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## Studies in Hos. 1-3

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If sound, Biblical theology must go by the name of "restitution theology," then let the Christian theologian rejoice in that term. For that is the only kind of theology which deserves a place in the Christian Church, since it is the only kind of theology which Jesus Christ, the Head and King of the Church, recognizes as true and divine. May God in His mercy retain in His Church "restituting theologians," for they are theologians after His heart, whom He will honor and glorify throughout eternity as the true builders of His Zion of grace.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER.

(To be continued.)

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## Studies in Hos. 1-3.

### Introductory Thoughts.

#### The Name of the Prophet.

"The Word of the Lord that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri."

Hosea is the name of the prophet=help, deliverance. It was Hoshea (Oshea), the son of Nun, Num. 13, 8, 16, who, true to his changed name Joshua, placed his hope of salvation solely in Jehovah and pleaded with his people to follow him in his loyalty to the Lord, Josh. 24, 1-28. It was Hoshea, the last king of Israel, who, unlike his great namesake, sought salvation and deliverance from strange gods, from an alliance with Egypt, 2 Kings 17, 4, instead of making the Lord his help. It was Hosea, the prophet, who warned—alas! in vain—against seeking deliverance and help with the idols and pleaded—again in vain—with them to look for help to Jehovah alone.

#### The Time of His Activity.

Hosea tells us that he prophesied 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. Uzziah reigned 810-758,\* Hezekiah, 727-698, Jeroboam II, 783-743. Chap. 1, 4 indicates that the house of Jehu was still enthroned in the Northern Kingdom; yet the end of this dynasty was fast approaching. Hosea therefore spoke his first prophecy in the closing days of Uzziah's reign some time between 760 and 758. Since he does not mention the fall of Samaria, 722, he may have finished his book before that event, in the early days of Hezekiah. Accordingly we may assign to him a period of about thirty-five years, 760-725.

#### His Personal History.

We know very little of the personal history of Hosea. His family is unknown. Early Jewish writers identified his father, Beeri, (1, 1), with Beerah, a prince of the tribe of Reuben, carried into exile

\* All dates are given according to Ussher.

by Tiglath Pileser, 1 Chron. 5, 6. According to an ancient Christian tradition (Ephraem Syrus, Pseudo-Epiphanius) he was of the tribe of Issachar, from a place called Belemoth or Beleman; Jerome: Bethshemesh.

It seems well established that he was a native of the Northern Kingdom. 1. Only an Ephraimite could have been so well acquainted with the history and political situation of the Northern Kingdom. (Sellin.) Sellin also adds: He follows the Ephraimitic-Elohistic, not the Judaic-Jahvistic tradition of history, 2, 18; 9, 15; 11, 8; 12, 11. 13 ff. That, of course, is nonsense.

2. Judah is mentioned rarely, Jerusalem not at all. Most cities mentioned are in the Northern Kingdom.

3. Ewald says: "In every sentence it appears that Hosea has not only visited the Kingdom of Ephraim, as Amos has done, but that he is acquainted with it from the depths of his heart and follows all its doings, aims, and fortunes with the profound feelings gendered of such a sympathy as is conceivable in the case of a native prophet only."

Most of Hosea's symbols are connected with agriculture, rural life. He may have been a tiller of the soil before he was called as a prophet. His intimate knowledge of the history of his people, the political affairs of his day, the language, which, while terse, is beautiful, containing many similes, references, and figures which only a cultured man would employ, seem to point to the wealthier class of the rural communities.

Duhm, *Theologie der Propheten*, pp. 130, 131, endeavors to prove that Hosea was a member of the priestly order, advancing the following arguments: 1. Frequent references to priests, especially chap. 4; 2. to the Law, 4, 6; 8, 12; 3. to uncleanness, 9, 10, and unclean things, 9, 3; 5, 3; 6, 10; 4. to persecution in the Temple, 9, 8. Yet these arguments certainly are not sufficient to prove him a priest.

A Jewish legend states that he died in Babylon and that his body was buried at Safed, northwest of the Sea of Galilee, on the highest point in that region. According to another tradition he was a native of Gilead and was buried there. To this day the grave of Nebi Osha is shown near es-Salt, Ramoth-gilead, south of the Jabbok River. (Eiselen, *The Prophetic Books*, p. 372.)

#### Political and Social Conditions.

Hosea was called into office in those stirring times that ushered in the final catastrophe which swept away the Northern Kingdom, Ephraim, the ten tribes, into political extermination, 722. At the time that Hosea began to prophesy there appeared at least to the superficial observer no indication on the political horizon that the end was so near, so rapidly approaching. Jeroboam II ruled over Israel. In the reign of Uzziah, or, as he is also called, Azariah (2 Kings 14, 21; 15, throughout the chapter, except v. 13, where he is called

Uzziah), Israel-Judah had regained the power and splendor which it had enjoyed in the days of Solomon, 1016—977, after having been at the mercy of the enemies for about 150 years, 977 to 825, the beginning of Jeroboam's rule according to Ussher. In 977 that unfortunate breach had occurred due to Rehoboam's stubborn refusal to lighten the burden of taxation imposed by Solomon on Israel, 1 Kings 12. This breach had been a divine punishment for king and people—for the royal house because of Solomon's shameful apostasy and idolatry, 1 Kings 11, 11—13; for the people because they also had forgotten God.

The political and commercial strength of the two kingdoms had been sapped for 150 years by intertribal warfare and oppression by foreign enemies. With the exception of a few years of peace, during the dynasty of Omri, there had been almost constant warfare between Judah and Israel. Asa had bribed the Syrian king Benhadad to worry Israel, 1 Kings 15, 20 (920), who took Cinneroth and Naphtali, one of the most fertile regions, from Israel. Jehoshaphat and Jehoram of Judah, 914—885, were on friendly terms with Ahab, Ahaziah, and Joram of Israel, the royal houses intermarrying; but on the accession of Jehu hostilities again flared up between the two kingdoms.

Not only intertribal warfare weakened the kingdoms. Foreign enemies time and again invaded the land. Already Rehoboam had become a vassal of Egypt, King Shishak capturing a number of cities and despoiling the Temple of its ornaments. 1 Kings 14, 25—28. The Philistines harassed Israel, 1 Kings 15, 27; 16, 15. Syrians repeatedly invaded Israel, and though three times defeated by Ahab, 1 Kings 20, gained a decisive victory over Israel at Ramoth-gilead, in which battle Ahab was slain, 22. After Ahab's death Moab rebelled under King Mesha, 2 Kings 2, 1; 3, 4. Syrians almost at will raided Israel, 5, 2; 8, 28. 29. Edom and Libnah revolted from Judah, 8, 20. 22. The Syrians under Hazael took East Jordanland, 10, 32. 33, and were diverted from Jerusalem only by a large gift from the Temple treasury, 12, 17. Jehu's son Jehoahaz, 856, had only 50 horse-men, 10 chariots, 10,000 footmen, 13, 7. Roving bands of Moabites invaded the land, 13, 20.

However, the Lord was not yet willing to reject Israel, 2 Kings 13, 5; 14, 26 ff. Better times dawned. Joash in the Northern Kingdom three times defeated the Syrians, 13, 25; Amaziah in the South defeated Edom, 14, 7. In unpardonable pride the old rivalry between Judah and Israel caused him to attack Joash, a course which brought him signal defeat, 14, 8—14.

Now came for the two kingdoms an almost unprecedented era of prosperity. Jeroboam II completed the good work begun by his father Joash. He recovered Damascus, which had been part of

David's and of Solomon's kingdom, 2 Sam. 8, 6. Advancing northward 200 miles, he conquered Hamath the Great, Amos 6, 2, a city of the Hittites, near Baalbek, on the Orontes, which had thrown off the yoke of Solomon.

At about the same time Uzziah subdued the Philistines and Arabians; made vassals of the Ammonites; built strong outposts in the desert of Judah; fortified Jerusalem with towers, 1 Chron. 26; had a standing army of 307,500 men fully equipped with the most modern armament, shields, spears, helmets, habergeons (coats of mail), bows, and slings. He was the first to introduce catapults and ballistae, powerful engines to throw missiles, stones and arrows, 2 Chron. 26, 15. Elath, on the Gulf of Akabah, the northeastern arm of the Red Sea, was recaptured by either Judah or Israel; at least after the death of Jeroboam, Uzziah possessed it. Uzziah, having learned a lesson from Amaziah's defeat, seems to have lived in peace with Jeroboam, who spite of his idolatry — his continuance, for political reasons, of the policy of Jeroboam I — was one of the best kings of Israel.

At the time of Hosea and his earlier contemporary Amos a generation had therefore grown up in Israel which knew not the bitterness of oppression by the enemy nor the shame of defeat, a generation which had little, if any, experience in actual warfare. Peace had ruled for many years, and consequently prosperity had returned to the poverty-stricken land. Not only had agriculture revived under the fostering care of Uzziah, who loved husbandry, agriculture, encouraging wherever possible the planting of orchards and vineyards, 2 Chron. 26, 10; Amos 5, 11, the cultivation of farms and gardens; also in Northern Israel the immensely fertile soil of Samaria was again being carefully and skilfully cultivated, once the danger of raids from surrounding enemies was past, and yielded rich harvests, thirty-, fifty-, hundredfold. Wealth came back to the impoverished people. Commerce assumed the proportions it had gained in the days of David and Solomon. The people began to flock to the cities in the hope of gaining an easier living. And, as usually under such conditions, the building trades flourished. Amos time and again refers to the building activity of his time. See also Hos. 8, 14; Micah 3, 12; Is. 9, 10. Mark especially the proud and haughty spirit in the last passage. With increasing wealth more conveniences and luxuries were demanded. No longer was a house built of unhewn stone regarded as satisfactory; the latest style was to build homes of ashlar, carefully hewn stone, squared, laid up in a manner more pleasing to the eye than the homes built from stone as they came from the quarry. The homes became palaces. Amos constantly speaks of *armonim*, high buildings, rivaling in size and beauty and grandeur of construction the palaces of the kings. For the proud

owners were indeed princes of trade, kings of the money market. These Nabobs were soon no longer satisfied with their homes in the cities. As Ahab had a summer residence in the cool hill country of Jezreel in order to escape the heat of the summer-time, so the rich built their summer homes, vying with one another in point of splendor and convenience. Even hewn stone no longer satisfied their pampered tastes. As Ahab made an ivory house, 1 Kings 22, 39, so Amos speaks of ivory houses, overlaid either on the outside or within with ivory. Undoubtedly such palaces, in city and country, were among the show-pieces, Is. 2, 16, "pleasant pictures," *s'kijjot hachemdat*, show-pieces of desire, costliness, which were pointed out with pride to visitors from far and near, exactly as is being done to-day.

In these homes were found all the conveniences, comforts, and luxuries of the day. There were divans of ivory, on which young Mr. Richman sprawled, and luxuriant couches, on which the lady of the house stretched out her weary limbs after having returned from a stroll through the avenues of the city. There she had exhibited her charms and beauty, enhanced by many an artificial means, Is. 3, 18-23, while her less fortunate sisters, the common rabble, the dames of the underworld, the flappers of 750 before Christ, admired their richly attired sisters and ran to the next bazaar to buy some cheap bauble, some of the latest beauty helps, in order to look like their more favored sisters. In the homes of the rich, feasts and banquets were held, at which only the most dainty meats were served, lambs selected from carefully kept flocks, calves from the midst of the stall, Amos 6, 4; Mal. 4, 2, kept in special stalls, fed with special feed. There the young men idled away their time by chanting [the Hebrew *parat* means chop off, pinch off], speaking or singing with a quavering voice, the latest in those days of superart, resembling perhaps our jazz,—the more unnatural, the more modern. Their heads were anointed with chief ointments, with the finest of perfumeries, while those passions kindled by the voluptuous music, nourished by the rich meals, were fanned into irrepresive ardor by huge bowlfuls of wine freely passed about, Amos 6. And the result? One can easily imagine the scenes of rioting and wantonness enacted on such occasions. Amos bitterly complains that, even under the guise of religious worship, both father and son went in to the same maiden that served as temple harlot, *kedeshah*, Amos 2, 7. Such a generation knew no restraint.

Side by side with this immense wealth and pomp was poverty, need, want, pauperism, poverty so great that people were sold into slavery because they could not pay a ransom sufficiently large to buy a pair of sandals, Amos 8, 6, being absolutely penniless.

The immense wealth of the rich was not amassed by fair means. Says Hosea 12, 7: He, Israel, is a merchant, a Canaanite; the balance

of deceit is in his hand; he loveth to oppress, deceive, force to the wall every competitor. Isaiah pronounces a woe on them that join house to house and lay field to field till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth, 5, 8. Amos draws a vivid picture of their greed and filthy love of filthy lucre, 8, 5, 6, by a deft manipulation the scales were changed; for a small ephah an excessively large shekel was asked. Like Dives these rich Nabobs had no pity for the poor, were far from helping them, from alleviating at least in a measure their abject pauperism. It was the rich who swallowed up the needy, Amos 8, 4, and made the poor of the land to fail; who took advantage of their poverty to rob them of what little they happened still to possess; who bought and sold them like cattle on the market, 8, 6. They panted after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, Amos 2, 7; they begrudged him the very dust which in sign and token of his poverty and misery he had placed on his head. Thus indeed did the rich store up violence and robbery in their palaces, 3, 10.

Was there no law and justice in the land? Could not the poor resort to the courts? Alas, that would have been as hopeless in those days as it often is in ours, worse than useless. Is. 1, 23; Amos 5, 12. Better to suffer in silence than look for justice, better to stay out of courts than to lose the last of your possessions and be condemned as a criminal.

#### The Religious Conditions.

According to the clear command of God, Israel was permitted to erect altars only in "all places where I record My name," Ex. 20, 24, where either by special divine command (personally or through His prophets) an altar was to be erected, Deut. 27, 4—6; Josh. 8, 30; Judg. 6, 19, 26; 1 Sam. 9, 9, 17, or where God had appeared to an Israelite and thus had given him an occasion to sacrifice to the Lord, Judg. 2, 5; 13, 15 ff.; 21, 4; 2 Sam. 24, 21, 25. Altars built by the Israelites without such permission were regarded as idolatrous, Josh. 22, 10 ff., although the patriarchs seem to have erected altars wherever they pleased. In my opinion the altar built by Saul, 1 Sam. 14, 35, was built without such permission. In Northern Israel, Elijah complained that the children of Israel had thrown down the altars of Jehovah, 1 Kings 19, 10, and he repaired the altar of the Lord on Mount Carmel, 18, 30. Whether all these altars had been erected by special divine command or in consequence of a divine manifestation, or whether they were erected by pious Israelites who did not wish to take part in the syncretistic, idolatrous worship of the nation, yet could not go to Jerusalem to offer up their sacrifices, is impossible to decide. In the latter case these altars were really not entirely in keeping with God's will, Ex. 20, 24 and Deut. 12, 4, 5, although erected in His honor and for His sole worship.

The Israelites were positively forbidden to make any image of the Lord in connection with their worship, Ex. 20, 4. 5; Lev. 26, 1; Deut. 5, 15-18. In spite of these clear commands we find that worshipping the idols of the surrounding heathen nations was one of the besetting sins of Israel. Solomon went so far as to build altars for the various idols of his wives and to worship at these altars, 1 Kings 11, 1-11. But it remained for Jeroboam to make idolatry the official worship of the Northern tribes. In direct transgression of Ex. 20, 4. 5 he set up two golden calves as symbols of Jehovah, 1 Kings 12, 28-33. Political expediency directed his policy. In order to prevent a healing of the breach that had occurred, v. 27, he hit upon this wicked scheme, v. 26, which led to the ultimate ruin of the Northern Kingdom; "and this thing became a *sin*, for the people went to worship," v. 30, the sin of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, so frequently mentioned in the records. Not satisfied with having set up the golden calves, Jeroboam made priests of the lowest of the people which were not of the sons of Levi, contrary to Ex. 28, 1; Numb. 16, 17. He also made a house of "high places." Such high places are also mentioned by Hosea, chap. 10, 8. Among the heathen it was quite the general custom to erect their altars on the summit of hills or mountains or to build artificial hills, or high places. It seemed to them that the summit of the hills was closer to heaven, the dwelling-place of God. So we read that Balaam went up to a high place, Num. 23, 3. This custom of erecting altars on high places was not in itself sinful; for the Lord is everywhere and may be worshiped on hills and high places as well as in the valley. So we read that in the day of Samuel the sanctuary was placed on a high place, 1 Sam. 9, 12; 10, 5. In Solomon's time the Tabernacle was situated on a high place at Gibeon, 1 Kings 3, 4, compared with 1 Chron. 16, 39. Since, however, the Lord had, Ex. 20, 24, permitted the erection of an altar only in the place where He would record His name, the indiscriminate building of high places was not in accord with God's will, and this is therefore censured, 1 Kings 3, 3. Jeroboam built high places not only without the command and sanction of God and therefore against His will, he built these high places in honor of forbidden images, the golden calves. Like king, like people. Not only did the people worship at Jeroboam's high places at Bethel and Dan, but in imitation of this worship and unhindered by the king they built altars and high places throughout the country, at first ostensibly to the honor of Jehovah, for the worship of the true God. Soon they erected beside these altars pillars, images, Hos. 3, 4; 10, 1. 2. *Mazzeboth*, pillars, were originally not displeasing to God. They served as memorials of important events or special manifestations of God's grace. Jacob erected the stone on which he had slept for a pillar, a memorial, Gen. 28, 18. 22. Later he erected a pillar at Galeed, Gen. 31, 45. 47, beside a sacrificial mound of stones. Cp. also



**Ex. 24, 4.** Finally, however, the pillars like the obelisk were regarded as the symbol of the sun's ray and became the symbol of Baal, the sun-god, beside whose altars they were erected, just as the "groves," *asherim*, became the symbols of Ashtarte, the goddess of the moon. Consequently they roused the indignation of the true prophets, who condemned the erection of such symbols as idolatry. Naturally, these symbols were still regarded by many Israelites as symbols of the true God; yet many undoubtedly from the very beginning worshiped under the symbols of the idols the idols themselves, Baal and Ashtarte. We also read of the worship of the host of heavens, 2 Kings 17, 16; 21, 3, 5, the stars. Compare the prohibition of this very form of idolatry, Deut. 4, 19; 17, 3.

The names of Baal and Ashtarte are often found in the plural to represent the various manifestations or conceptions of these deities (Baal-berith, Judg. 8, 33, the Baal of the covenant; Baal-zebub, 2 Kings 1, 2, the Baal of flies) or the Baals worshiped in the various cities, (Baal-gad, Josh. 11, 17; Baal-hamon, Cant. 8, 11; Baal-tamar, Judg. 20, 33; Baal-peor, Num. 25, 3, etc.). The worship of these idols was connected with that most hideous form of immorality, temple prostitution. Herodotus calls it the "most atrocious law of the Babylonians," Herodotus's *History*, I, § 199, while the code of Hammurabi deals with it very leniently, §§ 178—182. Cp. Amos 2, 7. Ahab and Jezebel sought to displace Jehovah-worship by Baal worship, killing the prophets of Jehovah and destroying His altars, 1 Kings 18, 4; 19, 10, 14; 22, 8, and engaging prophets of Baal and Ashtarte, 1 Kings 18, 19; 22, 6. Though Jehu exterminated Baalism as the official religion of Israel, 2 Kings 10, 18—28, yet he continued in the sin of Jeroboam, while the people persisted in the worship of Baalism under the guise of the true worship. In fact, only the name of Jehovah remained for a worship which was essentially idolatry, Baalism with its hideously immoral rites and customs. So wide-spread was this idolatry that we are told, 2 Kings 17, 9—11: "And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord, their God, and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city. And they set them up images and groves in every high hill and under every green tree; and there they burned incense in all the high places as did the heathen whom the Lord carried away before them, and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger." In connection with some of these many sanctuaries, "ephods," Hos. 3, 4, were used for purposes of divination. These ephods seem to have been imitations, sometimes in gold, Judg. 8, 27; 17, 5, of the official garment of the high priest, described Ex. 28, 4 ff., with its Urim and Thummim, the divine oracle, Ex. 28, 30; Num. 27, 21; 1 Sam. 21, 10; 28, 6; 30, 7. Besides these ephods, soothsayers and wizards were in great demand, 2 Kings 17, 17.

It seems that also the "teraphim," Hos. 3, 4, perhaps house gods similar to the Lares and Penates of the Romans, possibly little images of some deity, were used for purposes of divination. Wherever idolatry flourishes, there flourish superstition and witchcraft. Witness the rushing business done by clairvoyants, spiritists, and similar agents of superstition and darkness in our highly enlightened age and country.

Sad to say, the land of Jehovah, the land wherein He dwelled, Num. 35, 34, had become a land filled with idolatry, a land in which there was no truth nor mercy nor knowledge of God, but swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, and blood touching blood. We see the same development in Israel that we observe in the Reformed Church: from Zwinglianism, which did not mean to reject Christianity, to Modernism, which rejects every specifically Christian doctrine, which fraternizes with Buddhism and Shintoism and every other ism and still retains the name of Christianity. Since Israel had defiled the land of Jehovah, this land was getting ready to spew them out as it had spewed out the wicked Canaanites, Lev. 18, 28.

Such were the conditions when Hosea began to prophesy. Chapter 2 still presupposes a time of prosperity and plenty, though of increasing wickedness and crime. Jeroboam still ruled, 1, 1. No one had listened to the warnings of Amos; his solemn pleadings had remained unsuccessful. Now once more a prophet raises his voice in warning, again threatening ruin, disaster, desolation, if this last word of warning would go unheeded. It remained unheeded, and within a few years the threatened judgment came over Israel.

As soon as Jeroboam's strong hands no longer held the reins, a period of political unrest, rebellion, and anarchy followed. Jeroboam's son, Zachariah, was murdered after a reign of half a year by Shallum, who in turn after one month was slain by Menahem, ruler for eight or ten years. Pekahiah, his son, ruled two years, to be murdered by Pekah, who was killed by Hoshea, the last king over Israel.

In the year 727 Shalmaneser IV, king of Assyria, overran the Northern Kingdom. Hoshea sought aid from Egypt, was summoned to appear before Shalmaneser, ca. 725, imprisoned, 2 Kings 17, 4, and henceforth the king of Israel disappears from our view "as a bubble upon the face of the waters," Hos. 10, 7. Samaria was destroyed after a siege lasting three years, 722, and the people deported into Assyria, 2 Kings 17, 6.

During all this time of unrest and confusion, while the nation, without realizing it, was rushing headlong into ruin, Hosea preached and prophesied to his people, whom he loved so fervently. As Isaiah (Jehovah is my salvation) was sent to preach to a rejected people to harden their hearts, Is. 6, 9, 10, so Hosea (salvation) was sent to preach to a nation doomed to be cast out forever. As Isaiah prophesied in

language of exquisite beauty the coming glory of the Church of God in order to comfort the faithful remnant, so Hosea brings consolation to the hearts of the few believers still found in Ephraim by directing their faith and hope to that glorious day when again the number of the children of Israel, in a new covenant of grace and mercy, would be as the sand of the sea.

Hosea's time is a picture of our own. Much is made in our day of the "Christianity" of the nations, the spirit of Christ ruling at last, etc., while the spirit actually ruling is that of unionism, syncretism, indifference, and consequent decrease in true morality. Hos. 4, 1 b. 2 reads like an item from a modern newspaper. Again, what changes in the political world since 1914! And to-day, unrest, rebellion, revolution, the world over. The message of Hosea, though written over 2,600 years ago in a foreign country is still a timely message for America, for all the world.

#### Hosea's Personality and Style.

Hosea was not a calm, deliberative character, not a *nuechterner, kalter Verstandesmensch*, in whom the intellect controlled the emotion and will; no, he was an intensely emotional person, so that he has been aptly called *der Prophet des hochtragischen Liebesschmerzes* (the prophet of the highly tragical agony of love).

The Lord does not change the character of His prophets; neither does He make automatons of them, mere machines, mere mechanical repeaters of His Word, His revelation, like phonographs. No, the Lord permits the prophet to retain his individuality; but his individual characteristics are hallowed, sanctified, by the Spirit of God. Just for this reason the one prophet appeals to us more than perhaps another, according to our own individuality. As long as this natural preference of one or the other writer is kept within proper bounds, so that it does not amount to contempt or neglect of any other man of God, it is perfectly permissible. If not, God would not have made individual prophets and individual hearers.

The peculiar characteristics of Hosea's personality are clearly shown in his entire style. It is practically unique. Hosea does not make use of the *vav*, so common in Hebrew, in the measure that other writers do. Chap. 5, 8—11, none; 6, 8—11, one; 7, 3—8, one; 8, 7—12, two; 10, 1—7, five. Compare the five short verses Gen. 1, 1—5, with *fourteen vavs*. Jerome: *Osee commaticus est, et quasi per sententias loquitur*. W. R. Smith: "Indignation and sorrow, tenderness and severity, faith in the sovereignty of God's love, and a despairing sense of Israel's infidelity are woven together in a sequence which has no logical plan, but is determined by the battle and alternate victory of contending emotions. The swift transitions, the fragmentary, unbalanced utterance, the half-developed allusions, that make his

prophecy so difficult to the commentator, express the agony of this inward conflict."

"It was a leaden plummet which Amos saw Jehovah setting to the structure of Israel's life. But Hosea felt his own heart hanging at the end of the line, and this was a heart which could never be still." *The Expositor's Bible*, Vol. 4, page 496.

We might compare his style to a turbulent mountain brook, finding its source high up in the mountains of God's unchanging counsel and will and cascading downward, leaping from crag to crag, changing every moment, and changing so suddenly, hurrying past so swiftly, that we can at times barely follow its rushing waters, urged on by some unseen irresistible force. So in brief sentences Hosea's warnings, appeals, threats, consolations, burst forth, often merely indicating a thought and, before developing it, hurrying on to another symbol, introducing another figure of speech. Often we must be satisfied with having caught the general drift of the speech, which usually is quite clear and apparent, without being able to determine exactly just which point of comparison was in the prophet's mind when the image occurred to him. Compare the many figures of speech in chap. 7.

Then the scene changes, we find stretches of water filled with whirlpools and eddies, the water still violently agitated, but not rushing forward; it seems to be constantly turning back on itself in an almost endless series of eddies and whirlpools, circling round and round, disappearing for a moment, reappearing, until finally, as if tired of this play, it rushes onward on its flight. Let us look at chap. 4. There we have, v. 2, blood—blood; v. 4, strive—strive; 5, fall—fall; 5, 6, destroy—destroyed; v. 6, knowledge—knowledge; rejected—reject; forgotten—forget; vv. 7, 10, increased—increase; vv. 8, 10, eat—eat; vv. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, whoredom—whoring—commit whoredom, play the harlot, all words of the same stem; vv. 13, 14, daughters—daughters, spouses—spouses, commit adultery—commit adultery; v. 16, slideth back—backsliding.

Now we see the mountain brook changed into a furious torrent, breaking through its banks, spreading ruin and disaster, tearing away fertile fields, uprooting magnificent trees, eating away homes and houses, until, instead of scenes of peace and plenty, we see dry sandbars and barren heaps of gravel and roaring, rushing water shouting out, as it were, their wrath and anger. So Hosea thunders forth his message of destruction and desolation until our very hair stand on end at the horror of it. Chap. 2, 3, 4; 4, 14; 5, 12, 14; 9, 11—17; 13, 7—13; 13, 15, 16.

Once more, even when his fury seems to be at its highest, the scene changes—the roaring, raging torrent becomes a lovely brook murmuring softly as it slowly wends its way, wooing to life a thousand flowers and grasses, freely giving of its living, life-bestowing, life-

preserving waters to majestic trees rearing their heads high into the air to the glory of Him who made them. So Hosea, still shaking with passion, still agitated by holy wrath, suddenly breaks forth into words of love and grace so sweet, so soothing, so seemingly contradictory to his stern threats, that modern commentators have regarded these passages of unsurpassed beauty as interpolations, as later additions by some ignorant compiler, or as transpositions which by some accident were torn out of their original context. But these sudden transitions serve only to bring out the more clearly and effectively that sharp contrast between sin and grace, and that relation, contradictory as it seems to human reason and understanding, which nevertheless is divine harmony, that relation between the holiness and justice of God on the one side which threatens death and damnation to every transgressor and, on the other side, His loving-kindness and pity which has given a Savior to these selfsame transgressors, which takes pleasure not in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked should turn from his way and live. See chap. 2, 18—23; 11, 4. 8. 9; 13, 14. It is with this note of grace and mercy everlasting that the book of Hosea closes.

(To be continued.)

TH. LAETSCH.

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### Saggi 2, 7—10.

Die altjüdische Schule sieht unsern Text als messianisch an. Die altkirchliche Auffassung sieht in den Worten „aller Heiden Trost“ (Luther), „desideratus gentibus“ (Vulgata), „Desire of all nations“ (Authorized Version), eine direkte Weissagung auf den Messias. Nach der altkirchlichen Auffassung ist die Bewegung von Himmel und Erde und die große Bewegung der Völker in der römischen Zensusaufnahme zu finden, und dann soll Christus erscheinen. Die kleine, kurze Zeit ist ein Zeitraum von fünfhundert Jahren.

Gegen diese Auffassung unsers Textes lassen sich folgende Gründe anführen: 1. Die Zensusaufnahme Roms war kein völker- und welt-erschütterndes Ereignis. Die Mehrzahl der Menschen blieb friedlich zu Hause. Die ihren Geburts- oder Abstammungsort auffuchen mußten, zogen nicht stürmisch, sondern friedlich dorthin.

2. „Ein kleines“, von der Zeit gebraucht, heißt „ein wenig, eine kurze Zeit“. Die fünfhundert Jahre von Serubabel bis Christi Geburt, da der erste Zensus Roms erhoben wurde, Luk. 2, 2, sind doch keine so kurze Zeit.

3. Das Wort „erschüttern“ oder „erbeben“ weist nicht auf sanfte und gelinde, sondern auf heftige Erschütterungen und gewaltsame Umwälzungen hin.

4. Hebr. 12, 26. 27 bezeugt, daß die hier geweissagte Bewegung von Himmel und Erde in den gewaltigen Umwälzungen am jüngsten Tag ihren Abschluß finden werde.