside no kinds of absurdities. And this consideration, as I have said, will serve to

[91] 'Let the sacrificers of men kiss the calves.' — Horsley.
[92] 1 Kings 19:18. — fj.

awaken those who are as yet healable, when they understand that they have been infatuated; having been in this manner admonished, they may return to the right way. And that we ourselves may give thanks to God, and detest more and more that filth in which we were for a time involved, and remember that there is nothing more to be dreaded than that the Lord should allow us loose reins, the very example of his vengeance as to all idolaters is made known to us; for as soon as they departed from the pure worship of God, they gave themselves up, as we have stated, to the most shameful stupidity. Let us proceed ---

Hosea 13:3

3. Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.

3. Propterea erunt quasi nubes matutina, quasi ros mane exoriens, transiens quasi palea quae ex area projicitur, et quasi fumus e fumario, (Nam {ארבה} accipitur hoc sensu: significat quidem fenestram, sed est vaporarium camini.)

The Prophet employs here four similitudes to show the condition of Israel. How much soever they flourished for a time, and might be deemed happy, their state would yet be fading and evanescent. They shall be, he says, as the morning cloud: though they be loftily proud, the Lord will yet shake off from them whatever power they may have. Secondly, they shall be as the dew that rises up in the morning --- having nothing substantial in them. Thirdly they shall be as the chaff which from the floor is driven by a whirlwind And, lastly they shall be, he says, as the smoke; for as the smoke produces thick darkness, and, after having gone out of the chimney, disperses and disappears, so these proud people, how much soever they may have praised themselves, would not continue in a permanent condition.

We hence conclude, that the Israelites were not so much like the dead, but that yet they had some power remaining in them: for God would have otherwise threatened to no purpose, that they should be made like a cloud, and the dew, and the chaff, and the smoke: but they had been already in a great measure consumed. And God denounces on them here utter destruction, that they might not think that they had already suffered the last punishment, and that they might not suppose that they could gather new strength: for proud men entertain vain confidence, through which they remove to a distance the judgement of God. Lest, then, they should delude themselves with such allurements, the Prophet here declares that their condition would be fading, such as would soon come to ruin. It follows ---

Hosea 13:4-5

4. Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.

4. Et ego Jehova Deus tuus e terra Aegypti, et Deum extra me non cognosces, et Servator nemo praeter me.

5. I did know thee in the wilderness, in the land of great drought.

5. Ego cognovi te in leserto, in terra siccitatum (hoc est, in terra arida.)

The Prophet now repeats the sentence which we have noticed in the last chapter for the sake of amplifying the sin of the people. For had they never known sound

doctrine, had they never been brought up in the law, there would have been some colour for alleviating their fault; because they might have excused themselves by saying, that as they had never known true religion, they had gone astray according to the common practice of men; but as they had from infancy been taught sound doctrine, as God had brought them up as it were in his own bosom, as they had learned from their first years what it was to worship God purely, when they thus retook themselves to the superstitions of the heathens, what could there be for an excuse for them? We then see the bearing of the complaint, when God says, that he had been the God of Israel from the land of Egypt

I am then, he says, Jehovah your God. By calling himself Jehovah, he glances at all their fictitious gods; as though he said ``I am doubtless justly, and in mine own rights your God; for I am of myself --- I am the Creator of the world, no one can take away my power: but whence have these their divinity, except from the madness of men?'' He says further, I am thy God, O Israel; that is, ``I have manifested myself to thee from the land of Egypt, from thy very nativity. When I redeemed thee from Egypt I brought thee out as it were from the womb to the light of life; for Egypt was to thee like the grave. Thou didst then begin to live, and to be some sort of people, when I stretched forth my hand to thee.''

And now also ought to be noticed what I have said before, that the people were redeemed on this condition, that they should devote themselves wholly to God. As we are at this day Christ's, and no one of us ought to live according to his own will, for Christ died and rose again for this end, that he might be the Lord of the living and of the dead: so also then, the Israelites had been redeemed by God, that they might offer themselves wholly to Him. And since God ruled by this right over the people of Israel, how shameful and inexcusable was their defections when the people wilfully abandoned themselves to the superstitions of the Gentiles?

A God, he says, besides me thou oughtest not to know These words the Prophet had not before used. This sentence, then, is fuller, for it more clearly explains the import of what he had said, that God had purchased Israel for himself by bringing them out of Egypt, and that is, that Israel ought to have been content with this one Redeemer, and not to seek for themselves other gods. A God, then, besides me thou shalt not know. For if this one God was sufficient for redeeming his people, what do the people now mean, when they wander, and seek aid here and there? For they ought to render to God the life received from him, which they now enjoy, and ought to acknowledge to be sufficiently safe under his protection. We now then see why this was added, Thou shalt not know a God besides me

A reason, confirmatory of this, follows: For no one, he says, is a Saviour except me The copulative {ו}, vau, ought to be regarded here as a causative, For no one, etc., or, Surely no one is a Saviour except me. And this is a remarkable passage; for we learn that the worship of God does not consist in words, but in faith, and hope, and prayer. The Papists of the present day think that they do not profane the worship of God, though they fly to statues, though they pray to dead men, though they look here and there for the accomplishment of their hopes. How so? Because they ever retain the only true God, that is, they do not ascribe the name of God to Christopher

or to Antony. The Papists think themselves free from all blame, since God retains his own name. But we see how differently the matter is regarded by the Lord. ``I am,'' he says, ``the only true God.'' How is this? ``Because I am the only Saviour: feign not to thyself another God, for thou shalt find none that will save thee.'' Then God puts an especial value on the honour that is due to him from hope and prayer; that is, when our soul recumbs on him alone, and when we seek and hope for salvation from no other but from him. We see then how useful is the doctrine contained in this passage, in which the Prophet clearly shows, that the Israelites acted absurdly and shamefully when they formed another god for themselves, for no Saviour, except the one true God, can be found.

He afterwards adds Thee I knew in the desert, in the land of droughts God here confirms the truth that the Israelites had acted very absurdly in having turned their minds to other gods, for he himself had known them. The knowledge here mentioned is twofold, that of men, and that of God. God declares that he had a care for the people when they were in the desert; and he designates his paternal solicitude by the term, knowledge: I knew thee; that is, ``I then chose thee a people for myself, and familiarly manifested myself to thee, as if thou were a near friend to me. But then it was necessary that I should have been also known by thee.'' This is the knowledge of men. Now when men are known by God, why do they not apply all their faculties, so that they may remain fixed on him? For when they divert them to other objects, they extinguish, as much as they can, this benefit of God. So also Paul speaks to the Galatians,

`After ye have known God, or rather after ye are known by him,' (Galatians 4:9.)

In the first clause, he shows that they had done very wickedly in retaking themselves to various devices after the light of the gospel had been offered to them: but he increases their sin by the next clause, when he says, `Rather after ye are known by him;' as though he said, ``God has anticipated you by his gratuitous goodness. Since, then, God has thus first known you, and first favoured you with his grace, how great and how shameful is now your ingratitude in not seeking to know him in return?'' We now then see why the Prophet added that the Israelites had been known by God in the desert, in the land of droughts

And there is an express mention made of the desert: for it was then necessary for the people to be sustained miraculously by the Lord; for except God had rained manna from heaven, and had also given water for drink, the people must have miserably perished. Since, then God had thus supported the people contrary to the usual course of nature, so that without his paternal care there could have been no hope of life, the Prophet now rightly adds, In the desert, in the land of droughts; that is, in that dry solitude, where not a grain of corn grew, so that the people could not live except God had, as it were, with his own hand, given them meat, and put it in their mouth. We now see that the extreme impiety of the people is here manifestly proved; for having been taught in God's law, and been encouraged by so many benefits, they yet went astray after profane superstitions. And the Prophet, at the same time, adds ---

Hosea 13:6

6. According to their pasture, so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me.

6. Juxta [93] pascua sua et satiati sunt, saturati sunt, et elevatum est cor ipsorum; propterea obliti sunt mei.

The Prophet shows here that the people were in every way intractable. He has indeed handled this argument in other places; but the repetition is not superfluous. After he had said that the people were ungrateful in not continuing in the service of their Redeemer, by whom they had been so kindly and bountifully treated in the desert, where they must have perished through famine and want, had not the Lord in an unwonted manner brought them help in their great necessity, he now adds, ``The Lord would have also allured you by other means, had you not been of a wholly wild and barbarous disposition: but it is hence manifest, that you are utterly disobedient; for after you have been brought out of the desert, you came to rich pastures.'' For the land of Israel is here compared to rich and fertile pastures; as though he said, ``God has placed you in an inheritance where you might eat to the full, as when a shepherd leads his sheep to a spot especially fertile.'' What did take place? To their pastures they came, and were filled; they were filled, and elevated became their heart, and they forgat me

Since, then, the Israelites had extinguished the memory of their redemption, after the Lord had fed them when hungry in the desert, and since in their fulness they rejected God, and shook off his yoke, and, like ferocious horses, kicked against him, it became evident that their nature was so unnameable, that they could by no means be reduced to obedience or submission. We shall defer the rest till tomorrow.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou dost so kindly call on us daily by thy voice, meekly and calmly to offer ourselves to be ruled by thee, and since thou hast exalted us to a high degree of honour by freeing us from the dread of the devil, and from that tyranny which kept us in miserable fear, and hast also favoured us with the Spirit of adoption and of hope, --- O grant, that we, being mindful of these benefits, may ever submit ourselves to thee, and desire only to raise our voice for this end, that the whole world may submit itself to thee, and that those who seem now to rage against thee may at length be brought, as well as we, to render thee obedience, so that thy Son Christ may be the Lord of all, to the end that thou alone mayest be exalted, and that we may be made subject to thee, and be at length raised up above, and become partakers of that glory which has been obtained for us by Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lecture Thirty-fifth

We observed in our yesterday's lecture, that the Israelites were condemned, be-

[93] A great number of MSS have {,{ב beth, instead of ,{כ} caph, before the word, ``pastures.'' But to connect the first two words in this verse with the last verse, as Bishop Horsley does, is certainly not right; for the two different times here evidently referred to are thereby confounded. Though Calvin in this, as in some other instances, does not settle the grammatical construction, he yet sets forth the real meaning of the passage. God says, that he knew the people of Israel, both in the desert and in ``their pastures;'' that is, in the fertile land of Canaan; and then he states the effect which their pastures had upon them. What favors the substitution of {ב} for {כ} is, that the former is used before ``desert,'' and ``the land of droughts,'' in the preceding verse. The verb ``to know'' is to be understood at the beginning of this verse. The two verses, 5 and 6, may be thus rendered: --- 5. I knew thee in the desert, In the land of droughts; 6. In their pastures also when they were filled; They were filled, and raised up was their heart; Hence they forgat me. The change of persons from ``thee'' to ``them'' is common throughout this book. --- Ed.

cause they were, when fed in rich pastures, like mettlesome horses; and this is what commonly happens. And even Moses foretold this in his song,

`My chosen, having become fat, kicked against me,'
(Deuteronomy 32:15.)

What the Prophet said was now fulfilled; fulness had produced ferocity in the people of Israel. According to their pastures, he says, they were filled; they were satiated, and their heart was elevated Ezekiel declares the same of Sodom; when their stomach was well filled they became proud, (Ezekiel 16:49.) But the Prophet speaks there of their cruelty towards men; for he says, that the Sodomites, while abounding in all blessings, were full of cruelty, so that they contemptuously despised the poor. But the prophet condemns here a worse thing in the people of Israel, for their heart was inflated with pride against God.

And there is, in the last place, a mention made of their forgetfulness of God. It is impossible, when men are blinded by a wilful self-confidence, but that they will cast aside every fear of God and every concern for religion. And this passage teaches us, that we ought to use our abundance temperately and frugally, and that we ought, in the first place, beware lest the bounty of God should introduce a forgetfulness of him. For it is an extreme perversion, that when the more largely God pours his gifts upon us, our hearts should be more narrow, and that his benefits should be like veils to cover our eyes. We ought then to labour, that the benefits of God may, on the contrary, renew the recollection of him in our minds: and then, as I have said, let moderation and frugality be added. Let us now proceed ---

Hosea 13:7-8

7. Therefore I will be unto them as a lion: as a leopard by the way will I observe them:

7. Et ero illis tanquam leo, tanquam pardus in via Assur (vel, aspiciam, vel, insidiabor, ut alii vertunt.)

8. I will meet them as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, and will rend the caul of their heart, and there will I devour them like a lion: the wild beast shall tear them.

8. Occurram illis tanquam ursus orbatus (suis parvulis scilicet;) et disrumpam clausuram cordis eorum; vorabo eos quasi leo; [94] bestia agri scindet (vel, lacerabit) ipsos.

The Prophet denounces again on the Israelites the vengeance of God; and as they were become torpid through their own flatteries, as we have already often observed, he here describes the terrible judgement of God, that he might strike fear into the obstinate, so that they might at length perceive that they had to do with God, and begin to dread his power. And this, as we have said, was very necessary, when the Prophets intended to awaken hypocrites; for self- confidence so inebriates them, that

[94] Some render this "the lioness," but it is more consonant with this passage to render it "lion," meaning, as its name, {,{לביא labia, is taken to signify, a cruel old lion. The word in the former verse is ,{שחל} shechel, which means a fierce lion. So that the Lord compares himself to the most devouring and the fiercest species of the lion tribe. The Hebrews have other names for lions, designative of their peculiar nature of their age. ,{כפיר} caphir, is a young lion; ,{אריה} arie, a grown up and a rapacious lion, ,{שחץ} shichets, a lion of middle age and fierce; and ,{לישׁ} lice, an old lion. With respect to the two mentioned here, there is a gradation, according to the sense of the passage. The first, in verse 7, is a lion in middle age, bold and ferocious; but the second, in verse 8, is one still older, but retaining his vigor, and still more ferocious and devouring. --- Ed.

they hesitate not to despise all the threatenings of God: and this is the reason why he adopts these three similitudes. He first compares God to a lion, then to a leopard, and then to a bear. I will be, he says, like a lion, like a leopard, and then like a bear God, we know, is in his own nature merciful and kind; when he says that he will be like a lion, he puts on as it were another character; but this is done on account of men's wickedness, as it is said in Psalm 18,

`With the gentle, thou wilt be gentle; with the perverse,
thou wilt be perverse.'

For, though God speaks sharply and severely through his Prophet, he yet expresses what we ought to remember, and that is, that he thus speaks, because we do not allow him to treat us according to his own nature, that is, gently and kindly; and that when he sees us to be obstinate and unnameable, he then contends with us (so to speak) with the like contumacy; not that perversity properly belongs to God, but he borrows this similitude from men, and for this reason, that men may not continue to flatter themselves when he is displeased with them. I shall therefore be like a lion, like a leopard in the way

As to the word Assur, interpreters take it in various ways. Some render it, Assyria, though it is here written with Kamets: but the Hebrews consider it as an appellative, not the name of a place or country. Some again render it thus, ``I will look on them,'' and derive it from {שור}, shur, and take {א} aleph, as designative of the future tense. Others derive it from {אשר}, asher, and will have it to be in the conjugation Pual: and here they differ again among themselves. Some render it, ``I will lay in wait for them:'' and others think it to be Shoar, ``I will be a layer in wait like a leopard.'' But this variety, with regard to the meaning of the passage, is of but little moment; for we see the drift of the Prophet's object. He intends here to take away from hypocrites their vain confidence, and to terrify them with the apprehension of God's vengeance which was impending. He therefore says that though God had hitherto spared them, nay, had in a manner kindly cherished them, yet since they continued to provoke his wrath, their condition would soon be very different; for he would come against them like a lion; that is, he would leap on them with the greatest fury; he would also be like a leopard: and a leopard, we know, is a very cruel beast: and, lastly, he compares him to a bereaved she-bear, or, a bereaved bear.

But he afterwards adds, I will rend, or will tear, the inclosure of their heart. They who understand the enclosure of the heart to be their obstinate hardness, seem to refine too much on the words of the Prophet. We know, indeed, that the Prophets sometimes use this mode of speaking; for they call that a hard heart, or a heart covered with fatness, which is not pliant, and does not willingly receive sound doctrine. But the Prophet rather alludes to the savageness of the bear, when he says, I will rend or tear in pieces the membrane of the heart, and will devour you as a lion. For it is the most cruel kind of death, when the lion with his claws and teeth aims at the heart itself and tears the bowels of man. The Prophet therefore intended to set forth this most cruel kind of death. ``I will therefore,'' he says, ``tear asunder the pericardium, or the enclosure of the heart.'' I do not at the same time say, that the Prophet does not allude to the hardness of the people, while he retains his own

similitude.

And the beast of the field shall rend them He speaks now without a similitude; for God means that all the wild beasts would be his ministers to execute his judgement. ``I will then send all the beasts of the field to rend and tear them, so that nothing among them shall remain safe.'' We now see the purport of this passage, and to what use it ought to be applied. If we are by nature so slothful, yea, and careless, and when God does not stir us up, we indulge our own delusions, we ought to notice those figurative representations which tend to shake off from us our tardiness and show to us how dreadful the judgement of God is. For the same purpose are those metaphors respecting the eternal fire and the worm that never dies. For Gods seeing the feelings of men to be so torpid has in Scripture applied those things which may correct their sluggishness. Whenever then God puts on a character not his own, let us know that it is through our fault; for we suffer him not to deal with us according to his own nature, inasmuch as we are intractable. Let us go on ---

Hosea 13:9-11

9. O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.

9. Perdidit te Israel; quia in me auxilium tuum. [95]

10 I will be thy king: where is any other that may save thee in all thy cities? and thy judges of whom thou saidst, Give me a king and princes?

10 Ero: Rex tuus ubi, ut servet te in cunctis urbibus tuis, et judices tui, de quibus dixisti, Da mihi regem et principes?

11 I gave thee a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath.

11 Dabo tibi (hoc est), Dedi tibi regem in ira mea, et sustuli in furore meo.

In the first place, God upbraids the Israelites for having in their perverseness rejected whatever was offered for their safety: but he proceeds farther and says, that they were past hope, and that there was a hidden cause which prevented God from helping them, and bringing them aid when they laboured under extreme necessity. He has destroyed thee, Israel, he says. Some consider the word, calf, to be understood, ``The calf has destroyed thee:'' but this is strained. Others think that there is a change of person: and I am inclined to adopt this opinion, as this mode of speaking we know, is very common: Destroyed thee has Israel; thou art the cause of thine own destruction, or, ``Israel has destroyed himself.'' Though then there is here a verb of the third person, and there is afterwards added an affixed pronoun at the second

[95] Bishop Horsley's rendering of this verse which was that of Rivet, is the following — "It is thy destruction, O Israel, that upon me (alone it lies) to help thee." He adds in a note — "Thy great privilege, to have God alone for thy defense, becomes the occasion of thy destruction. In my wrath I withdrew my special aid; and since forsaken by me, thou hast no other helper, thy ruin must ensue. In this instance our version, as to the first clause, seems preferable to that offered by Calvin. The verb is not in the third person, but the second. Its final radica; letter is {,{n tau, and the same letter is characteristic of the second person, and it is not here doubled; another instance of which we find in Ezekiel 28:17, {שחת} .{חכמתך} `Thou hast corrupted,' or `destroyed, thy wisdom.' There is reason to doubt the correctness of our version, as well as that of Calvin, as to the second clause. Literally it is, ``Though in me for thy help,'' which seems to mean this, ``Though it was in my power to help thee.'' But if the first word of the verse be taken as a substantive, as it is by many critics, then the first clause may be considered as having reference to the preceding verses. The meaning then would be, that such would be Israel's destruction, though at the same time there was for him help in God, if he had sought it: --- Such thy destruction, Israel! Though in me there was help for thee. Then follows the next verse, --- I will be the same: thy king, where is he? etc. For changing {אהי} into ,{איה} the authority is very small, only one MS., and another doubtful: and there is no need, and indeed the sense is thereby injured. In the Geneva Bible it is rendered, `I am.' The future tense in Hebrew includes often the present as well as what is future. To give it its full meaning, it must be thus rendered, `I am and will be,' that is, thy help; for he had before said, that there had been help for them in him. --- Ed.

person, we may yet thus render the passage, ``Israel has destroyed himself.'' At the same time, when I weigh more fully every particular, this passage, I think, would be better and more fitly explained by being taken indefinitely: ``Something has destroyed thee, Israel:'' as though he said, ``Inquire now who has destroyed thee.'' God then does not here name Israel as the author, nor does he point out any as the author of their ruin; but yet he shows that Israel was lost, and that the cause of their destruction was to be sought in some one else, and not in him. This is the meaning. Then it is, Something has destroyed thee, Israel; for in me was thy help God shows and proves that Israel, who had been hitherto preserved, is now destroyed through their own fault; for God had once adopted the people, and for this end, that he might continue to show his favour towards them. If then the wickedness and ingratitude of the people had not hindered, God would have been doubtless always like himself, and his goodness towards that people would have flowed in a continuous and uniform stream.

This is what he means in the second clause, when he says, In me was thine help; by which he seems to say, ``How comes it, and what is the reason, that I do not now help thee according to my usual manner? Thou hast indeed found me hitherto to be thy deliverer: though thou hast often struggled with great and grievous dangers, I was yet never wanting to thee; thou hast ever found from me a prompt assistance. How comes it now that I have cast thee away, that thou criest in vain, and that no one brings thee any help? How comes it, that thou art thus forsaken, and receives no relief whatever from my hand, as thou hast been wont to do? And doubtless I should never be wanting to thee, if thou wouldest allow me; but thou closest the door against me, and by thy wickedness spurnest my favour, so that it cannot come to thee. It then follows, that thou art now destroyed through thy own fault: Something then has destroyed thee He speaks here indefinitely; but this suspended way of expression is more emphatical when he shows that Israel was without reason astonished, and had also without reason expostulated with God. ``There is then no ground for contending with God, as if he had frustrated thy expectation, and despised thy desires and crying; God indeed is consistent with himself, for he is not changeable;'' as though he said, ``Their perdition is from another cause, and they ought to know that there is some hindrance, why God should not extend his hand to help them, as he has hitherto usually done.''

We now perceive the mind of the Prophet: he in the first place records what God had been hitherto to the people; and then he takes for granted that he does not change, but that he possesses a uniform and unwearied goodness. But since he had hitherto helped his people, he concludes, that Israel was destroyed through some other cause, inasmuch as God brought him no aid; for unless Israel had intercepted God's goodness, it would have certainly flowed as usual. It then appears that its course was impeded by the wickedness of the people; for they put as it were an obstacle in its way.

And this passage teaches us, that men in vain clamour against God in their miseries: for he would be always ready to help them, were they not to spurn the favour offered to them. Whenever then God does not help us in our necessity, and suffers

us to languish, and as it were to pine away in our afflictions, it is doubtless so, because we are not disposed to receive his favour, but, on the contrary, we obstruct its way; as it is said by Isaiah,

``Shortened is not the Lord's hand, that it cannot save, nor is my ear heavy, that it does not hear. Your sins, he says, have set up a mound between you and me,'' (Isaiah 59:1, 2.)

To the same purpose are the words of the Prophet here when he says, that we ought to inquire what the cause of our destruction is, when the Lord does not immediately deliver us: for as he has once given us a taste of his goodness so he will continue to do the same to the end; for he is not wearied in his kindness, nor can his bounty be exhausted. The fault then belongs to us. We hence see how remarkable is this passage, and what useful instruction it contains.

He afterwards more fully confirms the same by saying, I will be; and then he says, Thy king, where is he? By saying, `I will be,' God retreats what he had before declared, that he would always be the same; for, as James says

`No overshadowing happens to him,' (James 1:17.)

Hence `I will be;' that is, ``Though the Israelites rail against me, that I do not pursue my usual course of kindness, it is yet most false; for I remain ever the same, and am always ready to show kindness to men; for I do not, as I have elsewhere declared, forsake the works of my hands, (Psalm 138:8.) Seeing then that I thus continue my favour towards men, it must be that the way to my favour is closed up by their wickedness. Let them therefore examine themselves, when they cry and I answer not. When in their evils they in a manner pine away, and find no relief, let them acknowledge it to be their own fault; for I would have made myself the same as ever I have been, and they would have found me a deliverer, had not a change taken place in them.'' We now comprehend the meaning of the Prophet in the ninth verse, and as to the expression, {אהי}, aei, I will be, in the verse which follows.

He then says, Where is thy king? God again reproaches the Israelites for having reposed their confidence in their king and other earthly helps, by which they thought themselves to have been well fortified. Where is thy king? he says. He derides the Israelites; for they saw that their king was now stripped of every power to help, and that all their princes were destitute both of prudence and of all other means. Since then there was no protection from men, the Prophet shows now that Israel had but a vain trust, when they thought themselves safe under the shadow of their king, when they considered themselves secure as long as they were governed by prudent men. All these things, he says, are vain. But we must ever bear in mind what he had said before I will be; for had not this shield been set up, hypocrites would have ever said in return, ``Where now is God? What is his purpose? Why does he delay?'' Hence God mentioned before that he was ready to help them, but that they by their wickedness had closed up the way.

But he further derides them for having in vain placed their hope and their help in their king and princes. Where is thy king, he says, that he may save thee in all thy cities? It is not without reason that the Prophet mentions cities, because the Israelites despised all threatening, while their cities were on every side unassailable

and strong to keep out enemies. Hence when God threatened them by his Prophets, they regarded what was said to them as fables, and thus defended themselves, ``How can enemies assail us? Though there were hundred wars nigh at hand, have we not cities which can resist the onsets of enemies? We shall therefore dwell in safety, and enjoy our pleasures, though God should shake heaven and earth.'' Since then they were so inebriated with this false confidence, the Prophet now says, ``I know that you excel in having great and many cities; but as you deem them as your protection, God will show that this hope is vain and deceptive. Where then is thy king, that he may save thee in thy cities? And though thy king be well furnished with an army and with defences, it will yet avail thee nothing, when God shall once rise up against thee.''

But he subjoins, And thy judges of whom thou hast said, Give me a king and princes? Here the Prophet ascends higher; for he shows that the people of Israel had not only sinned in this respect, that they had placed their hope in their king, and in other helps; but that they had also chosen for themselves a king, whom God had not approved. For David, we know, was anointed for this end, that he might unite together the whole body of the people; and God intended that his Church and chosen people should remain under one head, that they might be safe. It was therefore an impious separations when the ten tribes wished for themselves a new king. How so? Because a defection from the kingdom of David was as it were a denial of God. For if it was said to Samuel,

`Thee have they not rejected, but me,
that I should not reign over them,' (1 Samuel 8:7,)

it was certainly more fully verified as to David. We now then see what the Prophet meant: after having inveighed against the false confidence of the people for thinking that they were safe through the power of their king, he now adds, ``I will advance to another source: for thou didst not then begin to sin, when thou didst transfer the glory of God to the king, but when thou didst wish to have a kingdom of thine own, being not content with that kingdom which he had instituted in the person of David.'' The Prophet does now then accuse the people of defection, when a new king, that is, Jeroboam, was elected by them. For though it was done according to the certain purpose of God, as we have elsewhere observed, yet this availed nothing to alleviate the fault of the people; for they, as far as they could, renounced God. As the foot, if cut off from the body, is not only a mutilated and useless member, but immediately putrefies; so also was Israel, being like a half part of a torn and mutilated body; and they must have become putrified, had they not been miraculously preserved. But at the same time God here justly condemns that defection, that Israel, by desiring a new king, had broken asunder the sacred unity of the Church and introduced an impious separation.

These are the princes, of whom thou hast said, Give me a king and princes. I gave to thee in my wrath, and took away in my fury; that is ``It was a cursed beginning, and it shall be a cursed end; for the election of Jeroboam was not lawful; but through an impious wilfulness, the people then rebelled against me, when they revolted from the family of David.'' Nothing successful could then proceed from so inauspicious a

beginning. For it is only then an auspicious token, when we obey God, when his Spirit presides over our counsels, when we ask at his mouth, and when we begin with prayer to him. But when we despise the word of God, and give loose reins to our own humour, and fix on whatever pleases us, it cannot be but that an unhappy and disastrous issue will follow. God therefore says, that he gave them a king in his wrath; as though he said, ``Ye think that you have done nobly, when Jeroboam was raised to the throne, that he might become eminent: for the kingdom of Judah was then far inferior to that of Israel, which not only excelled in power, but also in the number of its subjects. Ye think that you were then happy, because Jeroboam ruled over you: but he was given you in the anger and wrath of God,'' saith the Prophet. ``But God commanded Jeroboam to be anointed.'' True, it was so: but this, says God, I did in my wrath; and now I will take away in my fury; that is, ``I will deprive you of that kingdom which I see is the cause of your blindness. For if that kingdom remains entire, I shall be nothing, the authority of my word will be of no weight among you. It is then necessary that this kingdom should be wholly subverted; for ye began to be unhappy as soon as ye sought a new king.''

We now understand what the Prophet means. At the same time, we learn from this passage, that God so executes his judgements, that whatever evil there is, it ought to be ascribed to men. For the raising of Jeroboam to the kingdom, we certainly allow to have been rash and unjust; for thereby was violated that celestial decree made known to David,

``My Son art thou, I have this day begotten thee. Ask of me, and I will give thee the Gentiles,' etc., (Psalm 2:7,8.)

But who appointed Jeroboam to be king? The Lord himself. How could it be, that God raised Jeroboam to the throne, and that he yet by his decree set David, not only over the children of Abraham, but also over the Gentiles, with reference to Christ who was to come? God seems here to be inconsistent with himself. By no means; for when he set David over his chosen people, it was a lawful appointment: but when he raised Jeroboam to the throne, it was a singular judgement; so that in God there is no inconsistency. The people at the same time, who by their suffrages adopted Jeroboam and made him their king, acted impiously and perversely. ``Yet God seems to have directed the whole by his providence.'' True; for before the people knew any thing of the new king, God had already determined to elect him and resolved also to punish in this way the defection and ingratitude of Solomon. All these things are true, that is, that God by his secret counsel had directed the whole business, and yet that he had no participation in the sin of the people.

Thus let us learn wisely to admire the secret judgements of God, and not imitate those profane cavillers, who make a great noise, because they cannot understand how God thus makes use of wicked men, and how he directs for the best end what is done by men wickedly and foolishly. As they do not perceive this, they conclude that if the Lord governs all things, he must be the author of sin. But the Scripture, as we see, when it speaks of the wrath and fury of God, does at the same time set forth to us his rectitude in all his judgements, and distinguishes between God and men, even as the difference is great; for God does not turn the perverse designs

of men to answer their own ends --- he is a just judge. And yet his purpose is not always apparent to us: it is, however, our duty reverently and with chastened minds to admire and adore those mysteries which surpass our comprehension. It follows ---

Hosea 13:12-13

12. The iniquity of Ephraim is bound up; his sin is hid.

12. Obsignatum est peccatum Ephraim (vel, obsignata est iniquitas Ephraim;) reconditum peccatum ejus.

13. The sorrows of a travailing woman shall come upon him: he is an unwise son; for he should not stay long in the place of the breaking forth of children.

13. Dolores parturientis venient ei; ipse filius insipiens (non sapiens,) quia tempore non staret in ruptura filiorum (ad verbum.)

He says, first, that sealed is the iniquity of Ephraim, and that hidden is his sin; by which words he means, that hypocrites in vain flatter themselves while God suspends his vengeance; for though he may connive for a time, yet he does not sleep; nor ought it to be believed that he is blind, but he seals up the sins of men, and keeps them inclosed until the proper time for revealing them shall come. This is the chief point; but the Prophet has expressed something more. For as Jeremiah says,

`The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron,
with the point of a diamond,' (Jeremiah 17:1;)

so now also does Hosea say, that the iniquity of Ephraim was sealed up. For writings may perish, when they spread abroad: but what is laid up and put under a seal always remains. What, then, Hosea now means is, that the people flattered themselves in vain, while a truce was granted them; for the Lord kept their sins under his seal; as though he said ``God forgets not your iniquity: as he, however, spares you only for a time, it would be far better to suffer immediate punishment, for thus the memory of your sin would pass away; but he now carefully keeps all your iniquities as it were under seal, and your sins are laid up in store.''

We now see that what the Prophet means in this verse is, that the Israelites had made such advances in their sins, that now no pardon or remission could be hoped for. ``God then shall never be propitious to you, for your sin is sealed up.'' And this sentence applies to all those who disguise themselves before God, when he does not severely treat them, but, on the contrary, kindly sustains and bears with them. Since, then, they thus disappointed his forbearance, it was necessary that this should befall them, that he should seal up their iniquities, and keep inclosed their sins.

He afterwards says, that the sorrows of one in travail would come on this proud and rebellious people. He pursues the same subject, but under another figure; for by the sorrows of one in travail he points out the sudden destruction which befalls careless men. And this mode of speaking is common in Scripture. There will come then the sorrows of one in travail on these men; that is, ``As they promise to themselves continual peace, and are now awakened by any threatenings, and as they proudly despise both my hand and my word, a sudden destruction shall crush them.'' Thus much as to the beginning of the verse, There shall come on them the sorrows of one in travail

He then adds, He is an unwise son, that is, he is altogether foolish. Here God reprobates the extreme madness of the people of Israel, as though he had said, ``If any particle of sound understanding remained in this people, they would at least perceive the judgement which is impending; and there would then be some hope of a remedy: but this people are now wholly infatuated.'' And this proves their folly, for they ought not, he says, to stay in the breaking forth of children This clause, however, some interpreters explain thus, ``The time will come, they will not stay in the breaking forth of children.'' But rather the contrary is meant by the words; for the Prophet means, that when the time of birth came, the people would stop in the breaking forth; which they would not do, were they endued with a right and sound mind.

It must be noticed, that the Prophet alludes to the time of birth; for he had said before, that the sorrows of one in travail would come on the people of Israel; he now declares that these sorrows would be filial. Though a woman be in labour and in great danger in giving birth, she is yet freed in a moment, and as Christ says, joy and gladness arise from that sorrow, (John 16:21.) But the Prophet says that this bringing forth would be very different; for it would be an abortion, and the child would be retained to putrefy in the womb. If a woman in the very birth restrains effort and shrinks in her strength, she destroys the child and herself at the same time; for she cannot bring forth without exertion. Since then the safety of the woman depends on the exertion made, the Prophet now says, that the contrary would be the case with the people of Israel. They are, he says, like a woman in travail; but they are at the same time blinded with folly, for they retain the child in the womb and make no effort: so this parturition must at last be fatal to them. Why? Because they make no effort to bring forth the child.

The Prophet by these figurative representations no doubt glances at the obstinate hardness of the people; for when they ought to bewail and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, we know how perversely they hardened themselves against all punishment. Since, then, this people did thus as it were champ the bridle, and at the same time make hard their heart, partly by their fierce temper, partly by stupidity, partly by desperation, it was no wonder that the Prophet said that they were an unwise and insane people, for they stayed at the breaking forth of children; that is they made no effort to obtain the wished-for end to their evils. For when the Lord afflicts us, and we bring forth, this bringing forth is our deliverance. Now, how can there be deliverance except we hate ourselves for our sins, except we raise up our minds to God, and thus open a passage for God's grace? But when we oppose God pertinaciously through our fierceness and stupidity, it is the same as if one closed up every avenue. We now then see how appropriate is this metaphor used by the Prophet, when he says that the people were mad; for when the time of bringing, forth came, they stayed in the breaking forth; that is, at the opening of the womb, for this is what the Prophet means by the word. Since then they stayed in the very opening, and restrained, as it were, every effort, and ceased from all strivings, they must have perished. We now see what the obstinacy of men produces when they harden themselves, when they thus contracts as it were, within narrow limits their

heart and mind and all their faculties. For when a woman who is in travail restrains all efforts, she wilfully seeks death for herself: so they do the same who harden themselves against all punishments, and especially when the time of birth is come; and to this the word, breaking forth, refers: for when the Lord strikes us not only once, but continues to lay on us many stripes, so that we must either repent or perish for ever, it is the ripened time for bringing forth; for God then leads us to an extremity, and nothing remains for us but to humble ourselves under his mighty hand or to perish. The Prophet then calls that condition, the breaking forth, in which obstinate men continue, who will not obey God. It is necessary to join with these verses the two which follow: this I shall do to-morrow.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as thou hast given us thy only begotten Son to rule us, and hast by thy good pleasure consecrated him a King over us, that we may be perpetually safe and secure under his hand against all the attempts of the devil and of the whole world, --- O grant, that we may suffer ourselves to be ruled by his authority, and so conduct ourselves, that he may ever continue to watch for our safety: and as thou hast committed us to him, that he may be the guardian of our salvation, so also suffer us not either to turn aside or to fall, but preserve us ever in his service, until we be at length gathered into that blessed and everlasting kingdom, which has been procured for us by the blood of thy only Son. Amen.

Lecture Thirty-sixth

Hosea 13:14

14. I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

14. E manu sepulchri redimam eos, a morte redimam (est quidem aliud verbum, sed utrumque significat redimere:) ero perditio tua, [96] mors: ero excisio tua (vel, interitus tuus) sepulchrum (vel, inferne:) consolatio (vel, poenitentia) abscondita est ab oculis meis.

The Prophet, I doubt not, continues here the same subject, namely, that the Israelites could not bear the mercy offered to them by God, though he speaks here more fully. God seems to promise redemption, but he does this conditionally: they are then mistaken, in my judgement, who take these words in the same sense as when God, after having reproved and threatened, mitigates the severity of his instruction, and adds consolation by offering his grace. But the import of this passage is different; for God, as we have already said, does not here simply promise salvation, but shows that he is indeed ready to save, but that the wickedness of the people, as it has been said, was an impediment in the way. Let us, however, more carefully

[96] "Very many MSS. and some editions read {דברך}; and {דבר} in Hebrew is to destroy, to subdue." --- Newcome. This passage presents an instance of that useless kind of criticism, by which an attempt has been made to introduce a verbal agreement between sentences in the Old Testament and the supposed quotations of them in the New. The apostles had more regard to the meaning than to words. Horsley has a long note on the two words {דבר}, prediction or destruction, and {קטב}, excision or extirpation; and he renders the first by ``pestilence,'' and the second by ``burning plague.'' That the two words are so used he proves satisfactorily. But when applied to death and the grave, they of course can retain only their reading idea of something destructive, extirpating, and ruinous. Words in all languages have their primary and secondary meanings: and to retain the primary meaning in a translation would often be improper. Calvin has in this instance showed more judgment than the Bishop.

examine the words.

From the hand of the grave, he says. By the hand he doubtless means power: for Jerome does nothing but trifle, when he speaks here of works, and says that the works of the grave are our sins. But this is far away from the mind of the Prophet. It is indeed a metaphor common in Scripture, that the hand is put for power or authority. Then it is, I will redeem them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death; that is, except they resist, I will become willingly their Redeemer. Some have therefore rendered the passage in the subjunctive mood, ``From the hand of the grave I would redeem them, from death I would deliver them.'' But there is no need to change the tense, though, as I have said, they who do so faithfully set forth the design of the Prophet. But lest any one say that this is too remote from the words, the text of the Prophet may be very well understood, though the future tense be preserved. I will then redeem them, as far as this depends on me; for a condition is to be introduced as though God came forth and declared that he was present to fulfil the office of a Redeemer. What, then, does stand in the way? Even the hardness of the people; for they would have preferred to perish a hundred times rather than to turn to the Lord, as we shall presently see.

He afterwards adds, I will be thy perdition, O death; I will be thy excision, O grave. By these words, the Prophet more distinctly sets forth the power of God, and magnificently extols it, lest men should think that there is no way open to him to save, when no hope according to the judgement of the flesh appears. Hence the Prophet says, ``Though men are now dead, there is yet nothing to prevent God to quicken them. How so? For he is the ruin of death, and the excision of the grave;'' that is, ``Though death should swallow up all men, though the grave should consume them, yet God is superior to both death and the grave, for he can slay death, for he can abolish the grave.'' We now perceive the real meaning of the Prophet.

And we may learn from this passage, that when men perish, God still continues like himself, and that neither his power, by which he is mighty to save the world, is extinguished, nor his purpose changed, so as not to be always ready to help; but that the obstinacy of men rejects the grace which has been provided, and which God willingly and bountifully offers. This is one thing. We may secondly learn, that the power of God is not to be measured by our rule: were we lost a hundred times, let God be still regarded as a Saviour. Should then despair at any time so cast us down, that we cannot lay hold on any of God's promises, let this passage come to our minds, which says, that God is the excision of death, and the destruction of the grave. ``But death is nigh to us, what then can we hope for any more?'' This is to say, that God is not superior to death: but when death claims so much power over men, how much more power has God over death itself? Let us then feel assured that God is the destruction of death, which means that death can no more destroy; that is, that death is deprived of that power by which men are naturally destroyed; and that though we may lie in the grave, God is yet the excision of the grave itself. This is the application of what is here taught. But some one gives this version, ``I will be thy perdition to death,'' as if this was addressed to the people: it is an absurd perversion of the whole passage, and deprives us of a most useful doctrine.

But many interpreters, thinking this passage to be quoted by Paul, have explained what is here said of Christ, and have in many respects erred. They have said first, that God promises redemption here without any condition; but we see that the design of the Prophet was far different. They have then assumed, that this is said in the person of Christ, ``From the hand of the grave will I redeem them.'' They have at the same time thought, with too much refinement, that the grave or hell is put for the torments with which the reprobate are visited, or for the place itself where they are tormented. But the Prophet repeats the same thing in different words, and well known is this character of the Hebrew style. The grave then here differs not from death; though Jerome labours and contends that the grave means what is wholly different from death: but the whole of what he says is frivolous. They have then been deceived as to these words. And then into the words of the Prophet ``I will be thy excision, O hell, (or grave,'') they have introduced the word, bait, and have allegorically explained it of Christ, that he was like a hook: for as a worm, when fastened to the hook, and swallowed by a fish, becomes death to it; so also Christ, as they have said, when committed to the sepulchre, became a fatal bait; for as the fish are taken by the hook, so death was taken by the bait of the death of Christ. And these vain subtilties have been received with great applause: hence under the whole Papacy it is received without doubt as a divine truth, that Christ was the bait of death. But yet let any one narrowly examine the words of the Prophet, and he will see that they have ignorantly and shamefully abused the testimony of the Prophet. And we ought especially to take care, that the meaning of Scripture should be preserved true and certain.

But let us see what to answer to that which is said of Paul quoting this passage. The solution is not difficult. The Apostles do not avowedly at all times adduce passages, which in their whole context apply to the subject they handle; but sometimes they allude to a word only, sometimes they apply a passage to a subject in the way of resemblance, and sometimes they bring forward passages as testimonies. When the Apostles use the testimonies of Scripture, then the genuine and real truth must be sought out; but when they glance only at one word, there is no occasion to make any anxious inquiry; and when they quote any passage of Scripture in the way of resemblance, it is a too scrupulous anxiety to seek out how all the parts agree. But it is quite evident that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15, has not quoted the testimony of the Prophet for the purpose of confirming the doctrine of which he speaks. [97] What then? As the resurrection of the flesh was a truth very difficult to be believed, nay, wholly contrary to the judgement of nature, Paul says that it is no matter of wonder, inasmuch as Christ will come to raise us. How so? Because it is the peculiar prerogative of God to be the perdition of death and the destruction of the grave; as though he said, ``Were men to putrefy a thousand times, God would still retain that power of which he declared when he said, that he would be the ruin of death and the destruction of the grave.'' Let us then know, that, though the judgement of nature rejects the truth, yet God is endued with that incomprehensible power by

[97] "The Apostle's triumphant exclamation, 'O death,' etc., is an allusion indeed to this text of Hosea, an indirect allusion, but no citation of it." — Bishop Horsley.

which he can raise us from a state of putrefaction; nay, since he created the world from nothing, he will also raise us up from the grave, for he is the death of death, the grave of the grave, the ruin of ruin, and the destruction of destruction: and the simple object of Paul is, to extol by these striking words that incredible power of God, which is beyond the reach of human understanding.

Now were any one to quote for the same purpose this place from the Psalms, ``The Lord's are the issues of death, (Psalm 68:20,) would it be needful to inquire in what sense David said this or of what time he speaks? By no means; but what is spoken of is the unchangeable prerogative and power of God, of which he can never be deprived, so also in this place we see what he declares by Hosea, and what he would have done, had there not been an obstacle in the ingratitude of the people; for he says I will be thy ruin, O grave; I will be thy death, O death And since God has promised this, let us feel assured that we shall at last find this to be true as to ourselves. We now then perceive how the real meaning of the Prophet agrees with the subject handled by Paul.

It now follows, consolation, or, repentance is hid from my eye; for {נחם}, nuchem, means both. {נחם}, nuchem, signifies to repent, and it signifies to receive consolation. If the term, consolation, be approved, the sense will be, ``There is no reason for any one to wonder that I speak so sharply, and do nothing but thunder against my people; for consolation has now no place among them; therefore consolation is hid from my eyes.'' And this was the case, because the irreclaimable wickedness of the people did not allow God to change his severity into mildness, so as to give any hope of pardon and salvation. In this sense then it is said that consolation was hid from his eyes. But if the word, repentance, be more approved, it will show exactly the same thing, --- that it was fully determined to destroy that people. ``There is then no reason for you to hope that I can become milder in course of time; for repentance is hid from mine eyes. This shall remain fixed, you shall be reduced to nothing; for ye are past all hope.'' We then see that both the words refer to the same thing, that God takes away from this miserable and reprobate people every hope of salvation. Now it follows ---

Hosea 13:15

15. Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall come, the wind of the Lord shall come up from the wilderness, and his spring shall become dry, and his fountain shall be dried up: he shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.

15. Quia ipse inter fratres fructum faciet (vel, augescet; vel, Quanvis ipse inter fratres suos augescat: alii putant {אחים} positum esse pro {אחוים}, inter germina: sed nimis coacta est interpretatio. Legamus igitur simpliciter ut verba sonant, Ipse inter fratres augescet;) veniet ventus orientalis, ventus Jehovae a deserto ascendens, et arefaciet venam ejus, et siccabitur fons ejus: ipse diripiet thesaurum omnis vasis desiderabilis.

God again confirms what had been said that Israel in vain trusted in their strength and fortresses and that certain destruction was nigh them on account of their sins which they followed without any limits or restraint. But the Prophet begins with these words, He among brethren will increase He alludes, I doubt not, (as other interpreters

have also noticed,) to the blessing of the tribe of Ephraim, which is mentioned in Genesis 48; for we know that though Ephraim was the younger, he was yet placed first by Jacob, so that he was preferred in honour to his brother, who was the firstborn: and further, the prophecy, we know, which Jacob then announced, was really fulfilled; for the tribe of Ephraim excelled, both in number and in other respects, all the rest, except only the tribe of Judah. Ephraim had evidently gained high eminence among the whole people. But when he ought to have ascribed all this to the gratuitous goodness of God, he became inflated with pride. This ingratitude the Prophet now reproves, He, he says, among his brethren will increase: but whence this increase? Whence was this so great a dignity, except that he was preferred to Manasseh, who by right of nature was the first? Now it was not enough for this wretched people to forget so great a favour of God, without at the same time abusing their wealth in fostering pride, and without hardening themselves in contempt of God. For whence came so great an audacity in their rebellion, whence so great stupidity and so great a madness as to despise the judgement of God, except from this --- that they had increased among their brethren?

Though, then, he increases among his brethren, yet there shall come an east wind, the wind of Jehovah, which shall dry his spring, and his fountain shall be dried up Here God declares what had been before mentioned, that it was in his power to take away from the people of Israel what he had gratuitously bestowed, as he could dry up the fountains whenever he wished. And he applies a most suitable similitude. As the east wind, he says, dries and burns up, and if it long prevails, the fountains will be dried up; so will I, he says, dry up all the springs of Ephraim. Whether or not he thinks that he possesses more vigour than fountains, which have an exhaustless source, it is certain that fountains dry up whenever it so pleases me. I will then dry up the springs and fountains of Ephraim: though he thinks that he draws from a deep fountain, yet the wind, when it shall rise, will dry up his whole vigour and moisture. We now understand what the Prophet means.

Now as to the words, some render {קדים}, kodim, improperly, the south wind; for it means the east wind: and then others incorrectly explain the wind of Jehovah, as meaning a strong wind. I indeed allow that what is unusual is often said to be divine; but in this place the Prophet intended to express, that God has winds ever ready, by which he can dry up whatever vigour there may be or seem to be in men. Hence the name of Jehovah is set in opposition to natural causes or means. It shall not then be a fortuitous wind that shall dry up the springs of Ephraim, but one raised up by the counsel and certain purpose of God; as though he said, ``This wind will be the scourge of God.''

We are then taught here, that when God for a time blesses us, we must beware lest we abuse his favour and entertain a false confidence, as we see that Ephraim had done: for he flourished among his brethren, and then raised up his head; and thus he obliterated God's favour through his pride and haughtiness. We ought then, when prosperous, ever to fear, lest something like this should happen to us. The more kindly then God deals with us, the more constantly ought we to be roused up to pray to him, that he may be pleased to carry on his work to the end, lest

we slumber in our enjoyments while God is indulgent to us. This, in the first place, we ought to bear in mind. Then we must also notice the warning of the prophet, that God can suddenly, and, as it were, in a moment, upset the prosperity of men, that there is nothing in this world which cannot be immediately changed whenever God withdraws from us his favour. This comparison then ought often to occur to us; when the air is tranquil, when the season is quiet, a wind will in a moment rise up, which will dry the earth, which will also make dry the fountains; and yet the vigour of fountains seems to be perpetual; what then may not happen to us? Cannot the Lord at any moment make us dry, since we have in ourselves no source of strength? He might indeed have said in this place what we find in the 40th chapter of Isaiah [98] that man is like the flower that soon fadeth; but he intended to express something more profound; for this people, being deeply fixed in their own strength, thought that they were supplied by exhaustless fountains, and that their vigour could not be dried up: hence he says, ``Though thou hast fountains and springs, yet God will dry thee up; for he will find a wind that has power, as experience proves, to dry up springs and fountains.''

But it follows, It will rob the treasure of every desirable vessel This may seem to be improperly applied to wind; but yet the meaning of the Prophet is sufficiently clear, even this, that nothing shall remain untouched in the tribe of Ephraim, when the Lord shall raise up his wind. ``However hidden,'' he seems to say, ``your treasures may be, yet this wind shall penetrate into the inmost recesses, so that nothing shall be safe from its violence.'' In short, the Prophet means, that the force of God's vengeance would be so violent, that Ephraim could not be secure in any of his fortresses; for the wind of God would penetrate unto the very inmost springs of the earth. This is the meaning. It follows ---

Hosea 13:16

16. Samaria shall become desolate; for she hath rebelled against her God: they shall fall by the sword: their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up.

16. Desolabitur Samaria, quia exacerbavit Deum suum: in gladio cadent; parvuli eorum allidentur, gravidae eorum scindentur.

This is the conclusion of the discourse: this verse has then been improperly separated from the former chapter [99] ; for the Prophet enters not here on a new subject, but only confirms what he had said of the ultimate destruction of Samaria and of the whole kingdom. Samaria then shall be desolated; as though he said ``I have already often denounced on you what you believe not, that destruction is nigh at hand; of this be now persuaded; but if you believe not, God will yet execute what he has determined, and what he now pronounces by my mouth.'' At the same time he adds the cause, For they have provoked their God That they might not complain that they were severely dealt with, he says, that they only suffered the punishment which they deserved. He also specifies the kind of destruction that was to be, They shall fall by the sword, their children shall be dashed in pieces, and their pregnant

[98] Isaiah 40:6-8. — fj.

[99] The fourteenth chapter begins in the original with this verse; but it has been thought better to retain the division of our own version.

women shall be torn asunder, that the child may be extracted from the womb. In saying that the citizens of Samaria, and the inhabitants of the whole country, shall fall by the sword, he doubtless intimates that God would make use of this kind of punishment by sending for enemies who would consign them to destruction.

We now then see what is included in the words of the Prophet. He first shows that it was all over with Samaria and the whole kingdom of Israel; as God could by no means bring them to repentance, he would now take vengeance on so desperate an obstinacy. He afterwards shows that God would do this justly, because he had been provoked; and, lastly, he shows what kind their punishment would be. That they might not think that the Assyrians would come by chance, the Prophet says that this army, which was to invade and destroy the country of Samaria, would be, as it were, conducted by the hand of God; for though the Assyrians wished to extend their own borders, and were influenced by their own avarice and cupidity, yet God would use them as instruments to execute his own judgement; and that they might know how dreadful the vengeance would be, he relates two kinds of evils, --- that their children would be dashed in pieces, and that their women would be rent asunder, and their offspring extracted from their wombs. Even to speak of this is horrible; and it is what never takes place, except when enemies are greatly enraged and extremely provoked. We now then comprehend the meaning of the Prophet.

But if any one objects and says, that infants, and babes as yet concealed in the wombs of their mothers, deserve not such a grievous punishment, as they have not hitherto merited such a thing; it may be answered, that the whole human race are guilty before God, so that infants though not yet come forth to the light, are yet included as being under guilt; so that God cannot be charged with cruelty, though he may use his own right towards them. And further, we hear what he declares in many places, that he will devolve the sins of parents on their children. Since it is so, let us learn to acquiesce in these awful judgements of God, though very repugnant to our feelings; for we know that we must not contend with God, and that it would be extreme presumption to do so; nay, it would be impious audacity. Though then the reason for this punishment may not appear to us, we ought yet reverently to regard this judgement of God. We may moreover thus reason --- If infants be not spared, even those as yet hid in the mother's womb, what will become of adults? what will become of the old, who through their whole life have continued to provoke the vengeance of God? The Lord no doubt intended by these words to terrify those godless despisers of his word, with whom he had to do. ``How great a judgement,'' he says, ``hangs over you, and how tremendous! since your infants shall not be exempted: for I shall involve you in the same judgement, when they shall be dashed against the stones, after having been drawn out of their mothers' womb. When such a dreadful punishment shall be inflicted on them, what shall be done to you? for the cause of the evil exists in you.'' We have now then explained this verse. Then follows an exhortation.

Hosea 14

Chapter 14

Hosea 14:1-2

1. O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

1. Revertere Israel ad Jehovam Deum tuum; quia orruisti in iniquitate tua.

2. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips.

2. Tollite vobiscum verba, et convertimini ad Jehovam: et dicite ei, Omnem tolle iniquitatem, et sume (vel, attolle) bonum; et solvemus vitulos labiorum nostrorum.

Here the Prophet exhorts the Israelites to repentance, and still propounds some hope of mercy. But this may seem inconsistent as he had already testified that there would be no remedy any more, because they had extremely provoked God. The Prophet seems in this case to contradict himself. But the solution is ready at hand, and it is this, --- In speaking before of the final destruction of the people, he had respect to the whole body of the people; but now he directs his discourse to the few, who had as yet remained faithful. And this distinction, as we have reminded you in other places, ought to be carefully noticed; otherwise we shall find ourselves perplexed in many parts of Scripture. We now then see for what purpose the Prophet annexed this exhortation, after having asserted that God would be implacable to the people of Israel; for with regard to the whole body, there was no hope of deliverance; God had now indeed determined to destroy them, and he wished this to be made known to them by the preaching of Hosea. But yet God had ever some seed remaining among his chosen people: though the body, as a whole, was putrid and corrupt; yet some sound members remained, as in a large heap of chaff some grains may be found concealed. As God then had preserved some (as he is wont always to do,) he sets forth to them his mercy: and as they had been carried away, as it were by a tempest, when iniquity so prevailed among the people, that there was nothing sound, the Prophet addresses them here, because they were not wholly incurable.

Let us then know that the irreclaimable, the whole body of the people, are now dismissed; for they were so obstinate that the Prophet could address them with no prospect of success. Then his sermon here ought to be especially applied to the elect of God, who, having fallen away for a time, and become entangled in the common vices of the age, were yet not altogether incurable. The Prophet now exhorts them and says Return, Israel, to Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity This reason is added, because men will never repent unless they are made humble; and whence comes true and genuine humility, except from a sense of sin? Unless then men become displeased with themselves, and acknowledge that they are worthy of perdition, they will never be touched by a genuine feeling of penitence. These two things are then wisely joined together by Hosea, that Israel had fallen by their iniquities, and then, that it was time to return to Jehovah. How so? Because, when we are convinced that we are worthy of destruction, nays that we are already doomed to death for having so often provoked God, then we begin to hate ourselves; and a detestation of sin drives us to seek repentance.

But he says, Turn thou, Israel, to thy God The Prophet now kindly invites them; for he could not succeed by severe words without mingling a hope of favour, as we know that there can be no hope of repentance without faith. Then the Prophet not only shows what was necessary to be done, but says also, `Thou art Israel, thou art an elect people.' He does not, however, as it has been already stated, address all indiscriminately, but those who were the true children of Abraham, though they had for a time degenerated. ``Turn thou, Israel, then to thy God; for how much soever thou hast for a time fallen away, yet God has not rejected thee: only return to him, and thou shalt find favour, for he is placable to his own people.''

He afterwards shows the way of repentance: and this passage deserves to be noticed; for we know that men bring forward mere trifles when they speak of repentance. Hence when the word, repentance, is mentioned, men imagine that God is to be pacified with this or that ceremony, as we see to be the case with those under the Papacy. And what is their repentance? Even this, --- if on certain days they fast, if they mutter short prayers, if they undertake vowed pilgrimages, if they buy masses, --- if with these trifles they weary themselves, they think that the right and the required repentance is brought before God: but all this is altogether absurd. As then the world understands not what repentance means, and to what it leads, the Prophet here sets forth true repentance by its fruits. He therefore says, Take with you words, and turn to Jehovah; and say to him, Take away all iniquity and bring good, and we will render to thee the calves of our lips When he bids them to take or find words to present instead of sacrifice, he no doubt alluded to what the law teaches.

First, it is certain that the Prophet speaks not of feigned words; for we know what God declares by Isaiah,

`This people draw nigh me with their lips,
but their heart is from me far distant,' (Isaiah 29:13.)

But he bids them to take words, by which they might show what was conceived and felt in their heart. Then he means this first, that their words should correspond with their feeling.

It must, secondly, be noticed, that the Prophet speaks not here of any sort of words, but that there is to be a mutual relation between the words of God and the words of men. How are we then to bring words to God, such as prove the genuineness of our piety? Even by being teachable and submissive; by suffering willingly when he chastises us, by confessing what we deserve when he reproves us, by humbly deprecating vengeance when he threatens us, by embracing pardon when he promises it. When we thus take words from God's mouth, and bring them to him, this is to take words according to what the Prophet means in this place. We hence see the import of the Prophet's exhortation, when he bids us to take words: but I cannot proceed further now.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we now carry about us this mortal body, yea, and nourish through sin a thousand deaths within us, --- O grant, that we may ever by faith direct our eyes towards heaven, and to that incomprehensible power, which is to be manifested at the last day by Jesus Christ our Lord, so that in the midst of death we may hope that thou wilt be our Redeemer, and enjoy that redemption, which he completed when he rose from the dead; and not doubt but that the fruit which he then brought forth by his Spirit will come also to us, when Christ himself shall come to judge the world; and may we thus walk in the fear of thy name, that we may be really gathered among his members, to be made partakers of that glory, which by his death he has procured for us. Amen.

Lecture Thirty-seventh

Take with you words and turn to Jehovah and say to him, Take away all iniquity, and bring good, and we will pay thee the calves of our lips. We mentioned in our last lecture the sort of words the Prophet here bids the Israelites to take, while exhorting them to repent: for as they had been hitherto deaf and mute, he commands them to be not only attentive to the word of the Lord, but also prompt to respond, that there might be a mutual consent between the doctrine heard and their own confession. He now explains himself and says, Take away all iniquity, and bring good. These are the words with which he bids them to come to God. He dictates to them the confession which the Lord requires.

He first bids them to ask remission and the pardon of sins; for if a sinner desires to return into favour with God, and yet does not confess his guilt, he adopts a way the most strange. The very beginning must be a confession, such as the Prophet here describes. For the Israelites, by asking God to remit their sins, at the same time confessed themselves to be guilty before Him; yea, they condemned themselves that they might obtain gratuitous absolution. And emphatical is what they said, Take away all iniquity. Thus they confessed themselves to be guilty not only of one sin, but also of many sins, for which God might justly punish them, had he not been propitious to them. In short, they acknowledge here their various and multiplied guilt.

But they add, Bring good This sentence is commonly explained as if the Israelites said, that they had hitherto been barren and empty of good works, but that now being reconciled, they would be useful and profitable servants of God. But this sense

seems not to me suitable to this place; for he afterwards subjoins the evidence of gratitude, We shall pay the calves of our lips. He here speaks, I doubt not, of God's blessing, which flows from the gratuitous pardon of sins: for God does not simply receive us into favour, but also really shows that he is not in vain reconciled to us; for he adds the fruits of his paternal love, by favouring us with his kindness. As then the Prophet commanded the Israelites to bring words before God, so now he introduces them as praying that God would bring good: and Scripture is wont commonly to join these two together, --- the favour of God, by which he freely remits sins, --- and his blessing, which he grants to his children, after he has embraced them in his paternal love. Hence bring good; that is, ``O Lord, first receive us into favour, and then prove in reality that thou art propitious to us, even by outward benefits.''

It now follows, And we shall pay, or render, the calves of our lips In this passage, the faithful confess that they have nothing with which they can pay God in return, when he has bountifully granted them all things, except that they will celebrate his goodness in their praises, and confess that they owe all things to him. This is then a remarkable passage; for it sets forth God's goodness towards men, and then it teaches that men can render no mutual compensation, but can only bring praises by which they celebrate God's goodness, and nothing more, as it is said in Psalm 116,

`What shall I repay the Lord for all the benefits which he has conferred on me? The cup of salvation will I take, and on the name of the Lord will I call.'

There also the Prophet testifies that God is not liberal towards men because he expects or demands any thing from them, for what can they give? but that he still requires thanksgiving, and that he is content with the sacrifice of praise, as we find it also said in Psalm 116. But we learn the same thing from this passage, O Lord, they say, bring good; that is, ``Though we have in various ways exposed ourselves to thy judgement, having by our innumerable sins provoked thy wrath, yet let thy goodness surpass all our iniquities; having made us clean, bring also that good which has been hitherto, as it were, far away from us.'' For while God shows signs of his wrath, we are destitute of all his blessings. They therefore ask God, after restoring them to favour, to manifest to them his kindness. And what do they at last say? ``O Lord, we promise thee no compensation, for thou requires none, nor is it in our power to give any; but we will pay to thee the calves of the lips; that is, ``We will confess that we owe all things to thee; for it is only the sacrifice of praise that we can render thee, when thou hast loaded us with all kinds of blessings.''

And calves of the lips the Prophet fitly calls the praises which God requires as the chief sacrifice; for under the law, some offered calves when they paged their vows. But the Prophet shows that God regards not external sacrifices, but only those exercises which men perform in another way, even the sacrifices of thanksgiving. This then is the meaning of the metaphor; as though he said, ``The calves which are wont to be offered are not the true sacrifices in which God delights, but tend rather to show that men are to offer praise to God.'' We now then perceive the meaning of this verse. It follows ---

Hosea 14:3

3. Asshur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any

more to the work of our hands, Ye are our gods: for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

3. Assur (Assyrius) non servabit nos: super equum non ascendemus, et non dicemus posthac, Dii nostri, operi manuum nostrorum; quia in te misericordiam consequetur pupillus.

This verse ought to be joined with the last, as the Israelites show here more clearly and fully in what they had sinned, and, at the same time, give proof of their repentance; for when they say, The Assyrian shall not save us, we shall not mount on horses, we shall not say to the work of hands, Our gods, it is to be understood as a confession, that they had in these various ways roused against themselves the vengeance of God; for they had hoped for safety from the Assyrians, ran here and there, and had thus alienated themselves from God; they had also fled to statues and idols, and had transferred to dumb images the honour due to the only true God. We hence see, that though the faithful speak of future time, they yet indirectly confess that they had grievously sinned, had forsaken the only true God, and transferred their hopes to others, either to the Assyrians or to fictitious gods. But at the same time, they promise to be different in future; as though he said, that they would not only be grateful to God in celebrating his praises, but that their way of living would be also new, so as not to abuse the goodness of God. This is the substance of what is here said.

By saying, The Assyrian shall not save us, they doubtless condemned, as I have already stated, the false confidence with which they were before deluded, when they sought deliverance by means of the Assyrians. There is, indeed, no doubt, but that the Israelites were ever wont to pretend to trust in the name of God; but in thinking themselves lost without the succour of the Assyrians, they most certainly defrauded God of his just honour, and adorned men with spoils taken from him. For except we be convinced that God alone is sufficient for us, even when all earthly aids fail us, we do not place in him our hope of salvation; but, on the contrary, transfer to mortals what belongs alone to him. For this sacrilege the Israelites therefore condemn themselves, and, at the same time, show that the fruit of their repentance would be, to set their minds on God, so as not to be drawn here and there as before, or to think that they could be preserved through the help of men. Let us hence learn, that men turn not to God, except when they bid adieu to all creatures, and no longer fix their hopes on them. This is one thing.

What follows, On a horse we shall not mount, may be explained in two ways; --- as though they said, that they would no longer be so mad as to be proud of their own power, or consider themselves safe because they were well furnished with horses and chariots; --- but the clause may be more simply explained, as meaning, that they would not as before wander here and there to procure for themselves auxiliaries; We shall not then mount a horse, but continue quiet in our country; and this sense seems more appropriate. I do not then think that the Prophet brings forward any new idea, but I read the two sentences conjointly, The Assyrian shall not save us, we shall not then mount on a horse, that is, that we may ride in haste; for they had wearied themselves before with long journeys: as soon as any danger was at hand, they

went away afar off into Assyria to seek help, when God commanded them to remain quiet.

The meaning of this will be better understood by referring to other passages, which correspond with what is here said. God says by Isaiah, `On horses mount not; but ye said, We will mount: then mount,' says he, (Isaiah 30:16.) Here is a striking intimation, that the Jews against God's will rode and hastened to seek aids. ``I see you,'' he says, ``to be very prompt and swift: then mount, but it shall be for the purpose of fleeing.'' We see what was the design of this reproof of the Prophet; it was to show that the Jews, who ought to have remained still and quiet, fled here and there for the sake of seeking assistance. So also in this place, when they would show the fruit of their repentance, they say, ``We will not hereafter mount a horse, for the Lord, who promises to be our aid, is not to be sought as one far off: we will not then any more fatigue ourselves in vain.'' It seems to me that this is what is meant by the Prophet.

Then he adds, And we shall not say, Our gods, to the work of our hands. As they had spoken of the false trust they placed in men, so now they condemn their own superstition. And these are the two pests which are wont to bring destruction on men; for nothing is more ruinous than to transfer our hope from God; and this is done in two ways, either when men trust in their own strength, or pride themselves on human aids and despise God, as if they can be safe without him, --- or when they give up themselves to false superstitions. Both these diseases ever prevail in the world, when men entangle themselves in their own superstitions, and form for themselves new gods, from whom they expect safety; as we see to be the case with those under the Papacy. God is almost of no account with them, Christ is not sufficient. For how comes it that they contrive so many patrons for themselves, that they devise so many guardianships, except that they despise the help of God, or so extenuate it, that they dare not to hope for salvation from him? We hence see that superstition draws men away from God, and becomes thus the cause of the worst destruction. But there are some, who are not thus given up to superstitions, but who derive a hope from their own valour or wisdom; for the children of this world are inflated with their own strength; and when princes have their armies prepared, when they have fortified cities, when they possess abundance of money, when they are strengthened by many compacts, they are blinded with false confidence. So then this verse teaches us, that these are two destructive pests, which commonly draw men away from real safety; and if then we would repent sincerely from the heart, we must purge our minds from these two evils, so that we may not ascribe any thing to our own strength or to earthly helps, nor form any idols to be in the place of God, but feel assured that God alone is a sufficient help to us.

But it follows, For in thee will the fatherless find mercy. Here the Israelites show that it is necessary for us to be depressed that we may remain dependent on God alone; for those are compared to the fatherless who are so humbled, that they cast away all vain hopes, and, conscious of their nakedness and want, recumb on God alone. Hence, that God's mercy may find a way open to come to us, we must become fatherless. Now what this metaphor means is well known to us. The fatherless, we

know, are, first, destitute of aid, and, secondly, of wisdom; and they are also without strength. They are then dependent on the aid of another, and stand in need of direction; in short, their safety depends on the assistance of others. Thus, also, we are really fatherless, when we rely not on our own prudence, nor recumb on our own strength, nor think that we can be safe through the aids which come from the earth, but cast all our hopes and cares on God alone. This is one thing. The fatherless then shall find mercy in thee; that is, ``When thou, Lord, dost so afflict us, that we become wholly cast down, then we shall find mercy in thee; and this mercy will be sufficient for us, so that we shall no more wander and be drawn aside by false devices, as it has hitherto been the case with us.'' When, therefore, they say, in God will the fatherless find mercy, they mean that the grace offered by the Lord will be sufficient, so that there will be no need any more of seeking aid from any other. We now understand what the Prophet means in this verse. It follows ---

Hosea 14:4

4. I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.

4. Sanabo defectiones eorum, diligam eos sponte (vel, liberaliter;) quia aversus est furor meus ab eo.

God here confirms what we have observed respecting his gratuitous reconciliation, nor is the repetition useless; for as men are disposed to entertain vain and false hopes, so nothing is more difficult than to preserve them in dependence on the one God, and to pacify their minds, so that they disturb not nor fret themselves, as experience teaches us all. For when we embrace the promises of free pardon, our flesh ever leads us to distrust, and we become harassed by various fancies. ``What! can you or dare you promise with certainty to yourself that God will be propitious to you, when you know that for many reasons he is justly angry with you?'' Since, then, we are so inclined to harbour distrust, the Prophet again confirms the truth which we have before noticed, which is, that God is ready to be reconciled, and that he desires nothing more than to receive and embrace his people.

Hence he says, I will heal their defections The way of healing is by a gratuitous pardon. For though God, by regenerating us by his Spirit, heals our rebellion, that is, subdues us unto obedience, and removes from us our corruptions, which stimulate us to sin; yet in this place the Prophet no doubt declares in the person of God, that the Israelites would be saved from their defections, so that they might not come against them in judgement, nor be imputed to them. Let us know then that God is in two respects a physician while he is healing our sins: he cleanses us by his Spirit, and he abolishes and buries all our offences. But it is of the second kind of healing that the Prophet now speaks, when he says, I will heal their turnings away: and he employs a strong term, for he might have said, ``your faults or errors'' but he says, ``your defections from God;'' as though he said, ``Though they have so grievously sinned, that by their crimes they have deserved hundred deaths, yet I will heal them from these their atrocious sins, and I will love them freely.''

The word {נדבה}, nudebe, may be explained either freely or bountifully. I will then love them bountifully, that is, with an abounding and not a common love; or I will love

them freely, that is gratuitously. But they who render the words ``I will love them of mine own accord,'' that is, not by constraint, pervert the sense of the Prophet; for how frigid is the expression, that God is not forced to love us; and what meaning can hence be elicited? But the Lord is said to love us freely, because he finds in us no cause of love, for we are unworthy of being regarded or viewed with any favour; but he shows himself liberal and beneficent in this very act of manifesting his love to the unworthy.

We then perceive that the real meaning of the Prophet is this, that though the Israelites had in various ways provoked the wrath of God, and as it were designedly wished to perish, and to have him to be angry with them; yet the Lord promises to be propitious to them. In what way? Even in this, for he will give proof of his bounty, when he will thus gratuitously embrace them. We now see how God becomes a Father to us, and regards us as his children, even when he abolishes our sins, and also when he freely admits us to the enjoyment of his love. And this truth ought to be carefully observed; for the world ever imagines that they come to God, and bring something by which they can turn or incline him to love them. Nothing can be more inimical to our salvation than this vain fancy.

Let us then learn from this passage, that God cannot be otherwise a Father to us than by becoming our physician and by healing our transgressions. But the order also is remarkable, for God puts love after healing. Why? Because, as he is just, it must be that he regards us with hatred as long as he imputes sins. It is then the beginning of love, when he cleanses us from our vices, and wipes away our spots. When therefore it is asked, how God loves men, the answer is, that he begins to love them by a gratuitous pardon; for while God imputes sins, it must be that men are hated by him. He then commences to love us, when he heals our diseases.

It is not without reason that he adds, that the fury of God is turned away from Israel. For the Prophet intended to add this as a seal to confirm what he taught; for men ever dispute with themselves when they hear that God is propitious to them. ``How is this, that he heals thine infirmities? for hitherto thou hast found him to be angry with thee, and how art thou now persuaded that his wrath is pacified?'' Hence the Prophet seals his testimony respecting God's love, when he says, that his wrath has now ceased. Turned away then is my fury ``Though hitherto I have by many proofs, manifested to thee my wrath, yet I now come to thee as one changed. Judge me not then by past time, for I am now pacified to thee, and my fury is from thee turned away It follows ---

Hosea 14:5

5. I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon.

5. Ego quasi ros Israeli; florebit quasi lilium (alii vertunt, rosam:) figet radices suas quasi Libanus (vel, quasi Libani.)

The Prophet now again repeats what he had said, that God, after restoring the people to favour, would be so beneficent, as to render apparent the fruit of reconciliation. Seeing that the Israelites had been afflicted, they ought to have imputed this to their own sins, they ought to have perceived by such proofs, the wrath of God.

They had been so stupid as to have on the contrary imagined, that their adversities happened to them by chance. The Prophet had been much engaged in teaching this truth, that the Israelites would be ever miserable until they turned to God, and also, that all their affairs would be unhappy until they obtained pardon. He now speaks of a change, that God would not only by words show himself propitious to them, but would also give a proof by which the Israelites might know that they were now blessed, because they had been reconciled to God; for his blessing would be the fruit of his gratuitous love. Thus then ought this sentence, I will be to Israel as the dew, to be connected: He intimates that they were before dry, because they had been deprived of God's favour. He compares them to a rose or lily: for when the fields or meadows are burnt up by the heat of the sun, and there is no dew distilling from heaven, all things wither. How then can lilies and roses flourish, except they derive moisture from heaven, and the dew refreshes the grounds that they may put forth their strength? The reason then for the similitude is this, because men become dry and destitute of all vigour, when God withdraws his favour. Why? Because God must, as it were, distil dew, otherwise, as it has been said, we become wholly barren and dry. I will be then as dew to Israel

And further, He shall Flourish as the lily, and his roots he shall send forth Some render {ויך}, vaic, ``and he will strike;'' and {נכה}, nuke, means to strike. Others render the words, ``His branches will extend:'' but the verb is in the singular number, and the noun, ``roots,'' is in the plural. The Prophet then speaks of Israel, that he strikes his roots; but he means to fix in a metaphorical sense: he will then fix his roots. As when we strike, we fetch a blow, and extend our arms; so he will spread forth his roots as Libanus. This is the second effect of God's favour and blessing; which means, that the happiness of the people would be perpetual. With regard to the rose or lily, the meaning of the metaphor is, that God would suddenly, and as in a moment, vivify the Israelites, though they were like the dead. as in one night the lily rises, and unexpectedly also the rose; so sudden would be the change signified by this metaphor. But as the lilies and the roses soon wither, it was not enough to promise to Israel that their salvation would come suddenly; but it was needful to add this second clause, --- that though they would be like lilies and roses, they yet would be also like tall trees, which have deep roots in the ground, by which they remain firm and for a long time flourish.

We now then perceive the meaning of the Prophet. He mentions here the twofold effect of God's blessing as to the Israelites, --- that their restoration would be sudden, as soon as God would distil like the dew his favour upon them, and also that this happiness would not be fading, but enduring and permanent. And the words may be rendered, as Libanus, or as those of Libanus: as Libanus he shall cast forth his roots, as the trees which grow there; or, he shall cast forth his roots as the trees which are in Libanus. But as to the sense there is no difference. It follows ---

Hosea 14:6-7

6. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

6. Ibunt rami ejus, et erit quasi olivae decor ejus, et odor ei quasi Libani.

7. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and grow as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.

7. Revertentur incolae umbrae ejus (qui habitant sub ejus umbra) et se vivificabunt tritico (vel, quasi triticum,) et germinabunt tanquam vitis: odor ejus (alii vertunt, Memoriam; sed male; nam {זכר}, saicar, proprie memoriam significat, a verbo {זכר}, quod est Recordari; sed metaphorice etiam Hebraei odorem vocant memoriam; quia etiamsi res non videtur, tamen diffundit suam fragrantiam: odor igitur ejus tanquam vini Libani.

The Prophet goes on with the same subject, but joins the beginning of the first verse with the second clause of the former verse. He had said that the roots of the people would be deep when God should restore them. Now he adds, that their branches shall go on He mentions here ``to go on'' metaphorically for extending far; for branches of trees seem to go on, when they extend and spread themselves far and wide. His branches, then, shall go on; which means, that a tree, after striking roots, remains not in the same state, but grows and spreads forth its branches in all directions. In short, God promises a daily increase to his blessing, after he has once begun to show himself bountiful to the people of Israel. ``I will then be bountiful at the beginning; and further, he says, my blessing shall, as time passes, increase and be multiplied.''

He afterwards adds, His comeliness shall be like the olive The Prophet accumulates similitudes, that he might more fully confirm the people. And we certainly see that the minds of men grow faint, when they look for prosperity from this or that quarter; for there is hardly one in a hundred who is fully persuaded that when God is propitious, all things turn out well and happily: for men regard not the love of God when they wish things to be well with them, but wander here and there through the whole world; and now they seek prosperity from themselves, then from the earth, now from the air, then from the sea. Since then it is so difficult to impress this truth fully on the hearts of men, that the love of God is the fountain of all blessings, the Prophet has collected together a number of similitudes to confirm what he teaches. Then his comeliness, he says, shall be like the olive; and further, his fragrance like that of Libanus: and odoriferous trees, we know, grow on Mount Libanus. But by these various similes the Prophet shows that the state of the people would be prosperous and happy as soon as they should be received by God into favour. He afterwards adds, the dwellers under his shadow shall return; but I defer this till to-morrow.

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that as we are so miserable as soon as thou withdrawest thy favour from us, --- O grant, that we may deeply feel this conviction, and thus learn to be humble before thee, and to hate our ownselves, and that we may not in the mean lime deceive ourselves by such allurements as commonly prevail, to put our hope in creatures or in this world, but raise our minds upwards to thee, and fix on thee our hearts, and never doubt, but that when thou embraces us with thy paternal love, nothing shall be wanting to us. And in the meantime, may we suppliantly flee to thy mercy, and with true and genuine confession, acknowledge this to be our only

protection --- that thou deign to receive us into favour, and to abolish our sins, into which we not only daily fall, but by which we also deserve eternal death, so that we may daily rise through thy free pardon, till at length our Redeemer Christ thy Son shall appear to us from heaven. Amen.

Lecture Thirty-eighth

The dwellers under his shadow shall return, (so it is literally;) they shall revive themselves with corn, (or, revive as the corn;) they shall grow as the vine: his odour shall be as the wine of Libanus. The Prophet proceeds with the same subject, that God would show himself bountiful to his people, that it might plainly appear from their different state that they had before suffered just punishment. And he says, The dwellers under his shadow shall return. But the verb {ישבו}, ishibu, in this place rightly means, ``to be refreshed,'' as in Psalm 19; where the law of God is spoken of as {משיבת}, meshibet, converting the soul; which signifies the same as refreshing or restoring the soul. So the Prophet intimates, that after the Israelites shall begin to flourish again, their shadow would be vivifying, such as would restore and refresh those lying under it. He calls the ``dwellers under his shadow'', all those who belong to the people; and compares the common state of the people of Israel to a tree full of leaves, which extends its branches far and wide, so that they who flee under its shadow are defended from the heat of the sun. We now see the design of this metaphor, and what the Prophet means by the verb {ישבו}, ishibu

He afterwards adds They shall vivify themselves with corn, or, revive as corn. If we read the word in the nominative case, the preposition {כ}, caph, is to be understood. The ablative case is more approved by some, ``They shall vivify themselves with corn.'' But the former sense seems more suitable; for, as I have said yesterday, the Prophet, as he handles a truth difficult to be believed, does on this account accumulate similitudes, such as serve for confirmation. Hence they shall revive as corn; that is, they shall increase. As from one grain, we know, many stalks proceed; so also, since the prophet speaks of the increase of the people after their restoration to God's favour, he says that they would grow like corn.

But he adds, They shall germinate as the vine This similitude strengthens what I have just said, that the people are compared both to trees and to corn, and also to vines. And what is said of dwellers ought not to appear strange, for he wished more fully to express how this common benefit would come, that is, to every one. He afterwards adds, His odour shall be as the wine of Libanus; that is, when they shall germinate as the vine, they shall not produce common or sour wine, but the sweetest, such as is made on Mount Libanus, and which is of the best odour. But the Prophet means no other thing than that the Israelites will be happy, and that their condition will be prosperous and joyful, when they shall be converted from their superstitions and other vices, and shall wholly surrender themselves to be governed by God. This is the meaning. Let us now proceed ---

Hosea 14:8

8. Ephraim shall say, What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard him, and observed him: I am like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.

8. Ephraim, quid mihi adhuc cum idolis? [100] Ego respondi et respexi eum (vel, exaudivi:) Ego tanquam abies frondosa: a me fructus tuus inventus est.

The Prophet again introduces the Israelites speaking as before, that they would deplore their blindness and folly, and renounce in future their superstitions. The confession then which we have before noticed is here repeated; and it is a testimony of true repentance when men, being ashamed, are displeased with themselves on account of their sins, and apply their minds to God's service, and detest their whole former life. To this subject belongs what the Prophet now says. It is a concise discourse; but yet its brevity contains nothing obscure. Ephraim, he says, What have I to do with idols? There is indeed a verb understood, `Ephraim ``shall say'', What have I to do with idols?' But still it is evident enough what the Prophet means. There is then in these words, as I have said, a sincere confession; for the ten tribes express their detestation of their folly, that they had alienated themselves from the true God, and became entangled in false and abominable superstitions: hence they say, What have we to do with idols? and when they add, any more, they confess that their former life had been corrupt and vicious: at the same time they announce their own repentance, when they say that they would have nothing more to do with fictitious gods.

The reason follows, because God will hear and look on Israel, so as to become to him a shady tree. Some so explain this, as though God promised to be propitious to Israel after they had manifested their repentance. But they pervert the sense of the Prophet; for, on the contrary, he says, that after the Israelites shall perceive, and find even by the effect, that God is propitious to them, they will then say, ``How foolish and mad we were, while we followed idols? It is now then time that our souls should recumb on God.'' Why? ``Because we see that there is nothing better for us than to live under his safeguard and protection; for he hears us, he regards us, he is to us like a shady tree, so that he protects us under his shadow.'' We now perceive how these two clauses are connected together; for God shows the reason why Ephraim will renounce his idols because he will perceive that he was miserably deceived as long as he wandered after his idols. How will he perceive this? Because he will see that he is now favoured by the Lord, and that he was before destitute of his help. When God then shall give such a proof to his people, he will at the same time produce this effect, that they will cast away all false confidences, and confess that they were miserable and wretched while they were attached to idols. He therefore says, I have heard and favoured him What is then later in the words of the Prophet goes before; it precedes in order of things this clause, Ephraim shall say, What have I to do with idols?

In saying, I will be as a shady fir-tree, and adding at the same time, From me is thy fruit found, the two similitudes seem not to accord; for, as it is well known, the fir-tree bears no fruit. Why then is fruit mentioned? The answer is that these two similitudes

[100] Horsley renders the first clause thus, — “Ephraim! What have I to do any more with idols?” He considers it “the exultation of Jehovah over idols;” but the expression is so strange, taken in this sense, that the opinion cannot be entertained. It is doubtless the confession of Ephraim, as most commentators regard it. Newcome’s emendation, founded only on the Septuagint, is no less admissible, — “What hath Ephraim to do any more with idols?” He changes {{לי into .{לו} Our version and Calvin's is no doubt the best, most striking, and affording the best sense. --- Ed.

are not connected. For when God compares himself to a fir-tree, he speaks only of protection: and we know that when one seeks a cooling shade, he may find it under a fir-tree; besides, it is always green, as we all know, when leaves fall from other trees; and further, its height and thickness afford a good shadow. The reason, then, why God promises to be like a fir-tree to his people is this, because all who will fly under his shadow shall be preserved from the heat. But the meaning of the second similitude, that God would supply his people with fruit, is different. The Prophet had said before that the Israelites would be like a tree, which fixes its roots deep in the ground. He now transfers the name of a tree to God. Both these things are true; for when God makes us fruitful we are branches set in the best vine; and it is also true, that the whole fruit we have is from him; for all vigour would fail us, except God were to supply us with moisture, and even life itself. We now then see that there is no inconsistency in the words of the Prophet, as the object is different From me then is thy fruit found; as though God said, that the Israelites, if wise, would be content with his favour; for they who seek support from him will be satisfied; because they will find from him fruit sufficiently rich and abundant. We now then understand what is meant. But it follows ---

Hosea 14:9

9. Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? prudent, and he shall know them? for the ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them: but the transgressors shall fall therein.

9. Quis sapiens, et intelliget haec? Intelligens, et cognoscet ea? Quia rectae viae Jehovae, et justi ambulabunt in illis; et impii impingent in illis.

The Prophet, I have no doubt, very often inculcated what he here says, and frequently recalled it to mind, for we know that he had a constant struggle with extreme obstinacy. It was not only for one day that he found the people hard and perverse, but through the whole course of his preaching. Since then the Israelites continued, either openly to despise the Prophet's teaching, or at least to regard as fables what they heard from his mouth, or to chide him in words, and even to threaten him, when he treated them with severity and when the Prophet saw that the wickedness of the people was irreclaimable, he, being armed with confidence, no doubt went forth very often among them, and said ``Ye think that you shall be unpunished, while ye make a mock of what I teach; ye shall surely find at last that the ways of the Lord are right.'' And I have already reminded you, that the Prophets, after having harangued the people at large and in many words, reduced at last into brief heads what they had taught; for it is not probable, that since Hosea had so long discharged the office of a teacher, he had spoken only these few things, which might have been gone through in three hours. This is absurd. But when he had diligently attended to the office deputed to him, he afterwards, as I have said, collected together these few chapters, that the remembrance of his teaching might be perpetuated. What he was constrained then often to repeat, he now lays down at the end of his book, that it might be as it were a complete sealing up of his teaching.

Who is wise, he says, and he will understand these things? who is intelligent, and he will know them? This interrogatory mode is expressive; for Hosea was amazed

at the fewness of those who yielded themselves to be taught by God. The Israelites no doubt, arrogated to themselves great wisdom, as ungodly men are wont to do. For they seem to themselves to be then especially acute, when they laugh at every thing like piety, when they treat God's name with scorn, and indulge themselves, as we see at this day, in their own impiety. And this diabolical rage lays hold on many, because they think that they would be very simple and stupid, were they to embrace any thing the Scripture contains. ``O! what is faith but foolish credulity?'' This is the thought that comes to their minds. There are also filthy dogs, who hesitate not to vomit forth such a reproach as this, ``Only believe! But what is this thy believing, but wilfully to give up all judgement and all choice, and to allow thyself to be like mute cattle driven here and there? If then thou art wise, believe nothing.'' Thus godless men speak; and hence, as I have said, they pride themselves on their own acuteness, when they can shake off every fear of God and all regard for divine truth. There were many such, we may easily believe, in the time of the Prophet. Since then the whole land was filled with dreadful contempt of God, and yet men commonly thought themselves wise, nay, imagined in their deep thoughts, as Isaiah says, [101] that they could deceive God, he now asks, Who is wise, and he will understand? As though he said, ``I indeed see, that if I believe you, ye are all wise; for, imitating the giants, ye dare to rise up against God, and ye think yourselves ingenious when ye elude every truth, when ye proudly tread religion under foot; in this way ye are all wise. But at the same time, if there be any grain of wisdom in you, you must surely acknowledge me to be sent by God, and that what I declare is not the invention of men, but the word of the living God.'' We now then see what force there is in this question, when the Prophet says, Who is wise, and he will understand these things? Who is intelligent, and he will know them?

We at the same time see that the Prophet here condemns all the wisdom of men, and as it were thunders from heaven against the pride of those who thus presumptuously mock God; for how much soever they imagined themselves to be pre-eminent, he intimates that they were both blind and stupid and mad. Who then is wise? he says. But at the same time, he shows that the true wisdom of men is to obey God and to embrace his word; as it is said in another place, that wisdom and the beginning of wisdom is the fear of God, (Proverbs 1:7.) Whosoever then wishes to be truly wise, he must begin with the fear of God and with reverence to his word; for where there is no religion, men cannot certainly understand any thing aright. Let us suppose men endued, not only with great clearness of mind, but also with the knowledge of all the sciences; let them be philosophers, let them be physicians, let them be lawyers, let nothing be wanting to them, except that they have no true knowledge of eternal life, would it not be better for them to be mere cattle than to be thus wise, to exercise their minds for a short time on fading things, and to know that all their highly valued treasure shall perish with their life? Surely to be thus wise is far more wretched than if men were wholly void of understanding. Justly then does the Prophet intimate here that those were not only foolish, but also mad, and wholly destitute of all understanding, who regarded not celestial truth, and were deaf to

[101] Isaiah 19:15. — fj.

the Prophets, and discerned not when God spake, nor understood the power of his word. All then who are not thus wise, the Prophet justly says, are utterly void of all prudence and judgement: he therefore repeats the same thing, Who is wise, and he will understand these things? Who is intelligent, and he will know them? that is, ``If any excels others, he ought surely to show in this particular his wisdom, and if any one is endued with common understanding, he ought to know what this doctrine means, in which the image and glory of God shine forth brightly. All then who know and understand nothing in this respect are no doubt altogether foolish.''

He afterwards adds, For right are the ways of Jehovah He alleges this truth in opposition to the profane rashness of men, who haughtily reject God, and dare to despise his word. Right, he says, are the ways of the Lord: and by saying that they are right, he no doubt glances at the abominable blasphemies which the ungodly have recourse to, when they wish to render the word of God not only odious and contemptible, but also absurd, so as not to deserve any respect. Thus we see at this day, that godless men not only in words reject both the Law and the Prophets, but also search out pretences, that they may appear to be doing right in destroying all faith in the oracles of God. For instance, they seek out every sort of contradiction in Scripture, every thing not well received, every thing different from the common opinion, --- all these absurdities, as they call them, they collect together, and then they draw this conclusion, that all those are fools, who submit to any religion, since the word of God, as they say, contains so many absurd things. This raving madness prevailed then no doubt in the world: and the Prophet, by saying that right are the ways of Jehovah, means, that how much soever the ungodly may clamour, or murmur, or taunt, nothing is yet done by the Lord but what is right, and free from every blame and defect. However much then the ungodly may vomit forth slanders against the word of God, it is the same as if they threw dust into the air to darken the light of the sun; just so much they effect, he seems to say, by their audacity: for perfect rectitude will ever be found in the ways of the Lord; his word will ever be found free from every stain or defect.

He then adds, And the just shall walk in them, but in them shall the ungodly stumble By saying that the just shall walk in them, he confirms the last sentence by experience, for the just really find the ways of the Lord to be right We ought also to be furnished with this assurance, if we would boldly repel all the impious calumnies, which are usually heaped together by profane men against the word of God: for if we know not what it is to walk in the ways of the Lord, we shall surely, as soon as any thing is alleged against them, be suspended in doubt, or be wholly upset; for we see that many, not deeply rooted in the word of God, instantly quail, as soon as any thing is said against it, because they know not what it is to walk in the ways of the Lord; but they who walk in the Lord's ways courageously fight against all the temptations of the world; they carry on the context that they may attain celestial life; they feel assured that though now miserable for a time, they shall yet be blessed, for they have embraced the grace of God in Christ; they are sustained too by their own conscience, so that they can look down on all the reproaches and slanders of the world, and proceed onward in their course. They then who thus walk in the

ways of the Lord are unconquerable; yea, were the whole world to oppose them, and were the ungodly with their profane words to infect the whole atmosphere, the godly would still pursue their course until they reached the end. All the ways of Jehovah are therefore right, the just shall walk in them; but in them shall the ungodly stumble, or fall; for {כשל}, cashel, means both, but I prefer rendering it ``stumble,'' as it seems more suitable to the design of the Prophet. The just then find a plain and an even way in the word of the Lord, and nothing stands in their path to obstruct their course, and by daily advances they attain that to which the Lord calls them, even their celestial inheritance. The just shall thus walk in the Lord's ways, because the Lord will lead them, as it were, by his hand; faith will be to them for hundred eyes, and also for wings: and hope, at the same time, sustains them; for they are armed with promises and encouragements; they have also stimulants, whenever the Lord earnestly exhorts them; they have, besides, in his threatenings, such terrors as keep them awake. Thus then the faithful find in the word of the Lord the best ways, and they follow them. But what of the ungodly? They imagine all doubts, even the least, to be mountains: for as soon as they meet with any thing intricate or obscure, they are confounded, and says ``I would gladly seek to know the Holy Scriptures but I meet with so many difficulties.'' Hence when a doubt is suggested, they regard it as a mountain; nay, they purposely pretend doubts, that they may have some excuse, when they wish to evade the truth, and turn aside that they may not follow the Lord. The ungodly, then, stumble in the ways of Jehovah. But this ought to be read adversatively, ``Though the ungodly stumble, yet the just shall always walk in the ways of Jehovah;'' which means, that there is no reason why the ungodly should stop or retard us by their continual stumbling, and by exclaiming that the word of God is full of what gives offence; for we shall find in it an even way, only let us ascribe to God this glory, that he is just, and that his ways are right. This is the meaning of the sentence.

End of the Prophecies of Hosea

Addenda to Hosea

The addenda to Hosea are located here.

Historical Scripture Translation

Translation: Hosea 1

CHAPTER 1

1 THE word of Jehovah, which came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel.

2 The beginning of what Jehovah spoke by Hosea: Jehovah said to Hosea, ``Go, take to thee a wife of wantonness, and children of wantonness; for by wantoning the land hath become wanton, so that it follows not Jehovah.''

3 And he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bare him a son:

4 And Jehovah said to him, ``Call his name Jezreel; for yet a little while and I will visit the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel;

5 And it shall be in that day, that I will break in pieces the bow in the valley of Jezreel.''

6 And she conceived again, and bare a daughter; and he said to him, ``Call her name Loruchamah; for I will no more show mercy to the house of Israel, for I will utterly take them away: (**56**.) [102]

7 But to the house of Judah I will show mercy, and will save them by Jehovah their God; and I will save them neither by the bow, nor by the sword, nor by battle, nor by horses, nor by horsemen.''

8 And she weaned Lo-ruchamah, and conceived, and bare a son;

9 And he said, ``Call his name Lo-ammi; for ye are not my people, and I will not be yours:

10 Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall be, that in the place where it had

[102] This number refers to the page where another rendering is proposed.

been said to them, `Ye are not my people,' even there it shall be said, `Ye are the children of the living God:'

11 And assembled together shall be the children of Judah and the children of Israel, and shall set over themselves one head, and shall ascend from the land, though great shall be the day of Jezreel.''

Translation: Hosea 2

CHAPTER 2. [103]

1 Say to your brethren, ``My people;'' And to your sisters, ``Beloved.'' ---

2 Contend with your mother, contend; For she is not my wife, and I am not her husband: Let her then remove her fornications from her face,And her adulteries from the midst of her breasts;

3 Lest I strip her naked, And place her as on the day of her nativity, And set her as the desert, and set her as a dry land, And make her to die with thirst.

4 And her children I will not pity; For they are spurious children:

5 For the wanton has their mother played; With lewdness is she defiled who hath conceived them; For she said, --- ``I will go after my lovers, Who give me my bread and my waters, My wool, and my flax, and my oil, and lily drink.''

6 Behold, therefore, I will close up her way with thorns, And surround her with a mound, And her path she shall not find;

7 And she will follow her lovers, and shall not overtake them, And will seek them, and shall not find them; Then she will say, --- ``I will go and return to my former husband, For better was it. with me then than now.''

8 And she knew not that I gave to her corn, and wine, and oil, And multiplied to her the silver and the gold, Which they applied to Baal.

9 I will therefore return, and take away the corn in its time, And my new wine in its season; And will snatch away my wool and flax, By which she covered her own nakedness;

10 And I will now uncover her baseness before the eyes of her lovers, And no one shall rescue her from my hand;

[103] The portions supposed to be in the original in a poetical metre are placed here in parallel lines, not because they are so arranged by Calvin, but for the purpose of setting forth the meaning in a clearer light. It is proper also to say, that the sectional divisions are those of the Editor.

11 And I will cause to cease all her joy and her mirth, Her new Moon, her sabbath, and every festal-day;

12 And I will destroy her vine and her fig-tree, Of which she said, --- ``These are my rewards, Which my lovers have given me;'' And will set them as the forest, And eat them shall the beast of the field;

13 And I will visit on her the days of Baalim, To whom she offered incense, And adorned herself with her earring and her chain, And went after her lovers, and forgat me, saith Jehovah.

14 Behold, therefore, I will turn her, When I shall have led her to the desert, And will speak to her heart;

15 And will give her thence her vineyards, And the valley of Achor for a door of hope; And there she will sing as in the days of her youth, And as in the day she ascended from the land of Egypt.

16 And it shall be in that day, saith Jehovah, That thou shalt call me, --- ``My Husband,'' And shalt no more call me, --- ``My Baal:''

17 And I will take away the names of Baalim from her mouth, And she will no more remember their name:

18 I will also make for them a covenant, in that day, With the beast of the field, and the bird of heaven, and the reptile of the earth; And the bow, and the sword, and the battle, I will break from the land; And I will make them rest in security:

19 I will also espouse thee to me for ever, And espouse thee to me in righteousness, And in judgment, and in kindness, and in mercies; And I will espouse thee to me in faithfulness, And thou shalt know Jehovah.

20 And in that day I will hear, saith Jehovah, I will hear the heavens, and they will hear the earth, And the earth will hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil, And these will hear Jezreel: And I will sow her for me in the land, And show mercy to her who obtained not mercy, And will say to Lo-ammi, --- ``Ye are my people'' And they will say, --- *``Thou art* our God.''

Translation: Hosea 3

CHAPTER 3

1 And Jehovah said to me, --- ``Go again, love a woman beloved by a husband, and who is an adulteress, --- according to the love of Jehovah towards the children of Israel, who yet look to strange gods, and love flagons of grapes.''

2 And I bought her for myself for fifteen silverings and one homer of barley, and half an homer of barley.

3 And I said to her, --- ``For many days shalt thou abide for me; thou shalt not play the wanton, and shalt not be for any man, and I also shall be for thee.''

4 For the children of Israel shall for many days abide without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without a statue, and without an ephod, and without teraphim.

5 Afterward shall the children of Israel return and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king; and they shall fear Jehovah and his goodness at the end of days.

Translation: Hosea 4

CHAPTER 4

1 Hear the word of Jehovah, ye children of Israel; For a contention has Jehovah with the inhabitants of the land, For there is no faithfulness and no kindness, And no knowledge of God in the land:

2 Cursing, and lying, and murder, And stealing, and adultery, have burst forth; And blood have touched blood.

3 Mourn therefore shall the land, And languish shall every one who dwells in it; Together with the beast of the field, the bird of heaven, And also the fish of the sea, shall they be taken away.

4 But yet no man may rebuke and reprove a man; For thy people are as those who chide the priest.

5 Fall then shalt thou in the daytime, And fall also shall the Prophet with thee in the night; And I will destroy thy mother.

6 Perished have my people without knowledge: As thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, That thou shalt not discharge for me the priesthood; And as thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, Thy children will I also forget.

7 According to their increase, so have they sinned against me: Their glory will I turn to shame.

8 The sin of my people they eat, And to their iniquity they raise up the soul of each. (**154**)

9 And it shall be, as the people so shall be the priest; And I will visit on them their ways, And their works will I repay them:

10 For they shall eat, and shall not be satisfied: They shall play the wanton, and shall not increase; For Jehovah have they left off to serve.

11 Wantonness and wine, and new wine, take away the heart.

12 My people their wood consult, And their staff answers them; For the spirit of wantonness has deceived them, And they have played the wanton away from their

God:

13 On the tops of mountains they sacrifice, And on hills they burn incense --- Under the oak, and the poplar, and the teil-tree, For pleasant is its shade. Therefore your daughters shall become wanton, And your daughters-in-law shall be adulteresses. ---

14 I will not punish your daughters, because they become wanton, Nor your daughters-in-law, because they have committed adulteries; For they with strumpets separate themselves, And with harlots they sacrifice: --- And the people who understand not shall stumble.

15 If thou, Israel, art become wanton, let not Judah offend; Come ye not to Gilgal, nor ascend into Bethaven, Nor swear, Jehovah liveth.

16 For as an untameable heifer, untameable is Israel: Now feed him will Jehovah, as a tender lamb, in a spacious place.

17 To idols has Ephraim joined himself; --- leave him.

18 Putrid is become their drink, By wantoning they have become wanton; ``Bring ye,'' have their princes shamefully loved.

19 They have bound up wind in their wings, And ashamed they shall be of their sacrifices.

Translation: Hosea 5

CHAPTER 5

1 Hear this, ye priests, and attend, ye house of Israel, And ye house of the king, give ear, --- For to you is judgment; For a snare have you been in Mizpah, And a net expanded over Tabor.

2 And turning aside in sacrificing they are deeply fixed; Yet a correction have I been to them all.

3 I have known Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me; For thou Ephraim art wanton, polluted is Israel.

4 They apply not their endeavors to turn to their God; For the spirit of wantonness is in the midst of them. And Jehovah they have not known

5 And testify does the pride of Israel to his face: Israel then and Ephraim shall fall in their iniquity, Fall also shall Judah with them.

6 With their sheep and their herds shall they go to seek Jehovah; But shall not find him: he has separated himself from them.

7 With Jehovah have they dealt perfidiously; For strange children have they begotten: Now devour them shall a month, together with their portions.

8 Sound the cornet in Gibeah, blow the trumpet in Ramah, Blow also the horn in Bethaven after thee, Benjamin: ---

9 Ephraim shall be a waste in the day of correction; Among the tribes of Israel have I taught this truth.

10 The princes of Judah have been as those who remove the boundary; On them will I pour, as waters, my fury.

11 Exposed to plunder has Ephraim been, broken by judgment; For he willingly walked after the commandments.

12 And as a moth have I been to Ephraim, And as a worm to the house of Judah;

13 And Ephraim saw his disease, and Judah his wound; Ephraim went to Assur, and sent to king Jareb: Yet he could not heal you, nor will he cure you of your wound;

14 For as a lion shall I be to Ephraim, And as a young lion to the house of Judah: I --- I will tear and go away; I will take away, and none shall deliver. ---

15 I will go, I will return to my place, Until they confess that they have sinned, and seek my face: When they shall have affliction, they will seek me: ---

Translation: Hosea 6

CHAPTER 6

1 ``Come and let us return to Jehovah; For he hath torn, and he will heal us; He hath smitten, and he will bind up our wounds:

2 He will revive us after two days, On the third day he will raise us up,

3 And we shall live in his presence: And we shall know and pursue after the knowledge of Jehovah; As the dawn, his going forth is appointed; And he shall come as the rain to us, As the latter rain --- a rain to the earth.'' (**260**)

4 What shall I do to thee, Ephraim? What shall I do to thee, Judah? For your goodness is like the morning dew, Like the cloud which passeth away early.

5 I have therefore hewn them by my Prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth; And thy judgments have been as the light which goeth forth:

6 For mercy I desire, and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God before burnt-offerings.

7 But they as men have transgressed the covenant; In this they have dealt perfidiously with me.

8 Gilead is a city of those who work iniquity, filled with blood;

9 And, as robbers wait for a man, The company of priests kill in the way by consent; For their wicked purpose they accomplish.

10 In the house of Israel have I seen infamy; There is the wantonness of Ephraim, --- Israel is polluted.

11 Judah also did set a plant for thee, While I was restoring the captivity of my people.

Translation: Hosea 7

CHAPTER 7

1 While I was healing Israel, Then were discovered the iniquity of Ephraim, And the vices of Samaria; For they dealt falsely, and the thief entered in, The robber plundered abroad:

2 And they said not in their heart, That I remember all their wickedness: Surrounded them have now their vices, --- they are in my sight.

3 By their wickedness they cheer the king, And by their falsehoods the princes. All are adulterers, like an oven heated by the baker;

4 .Who ceases from stirring up, After mixing the dough, till it be fermented.

5 The day of our king! --- the princes Have made him sick with a bottle of wine; --- He stretched forth his hand to scorners.

6 For they have made ready, as an oven, Their heart, for lying in wait: All the night their baker sleeps; In the morning the oven burns as a flaming fire

7 All are hot like an oven; They have consumed their own judges, --- All their kings have fallen; --- No one among them cries to me.

8 Ephraim mingles himself with the nations; Ephraim is become bread baked under the ashes, Which has not been turned:

9 Eaten have strangers his strength, and he knows it not; And hoariness has spread over him, and he knows it not;

10 And testify does the pride of Israel to his face; But they have not returned to Jehovah their God, Nor sought him notwithstanding all these things.

11 Ephraim is also like a silly dove, without understanding; They cry on Egypt, they go to Assyria:

12 But when they go, I will expand over them my net, As a bird of heaven, I will bring them down, I will hold them fast, as their assembly have heard.

13 Woe to them! for they have gone back from me; Desolation to them! for they have dealt perfidiously with me: Though I redeemed them, They have yet spoken

lies against me:

14 And they have not cried to me with their heart; For they howled on their beds; For corn and wine they assemble together; --- They have revolted from me: (**269**)

15 Though I have bound and strengthened their arms, Yet against me they contrive evil.

16 They return not to God; They have been like a deceitful bow: Fallen by the sword have their princes, Through the pride of their tongue; --- This will be their reproach in the land of Egypt.

Translation: Hosea 8

CHAPTER 8

1 To thy mouth the trumpet! As an eagle, against the house of Jehovah; For they have transgressed my covenant, And against my law have they acted perfidiously.

2 To me will Israel exclaim, ``My God, we have known thee,''

3 Israel has cast good far away; --- The enemy will closely pursue him:

4 They have caused to reign, but not by me; Dominion have they set up, but I knew not; Of their silver and their gold they have made for themselves idols; They shall therefore be cut off.

5 Cast thee far away has thy calf, O Samaria! --- Kindled has my fury against them: How long will they not bear cleanness?

6 For even from Israel it is; The artificer has made it, and it is no god; For in fragments shall be the calf of Samaria.

7 Surely the wind they sow, and the tempest they shall reap; There is no stalks --- the grain will produce no flour; If indeed it will produce, strangers will devour it.

8 Devoured is Israel, --- now shall he be among the Gentiles, Like a vessel in which there is no delight:

9 For they went up to Assyria, like a solitary wild ass; --- Ephraim hired lovers:

10 Though they have hired among the nations, I will now gather them; And they shall grieve a little under the burden of the king and princes.

11 Because Ephraim has multiplied altars to sin, Altars for sinning shall be to him.

12 I have written for him the precious things of my law; As something strange have they been accounted.

13 For sacrifices of burnt-offerings they offer flesh, and eat; Jehovah will not regard it as acceptable: He will now remember their iniquity, He will visit their wickedness; --- To Egypt shall they return.

14 For Israel has his Maker forgotten, and built altars: Judah also has multiplied fortified cities; But I will send fire on his cities, And it shall devour his palaces.

Translation: Hosea 9

CHAPTER 9

1 Rejoice not, Israel, with joy like that of the people; For thou hast become wanton from thy God; Thou hast loved wages on all the floors of corn. ---

2 The floor and the vat shall not feed them, And the new wine shall disappoint them:

3 They shall not dwell in the land of Jehovah; And return shall Ephraim to Egypt, And in Assyria they shall eat what is unclean:

4 To Jehovah they shall not pour wine, And acceptable to him shall not be their libations; Their sacrifices shall be to them as the bread of mourners, --- Whosoever will eat shall be polluted; For their bread for their soul, It shall not come into the house of Jehovah.

5 What will ye do on the solemn day, On the festal-day of Jehovah?

6 For, behold, they are gone away on account of desolation; --- Egypt will gather them, Memphis will bury them. The wished-for store of their silver will the nettle possess, --- The thorn shall be in their tents.

7 The days of visitation have come, The days of retribution have come: Israel shall know the prophet to be foolish, And mad the man of the spirit, --- For the number of thy iniquity and great hatred.

8 The watchman of Ephraim for my God, the prophet, Is a snare of a fowler on all his ways, A hateful thing in the house of his God. --- (**327**)

9 They are deeply fixed, corrupt are they as in the days of Gibeah: He will remember their iniquity, he will visit their sins.

10 As grapes in the desert I found Israel, As the first fruit of the fig-tree, at its beginning, I saw your fathers: --- They went in into Baalpeor, And separated themselves unto shame, And became abominable like their lovers.

11 Ephraim! --- as a bird has fled their glory --- (**336**) From the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception:

12 For if they bring up their children, I shall exterminate them, that they shall not be men: --- Surely, woe to them, when I shall depart from them!

13 Ephraim, as I have seen in Tyrus, Is a tree planted in a house: (**339**) Yet Ephraim is to bring forth to the slaughter his children!

14 ``Give to them, Jehovah, --- what wilt thou give? Give to them an abortive womb and dry breasts.''

15 All their evil is in Gilgal; For there I conceived hatred against them: On account of the wickedness of their works, From my house I will cast them out; I will not continue to love them; --- All their princes are apostates.

16 Smitten has Ephraim been; Their root has dried up, --- fruit they will not bear: And if they bring forth, I will slay The wished---for fruit of their womb. ---

17 Cast them away will my God; For they hearkened not to him: And they shall be wanderers among the nations.

Translation: Hosea 10

CHAPTER 10

1 A vine robbed is Israel; Fruit will he lay up for himself: (**351**) According to the abundance of his fruit Hath he abounded towards altars; According to the goodness of his land Hath he done good to statues.

2 Divided has been their heart; They shall now be proved guilty: --- He will overturn their altars, He will destroy their statues.

3 For now they will say, --- ``We have no king, Because we feared not Jehovah; And a king, what will he do for us?'' ---

4 They have spoken words only, --- Swearing falsely, --- making a covenant: (**356**) Judgment grows up as wormwood in the furrows of the field.

5 For the calves of Bethaven, (**359**) Tremble will the inhabitants of Samaria; For mourn over it will its people, And its priests, who rejoice in it, over its glory: For it shall depart from it;

6 And itself shall to Assyria be carried, A present to king Jareb: --- Shame shall Ephraim receive, And ashamed shall Israel be of his counsel.

7 Cut down shall be the king of Samaria, As a foam on the surface of the waters. (**363**)

8 Perish shall the high places of Aven --- the sin of Israel; The thorn and the thistle shall come up on their altars; And they shall say to the mountains, ``Cover us,'' And to the hills, ``Fall on us.''

9 From the days of Gibeah hast thou, Israel, sinned: There they stood, --- the battle in Gibeah, Against the children of iniquity, laid not hold on them.

10 It is my wish, and I will chastise them; And assembled against them shall nations be, When they shall be bound together by their two furrows. (**371**)

11 Ephraim is an heifer, trained to love the treading of corn; But I passed over on her beautiful neck; --- To ride will I make Ephraim, --- Plough shall Judah, --- harrow for himself shall Jacob.

12 Sow for yourselves in righteousness, Gather for your measure kindness; Plough for yourselves what has been ploughed: And time it is to seek Jehovah, till he come, And rain righteousness upon you: ---

13 Ye have ploughed ungodliness, iniquity have ye reaped; Ye have eaten the fruit of falsehood: For you have trusted in your own way, In the multitude of thy valiant ones.

14 A tumult shall therefore rise among thy people, And every one of thy fortresses shall be laid waste, According to the devastation of Shalman in Betharbel: In the day of battle shall the mother, With the children, be dashed in pieces. ---

15 Thus shall Bethel do to you, On account of wickedness --- of your wickedness: In one morning shall utterly perish the king of Israel.

Translation: Hosea 11

CHAPTER 11

1 When Israel was a child, then I loved him: And from Egypt I called my son. ---

2 They called them; --- so they turned away from their presence; --- To Baalim they offered sacrifices, And to graven images they burnt incense.

3 And I, my walking was on foot, To raise up Ephraim by his arms: And they knew not that I healed them.

4 By the cords of man I drew them, by the chains of love: And I was to them as those who raise up the yoke on the cheeks; And I have extended meat to them.

5 They shall not return to the land of Egypt, Assur shall rule over them; For they have been unwilling to return:

6 And fall shall the sword on their cities, And destroy their bars; And it shall destroy on account of their counsels.

7 For my people are bent on defection from me; When to the Most High they call them, No one at all raises up himself.

8 How shall I set thee aside, Ephraim? Shall I deliver thee up, Israel? How shall I make thee as Sodom? Shall I set thee as Zeboim? Inverted within me is my heart, Rolled back again are my repentings:

9 I will not execute the fury of my wrath, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; For God am I, and not man, In the midst of thee, holy; --- And I will not enter the city.

10 After Jehovah shall they walk, And as a lion will he roar; When he shall roar, then dread shall children from the sea, ---

11 They shall dread as a sparrow in Egypt, And as a dove in the land of Assur; And I will make them to dwell in their own houses, saith Jehovah.

12 Surrounded me hath Ephraim with falsehood; And with fraud, the house of Israel: But Judah as yet rules with his God; And together with the saints he is faithful.

Translation: Hosea 12

CHAPTER 12

1 Ephraim feeds on the wind, and pursues the east wind; Daily he multiplies falsehood and devastation: A covenant they make with the Assyrian, And oil is carried into Egypt.

2 Jehovah has also a contention with Judah; And he will visit Jacob; --- according to his ways, According to his works, he will requite him.

3 In the womb he laid hold on his brother's foot, And by his strength he had power with God;

4 And he had power with the Angel and prevailed; He wept and entreated him: In Bethel he found him; --- and there he spoke with us,

5 Even Jehovah, God of hosts, --- Jehovah is his memorial,

6 And thou, to thy God return; Goodness and judgment observe, And hope in thy God always.

7 Canaan! --- in his hand is the balance of fraud; He loves to plunder:

8 Yet Ephraim said, ``I am however become rich; I have found wealth for myself; In all my labors they shall not find in me An iniquity, which is a sin.''

9 But I, Jehovah, thy God from the land of Egypt. Will yet make thee to dwell in tents, As in the days of the assembly.

10 I have also spoken by the Prophets, And visions have I multiplied, And through the Prophets used similitudes: ---

11 Is there (still) iniquity in Gilead? --- Surely vain have they been: In Gilgal they have sacrificed oxen, And their altars have been as heaps On the furrows of the field.

12 Even Jacob fled to the land of Syria, And Israel served for a wife, And for a wife he kept sheep:

13 And by a Prophet did Jehovah bring Israel out of Egypt, And by a Prophet he was preserved: ---

14 (Yet) Ephraim has provoked him by his high places; (**446**) But his blood shall

on him remain, And his reproach [104] will his Lord return to him.

[104] Is it not the reproach of Jacob, mentioned above, he having been in a servile state? — Ed.

Translation: Hosea 13

CHAPTER 13

1 When Ephraim spoke there was trembling; He exalted himself in Israel: But he sinned by Baal and died.

2 And now they have added to their sin, And have made for themselves what is molten, From their silver, according to their own understanding, Even idols --- all being the work of artificers: To each other they, who sacrifice men, say, --- ``Let them kiss the calves.''

3 They shall therefore be like a morning cloud, Like the dew that rises up early, Like the chaff which is driven by a whirlwind from the floor, And like the smoke from the chimney.

4 But I, Jehovah, am thy God from the land of Egypt; And a god besides me thou shouldst not know; For a Savior, there is none except me.

5 I knew thee in the desert, in the land of droughts:

6 According to their pastures they were filled; (**459**) They were filled, and their heart was elevated: And hence they forgat me.

7 I will therefore be to them as a lion, As a leopard in the way I will lie in wait;

8 I will meet them as a bereaved bear, And rend the inclosure of their heart; I will devour them as a lion; --- The beast of the field shall tear them.

9 Destroyed art thou, Israel, Though in me was thy help: (**464**)

10 I will be the same; --- thy king, where is he? To save thee in all thy cities, --- And thy princes? --- of whom thou hast said --- ``Give me a king and princes.''

11 I gave thee a king in my anger, And took him away in my fury.

12 Sealed up is the iniquity of Ephraim, Laid up in store is his sin.

13 The sorrows of one in travail shall come on him; He is an unwise son; For he should not stand long in the breaking forth of children.

14 From the power of the grave would I deliver them, From death would I redeem them; I would be thy perdition, O death; I would be thy destruction, O grave: ---

Repentance is hid from my eyes.

15 Though among his brethren he may increase, Yet there shall come an east wind The wind of Jehovah, ascending from the desert; And it will dry up his spring, And dried shall be his fountain; It will spoil the store of every desirable vessel.

16 Desolated shall be Samaria, For she has provoked her God: By the sword shall they fall; Their infants shall be dashed in pieces, Their pregnant women shall be ripped up.

Translation: Hosea 14

CHAPTER 14

1 Return, Israel, to Jehovah thy God; For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

2 Take with you words, and turn to Jehovah, And say to him, --- ``Take away all iniquity, and bring good; And we shall render to thee the calves of our lips.

3 The Assyrian shall not save us, On a horse we shall not mount, And we shall not henceforth say, --- Our gods,' to the works of our hands; For in thee will the fatherless find mercy.''

4 I will heal their defections, I will love them freely; For turned aside is my fury from him.

5 I will be as dew to Israel; He shall flourish as the lily, He shall fix his roots as Libanus;

6 Spread shall his branches, And as that of the olive shall be his comeliness, And his fragrance like that of Libanus.

7 Refreshed shall they be who shall dwell under his shadow; They shall revive as the corn, and germinate like the vine His odor shall be like that of the wine of Libanus.

8 Ephraim shall say, ``What have I to do any more with idols?'' I have heard, and showed him favor, --- ``I shall be to thee a shady fir-tree; --- From me is thy fruit found.'' Who is wise? and he will understand these things;

9 Who is intelligent? and he will know them: For right are the ways of Jehovah, And the just shall walk in them; But in them will the ungodly stumble.

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Latin Words and Phrases

- Diabolos: Hosea 8:11
- Intervenients: Hosea 1, note 7
- Mediis-media: Hosea 1, note 7
- Non bene coelestes impia dextra colit: Hosea 9:4
- Novatio: Hosea 10, note 71
- Praeventum fuisse: Hosea 12, note 84
- Quasi faces, vel stimuli: Hosea 7, note 41
- aliqua ex parte: Hosea 4:12
- ceremonia: Hosea 7:14
- dei carceres: Hosea 8:11
- duplicavit: Hosea 1:3, 4
- exercita pietatis: Hosea 9:5
- homo belluinus: Hosea 1:3, 4
- locus obscurissimus: Hosea 5, note 22
- mentietur illis: Hosea 9:2
- merae larvae: Lecture eleventh
- novale: Hosea 10, note 71
- nutricios: Hosea 9:1
- patronos: Hosea 11:2
- pendebunt ab ejus nutu: Hosea 1:11
- plenis buccis: Hosea 4:1-2
- res execrabilis: Hosea 9, note 54

French Words and Phrases

- Cela n'est que pour un desiuner: Lecture twenty ninth
- Il n'est ne chair ne poisson: Hosea 7:8
- Il n'y a piece: Hosea 2:10-12
- Je treuve cela a mon gout: Hosea 9:10
- Les heraux: Hosea 8:1
- Trousser: Hosea 8:9-10
- incompatibiles: Hosea 8:5
- trousser: Hosea 9:6