



December 1915.
Jehovah Years Over Back-Sliding Israel—Hosea 11: 1-11.

Commentary.—I. God's tenderness toward Israel (vs. 1-4). This chapter gives a very pathetic representation of God's tender and affectionate regard for Israel by metaphors chiefly borrowed from the love of mothers toward their tender offspring. From this occasion is taken to reflect on their ungrateful return to the divine goodness, and to denounce against them the judgments of the Almighty. But suddenly and unexpectedly the prospect changes. Beams of mercy break from the clouds just now fraught with vengeance. God, to speak in the language of men, feels the relentings of a tender parent; his bowels yearn, his mercy triumphs. His rebellious child shall be pardoned. As the lion of the tribe of Judah, he will employ his power to save his people, he will call his children from the land of their captivity; and, as doves that will fly to him; a faithful and a holy people.—Clarke.

1. When Israel was a child—Reference is made to the early period of the existence of Israel as a nation. I loved him.—This is an expression of God's tender love for his children. God with his infinite wealth of affection lavishes his love upon humanity, called my son out of Egypt.—The Lord brought Israel, whom he calls his son, out of bondage into the land which he had promised to them. This deliverance is here mentioned to show how greatly Jehovah loved his people and wrought miracle after miracle in their behalf. 2. As they called them, so they went from them.—The more the prophets called them the more they went from them.—R.V. This translation gives the sense more clearly than the Authorized Version. In these verses of the lesson we have in brief form the entire moral history of Israel. Here we see God's tender love for his people, their repeated departures from him, and his persistent efforts to draw them to himself. He sent one prophet after another to them to warn them of the results of their unbelief and disobedience, yet they were stubborn and did not permanently return to him. Sacrificed into Baalim—Baal-worship had strong attractions for the Israelites. They were a religious people, and seemed to desire gods that appealed to their senses. Their hearts were corrupt, hence they were attracted by the sensuality of this heathen worship. In this they were violating the first two commandments burned in sense to graven images—Offering sacrifices and burning incense were two prominent forms of worshipping Jehovah prescribed by God himself. The Israelites employed these forms in worshipping idols. Verses 1, 2 aptly describe the religious history from the Exodus to the days of Hosea; on the one hand, the intense love and care of Jehovah, on the other, the persistent rebellion of the people.—Who

3. I thought Ephraim also to go—Because Ephraim was one of the powerful tribes of Israel, the Lord by his prophet calls the whole nation by that name. This verse shows how tenderly the Lord dealt with this people. Israel was a child and Jehovah taught the infant nation to walk. Talking them by their arms—I took them by their arms—R.V. The figure is that of a father holding his child to walk, and when it was throes, he took it up to his arms.—Clarke. They were as talking snakes with their own ways that they did not recognize that the merciful and faithful hand of the Lord was upon them to bring to them the greatest possible good. 4. I drew them with cords of a man—The figure here also shows the Lord's tenderness toward his people. He did not use violent methods in restraining them as one might deal with unruly cattle, but drew them with "cords of a man," or with "bands of love." He assisted them with their burdens. Take off the yoke—This humane deliverance from the yoke is usually in order to release his oxen.—The manner of easing the yoke to which the prophet refers is not quite clear, since we do not know sufficiently the form of the yoke.—I laid meat unto them—I placed food before them. The figure shows impressively God's compassion for Israel.—An appropriate image of God's deliverance of Israel from the Egyptian yoke, and of his feeding them in the wilderness.—J. P. & B.

5. Judgments upon Israel (vs. 5-7). & He shall not return into Egypt—I have brought them [Israel] thence already, with the deliverance that the merciful hand of the Lord has brought them, but, as they have sinned and forfeited my favor and protection, they shall go to Assyria; and this, because they refused to return to me.—Clarke. Although they should not return to Egypt, yet they would go into Assyria.—The sword shall abide on his cities.—The sword is mentioned as a symbol of war. From the time of Jeroboam II. to the captivity of Israel under Sennacherib and the Assyrians, judgments and wars were the lot of Israel. His branches—The tribes and clans of Israel. Because of their own enmity—Israel had been fully forsaken as to their duty to obey and worship the true God, but instead of being devoted to him, they gave themselves over to the worship of idols. 7. Bent to backsliding from me.—The condition of Israel was deplorable. With them it was not a matter of forsaking the Lord once only, but their fixed disposition to leave him. Their frequent backsliding from God had resulted in a "bent" in that direction. Though they called them to me the most High—Although the prophets called the people of Israel upward from their degrading idolatry to serve the Lord, they would not respond to his call. They were bent to backsliding.

8. He never promised (vs. 8-11). &

How shall I give thee up—Jehovah's appeal to His people is most pathetic. He loves them and clings to them in spite of their waywardness. His love would spare them, but justice demands their punishment. Judgments must be visited upon them. How shall I deliver thee—How shall I cast thee off?—R. V. As Admah, as Zeboim—These two cities were near Sodom and Gomorrah and were destroyed with the cities of the plain (Deut. 9, 23). Mine heart is turned within me—in deep sorrow and compassion. My repentings are kindled together.—My compassions are kindled together.—R. V. God's compassion toward His people is emphasized. This has been called "the greatest passage in Hosea"—deeper, if not highest, of this book—the breaking forth of that exhaustless mercy of the Most High which no sin of man can bar back nor wear out.—9. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger—Mercy is kinder than wrath. God will spare the nation for a time, giving additional opportunity to repent. I am God, and not man—His forbearance keeps Him from inflicting speedy punishment upon them, as man might be inclined to do. I will not enter into the city.—I will not come in wrath.—R. V. 10. They shall walk after the Lord—The people were to recognize God's call and follow Him. He shall roar like a lion—The Lord would speak in majesty and power to gather Him his scattered people. From the west—Literally, from the sea; that is, from remote places. II. Bird out of Egypt—Assyria—The flight of birds denotes swiftness.

Questions.—Who was Hosea? During the reigns of what kings did he prophesy? Concerning what nation was his prophecy? What deliverance is mentioned in what way had Israel chiefly transgressed God's law? What judgments were pronounced upon Israel? What expressions in the lesson show God's tenderness toward Israel? What hope is held out for Israel?

PRACTICAL SURVEY.

Topic.—Israel's history.
I. A record of divine forbearance.
II. A record of divine reprobation.
III. A record of divine deliverance.

In Hosea's writings Israel is portrayed as a highly favored people, a singularly ungrateful race and a righteousness punished nation. God had granted Israel special revelation. He admitted them into exceptional relationship with himself as his people. He loved many ways to communicate his thoughts and reveal his will unto them. In this lesson God is presented in the character of a father—toward sinners, his unwillingness to punish and his readiness to forgive even in Hosea's time, show that the divine love was exercised in Israel's behalf. The heavenly Father's character and the modes of his dealing with humanity are clearly revealed in Israel's history, proving that he is not unmindful of the welfare of his children. Jehovah had been to the Hebrew people, a loving father, a gentle nurse, a kindly monitor, a considerate Master. His love for Israel had been unmistakable during the infancy of the nation, and even more wonderful in the time of Ephraim's moral decrepitude and premature decay. Let us see how strong denunciations of sin in his representation of God's affection and compassion toward the nation of his choice. As a father, distressed at heart because of his son's waywardness and disobedience, he recalls the period of that son's childhood when parental care and love watched over, upheld and guided him. Now that Israel had done wickedly in departing from God, in the midst of upbraiding and rebuke, the Lord is led to the memory of earlier and better days. Israel had become a child again because of the divine love which overshadowed them in their infancy and made them conscious of new powers and possibilities. A reminder of merciful interposition and slightly deliverance was a fit summons to submission and reconciliation. It was a divine appeal. Israel had received gracious and undeserved, but generous and forbearing, treatment from the God of nations. He had loved them, emancipated them, redeemed and fed them. This Omnipotent became as a nurse to Israel. His instructions ever exceeded his corrections.

II. A record of declension from God. Over against the rich display of God's mercy, love and long-suffering is portrayed Israel's refusal to hearken to God's call, as well as their pursuit of sin. Our lesson is the old story of God's love and man's rebellion. To Israel God was no longer the object of worship or the source of authority. Baal was worshipped in the high places and Astarte in the groves. The people talked familiarly of their history, but there was no gratitude in the heart to meet and fashion life into submissive obedience to the law of God. Israel made a shameful return for all God's goodness to them. They turned away from duty. They went farther into sin, the more they were warned. Sensuous pleasures had displaced their devotion to God. Their lives had become degenerate and their character and life. It had not given a bent to their conduct. They were guilty of folly, ingratitude and treachery. Their wickedness invited God's justice. Their suffering evoked his mercy. Forgetful of all that God had wrought for them and all they owed to him, Israel had left his service, renounced his worship and had given themselves up to the most shameful idolatries. Mercies or judgments seemed to be in vain. They rebelled against a just and rightful Sovereign. They robbed a good and gracious Master. They were ungrateful to a most kind friend and benefactor. They despised the richest mercy and tenderest compassion. The nation had proved altogether unworthy of its early mercies. Their covenant God had again and again interposed in their behalf to succor, to heed and to save them. Many and urgent counsels and entreaties had been addressed to Israel regardless of their vacillation. By the memory of their great redemption from Egypt their God called for obedience and devotion. God used the rod of retribution to punish and restore the offenders. There is an infinite, compassionate remembrance with God to give man up to his own folly and destruction.

III. A record of divine deliverance. In Hosea's writings Israel is portrayed as a highly favored people, a singularly ungrateful race and a righteousness punished nation. God had granted Israel special revelation. He admitted them into exceptional relationship with himself as his people. He loved many ways to communicate his thoughts and reveal his will unto them. In this lesson God is presented in the character of a father—toward sinners, his unwillingness to punish and his readiness to forgive even in Hosea's time, show that the divine love was exercised in Israel's behalf. The heavenly Father's character and the modes of his dealing with humanity are clearly revealed in Israel's history, proving that he is not unmindful of the welfare of his children. Jehovah had been to the Hebrew people, a loving father, a gentle nurse, a kindly monitor, a considerate Master. His love for Israel had been unmistakable during the infancy of the nation, and even more wonderful in the time of Ephraim's moral decrepitude and premature decay. Let us see how strong denunciations of sin in his representation of God's affection and compassion toward the nation of his choice. As a father, distressed at heart because of his son's waywardness and disobedience, he recalls the period of that son's childhood when parental care and love watched over, upheld and guided him. Now that Israel had done wickedly in departing from God, in the midst of upbraiding and rebuke, the Lord is led to the memory of earlier and better days. Israel had become a child again because of the divine love which overshadowed them in their infancy and made them conscious of new powers and possibilities. A reminder of merciful interposition and slightly deliverance was a fit summons to submission and reconciliation. It was a divine appeal. Israel had received gracious and undeserved, but generous and forbearing, treatment from the God of nations. He had loved them, emancipated them, redeemed and fed them. This Omnipotent became as a nurse to Israel. His instructions ever exceeded his corrections.

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ARRANGE TO ATTEND
THE SIXTH ANNUAL
TORONTO FAT STOCK SHOW
AT UNION STOCK YARDS, TORONTO
LARGE ENTRIES IN ALL CLASSES
Judging 10 a. m. on FRIDAY, DEC. 10, 1915
AUCTION SALE OF PRIZE WINNERS at 10 a. m. on SATURDAY, DEC. 11, 1915
REDUCED RATES ON ALL RAILROADS



OUR SOILS.
In order that they may be highly productive for the majority of crops, soils should be neutral, chemically speaking. By this it is meant that they should be neither acid nor alkaline. While a few plants will grow on a soil that is slightly acid, the legumes are very sensitive and will not thrive or use free nitrogen if the soil has an acid reaction.

Soils become acid when they are low, wet, or badly drained, and the only way to remedy this is to drain off the surplus water. Old soils that have been farmed many years are apt to sour for the reason that alkali has been used by the plants. Again, the soil may be soured by turning under green crops. Lime is one of the alkalies that is likely to be washed from the soil. It is readily combined with carbon dioxide, and is one among the first constituents that cultivate soil loses.

Many fields can be found that are too sour to produce normal crops. Sometimes this sourness occurs in spots which may be discovered by the growth of the plants. That plants that do thrive on sour soil are such as sorrel, redtop and plantain. A simple test of soils can be made with the use of blue litmus paper. This paper can be purchased at drug stores.

The Louisiana Experiment Station has described the method of taking samples of soils to be tested for acidity by the litmus paper test: "Turn up a spadeful of soil, take some soil from the top, middle and bottom of the spadeful and mould it into a ball, adding water, if necessary. Next open the ball and insert a strip of litmus paper, after which press the ball firmly together so that there will be good contact between the soil and the litmus paper. From time to time the ball can be opened to observe the litmus paper. The test should be continued for 15 to 30 minutes. A good plan is to go over the field, and, as each ball of soil is finished, stick a stake in the ground so that the balls can afterwards be found easily; in this way one can go over the ground rapidly. The soil should be moist and the test made immediately after rain; common stream or well water should not be used to moisten the soil since it may be slightly alkaline and so interfere with the test. If the blue litmus paper quickly turns red it is an indication that the soil is too sour for clovers and most other legumes to thrive. If the blue litmus paper turns merely to a light pink, the acidity is probably slight and may be conveniently corrected after a soaking rain; common stream or well water should not be used to moisten the soil since it may be slightly alkaline and so interfere with the test. If the blue litmus paper quickly turns red it is an indication that the soil is too sour for clovers and most other legumes to thrive. If the blue litmus paper turns merely to a light pink, the acidity is probably slight and may be conveniently corrected after a soaking rain; common stream or well water should not be used to moisten the soil since it may be slightly alkaline and so interfere with the test. If the blue litmus paper quickly turns red it is an indication that the soil is too sour for clovers and most other legumes to thrive. 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