

# BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts **17. 11**).

VOLUME **15.**

**NEEDED TRUTH PUBLISHING OFFICE**  
**ROBOT BUILDINGS, LEEDS ROAD,**  
**BRADFORD.**

Printed in England by **James Harwood, Ltd., Derby.**

Editors: J. Miller, J. Martin, A. T. Doodson, S. Burrows, and  
G. Prasher, Jun.

## CONTENTS.

### THE BOOK OF THE TWELVE PROPHETS.

<b>Hosea, Spiritual Adultery.</b>		<i>Page</i>
Hosea <b>1., 2., 3.</b>	Hosea's prophetic life . . . . .	<b>3, 13</b>
„ <b>4., 5., 6. 1-3.</b>	God's quarrel with His people..	<b>13, 21</b>
„ <b>6. 4-11, 7.</b>	The difficulty of G o d . . . . .	<b>22, 29</b>
„ <b>8., 9.</b>	God forgotten . . . . .	<b>31, 37</b>
„ <b>10., 11., 12.</b>	The compassion of G o d . . . . .	<b>38, 46</b>
„ <b>12*. 2-14, 13. 14.</b>	The call to the backslider..	<b>47, 53</b>
 <b>Joel, The Day of the LORD.</b>		
Joel <b>1., 2. 1-27.</b>	The call to humiliation and r e p e n t a n c e . . . . .	56, 61
„ <b>2. 28-32, 3.</b>	The Day of the L O R D . . . . .	63, 69
 <b>Amos, National Accountability.</b>		
Amos <b>1., 2.</b>	Divine judgments on the nations..	72, 79
„ <b>3., 4.</b>	The appeals to Judah and I s r a e l . . . . .	80, 86
„ <b>5., 6.</b>	Proclamation to I s r a e l . . . . .	87, 91
„ <b>7., 8., 9.</b>	Symbolical visions; Restoration..	92
 The historical background of Hosea's L i f e . . . . . <b>1</b>		
Hosea: the prophet, his times and his m e s s a g e . . . . .		2
The Gospel in Hosea . . . . .		45
The prophet J o e l . . . . .		54
Ephraim's fall . . . . .		77
The prophet A m o s . . . . .		77
Servants: A word s t u d y . . . . .		83
Questions and Answers. . . . .		12, 36, 44, 52, 68
Notice. . . . .		99

# BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

JANUARY, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Historical Background of Hosea's Life . . . . .	1
Hosea: the Prophet, his times and his message . . . . .	2
Hosea's prophetic life . . . . .	3
Questions and Answers . . . . .	12

### THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HOSEA'S LIFE.

Hosea's name is nowhere else mentioned in the Old Testament save in the prophecy which contains his message unto Israel. Verse 1 indicates the period during which he received the word of the LORD, no doubt on various occasions throughout the reigns of these kings. This would seem to cover a period of approximately 60 years.

We learn from 2 Kings 13. that Elisha died in the reign of Joash, king of Israel. In the reign of Jeroboam, who succeeded Joash, Hosea's prophetic life commenced. The probability is that Hosea lived for some time concurrently with Elisha. [This seems very unlikely. Elisha died about 839 B. C (Newberry), and it is improbable that Hosea's ministry began until about 785 B. C, towards the end of Jeroboam's reign over Israel. —G. P. J. At least we can see that he began to speak to Israel soon after the voice of Elisha was stilled. The ministry of Elijah and Elisha was oral and it would seem that Israel, having failed to return whole-heartedly unto the Lord through the speakings of these two mighty men, who had also performed miracles, must now experience the severity of God's judgment because of their wickedness. The messages of the prophets who followed were written because they not only exposed the sinfulness and departure of the generation of that time, but they also contained warnings of the certainty of the descent of God's judgment, and of a period of rich blessing which was in store for them when they would return to Him in real repentance.

Hosea's prophecy was chiefly for Israel, the kingdom of the ten tribes. He was to Israel what Jeremiah was to Judah, prophesying and giving warning over a period of many years, and continuing until the judgment descended and the nation was carried away into captivity. Yet although he spake unto Israel, the length of his period of prophesying is measured in relationship with the duration of the reigns of the kings of Judah. These kings were all descended in one unbroken line from David, some of whom followed the godly example of their illustrious forefather, but the kingdom of Israel was not vested in any particular family. God took great interest, nevertheless, in the appointment of kings for Israel. He commanded Elijah to anoint Jehu to be king, and told Jehu that his sons of the fourth generation would sit upon the throne of Israel. Jeroboam, in whose reign Hosea commenced his prophetic life, was of the third generation. He was an evil king, like unto all the others who sat on the throne of Israel before him, yet he was used by God to fulfil the prophecy spoken by Jonah which meant victory for Israel (2 Kings 14. 25). The king of the fourth generation, Zechariah, reigned for only six months. The brevity of his reign would seem to suggest that God fulfilled His promise, and no more, concerning the house of Jehu. Upon this house Hosea pronounced judgment. The kings which followed were murderers and profligates and were not recognized by God (Hosea 8. 4), and perhaps it is because God did not appoint them to the throne that Hosea's ministry was measured by the duration of the reigns of the kings of Judah.

The northernmost tribes, and the tribes of Reuben, **Gad** and **Manasseh** who dwelt beyond Jordan, were carried away captive by Tilgath-pilneser into the land of Assyria during the reign of Pekah, the second last king of Israel. It would seem to be to this event that Hosea refers in chapter 8. 8, 9. Israel is gone up to Assyria. Yet he continued to speak to those who remained, principally Ephraim. During the reign of Hezekiah, the last mentioned king in 1. 1, the remainder of Israel were carried away captive also, but Hosea's last message, contained in chapter 14., which is a call to the nation to return, was probably spoken to them in captivity, and may suggest that the prophet was taken away with them. *James Bowman,*

### HOSEA: THE PROPHET, HIS TIMES AND HIS MESSAGE.

The minor prophets begin with the Book of Hosea. There are twelve of these books, which are called minor prophets, not because their contents are of less authority than the preceding prophetic books, but on account of their size. The Jews considered them one book, and the Talmud says of them, "Our fathers made them one book, that they might not perish on account of their littleness." The term "minor prophets" was used by the church in early days. Augustinus states: "The prophet Isaiah is not in the books of the twelve prophets who are therefore called 'minor,' because their discourses are brief in comparison with those who are called greater, because they composed considerable volumes." Jewish tradition claims that the present arrangement was made by the great synagogue formed by Ezra. This arrangement is not chronological. Jonah precedes Hosea, while Hosea, Amos and Joel were nearly contemporary; Obadiah is difficult to place. The introduction to the book enters into the question of date. Micah, the Morasthite, ministered between the years 757 and 699 B. C. Nahum, the complement and counterpart of the book of Jonah, also prophesied during the period of Isaiah. Habakkuk is later than the preceding prophets. [Newberry gives Obadiah as considerably later than Habakkuk. —G. P. J. He speaks of the invasion of the land by the Chaldeans as imminent; his prophetic office was probably exercised during the second half of Manasseh's reign [More probably in Josiah's reign—G. P. J. Zephaniah prophesied during the reign of Josiah, between 642 and 611 B. C. Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi are post-exilic.

The first verse of the book determines the period of Hosea's prophecy. He prophesied while Uzziah was reigning in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel, as well as during the time when Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah were kings over Judah. His whole prophetic ministry covers at least sixty and probably over seventy years, so that he must have reached a very old age. His prophecy is directed almost exclusively to the house of Israel, which had degenerated in a short time, and Hosea lived during these awful years.

Jeroboam II was almost the last king who ruled by the appointment of the Lord. After him kings made their way to the tottering throne of Israel by murdering their predecessors [as they had done in earlier times]. Shallum slew Zechariah; Menahem slew Shallum; Pekah killed the son of Menahem; Hoshea killed Pekah. All was anarchy in Israel.

The religious conditions were still worse. Nearly all these usurpers had made alliances with foreign powers which resulted in the introduction of the immoral, corrupt Phœnician and Syrian idolatry. The first Jeroboam had set up a rival worship, so that the people would not go to Jerusalem to worship in the divinely appointed way—Jeroboam had been in Egypt (1 Kings 11. 40; 12. 2) where he no doubt had seen nature worshipped in the form of a calf. This worship he introduced in the identical words which their fathers had used when they worshipped the golden calf in the wilderness (see Exodus 32. 4, 1 Kings 12. 28). Outwardly the different ceremonies of the law, the feasts of Jehovah, the new moons and sabbath days, the sacrifices and offerings were maintained, but all was a corrupt worship. The calf was the immediate object of that idolatrous worship. They sacrificed to the calf (1 Kings 12. 32), they kissed the calf (Hosea 13. 2) and swore by these idol-calves (Amos 8. 14).

As Dr. Pusey states: "Calf worship paved the way for the coarser and more cruel worship of nature, under the names of Baal and Ashtaroth, with all their abominations of consecrated child sacrifices and horrible sensuality. It led to

the most awful sins and degradation. Here is a description of the moral conditions prevailing in the days of Hosea, a condition brought about by false worship and departure from God. Hosea and Amos acquaint us with it. All was falsehood (Hosea 4. 1; 7. 1-3), adultery (Hosea 4. 11; 7. 4), bloodshed (Hosea 5. 2; 6. 8); excess and luxury were supplied by secret or open robbery (Hosea 4. 2; 10. 13); there was oppression (Hosea 12. 7, Amos 3. 9, 10); false dealing (Hosea 12. 7, Amos 8. 5); perversion of justice (Hosea 10. 5; Amos 2. 6, 7), and grinding of the poor (Amos 2. 7; 8. 6). Adultery was consecrated as an act of worship and religion (Hosea 4. 14). The people, the king and the priests were all steeped in debauchery. Corruption had spread everywhere; even the places once sacred through Jehovah's revelation, Bethel, Gilgal, Gilead, Mizpah and Shechem, were special scenes of vileness and wickedness. Remonstrance was useless, for the knowledge of Jehovah was wilfully rejected; they hated rebuke. To understand the message of Hosea and Amos these conditions, both religious, and moral, must be fully understood."

Like the message of other prophets Hosea's message is one of judgment and future mercy. He announced the coming judgment as certain and irreversible. They were to be led away into captivity. His sons and daughters borne to him by Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, expressed this coming judgment in their names, which were given to them by divine direction.

It belongs to the mournful solemnity of Hosea's prophecy that he scarcely speaks to the people in his own person. The ten chapters which form the centre of the prophecy, are almost wholly one long dirge of woe, in which the prophet rehearses the guilt and the punishment of his people. If the people are addressed, it is, with very few exceptions, God Himself, not the prophet, who speaks to them, and God speaks to them as their Judge.

The last chapter alone is one of almost unmingled brightness. The prophet calls to repentance, and God in His own person accepts it, and promises large supplies of grace. We learn then from the message of this book, what is so largely written in all the prophets, that their is a glorious future in store for all Israel. Judah and Israel both will receive the promised blessing and glory in that day when the King comes back, when Ephraim joyfully cries out, "I have answered, and will regard Him" (Hosea 14. 8). *W. R. Wallace.*

### HOSEA'S PROPHETIC LIFE.

**From Vanvouver.** —The prophet Hosea was contemporary with Amos in Israel, and Isaiah and Micah in Judah. His prophetic life extended over a period of approximately 60 years, from about 785 to 725 B. C, and we learn from the expression "house of Israel" used in his prophecy, that his ministry was directed towards the ten tribes of Israel as distinct from Judah and Benjamin.

The ten tribes had revolted nearly 200 years before, and had made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king, after the death of Solomon (about 975 B. C). Led by the wickedness of this king, the people pursued a path of rapid declension from the right ways of the LORD, and idol worship, like that of the surrounding nations, replaced the worship of God.

Many abominable and immoral practices associated with idolatry were carried on in secret places (2 Kings 17. 9), and in groves and under every green tree.

The beginning of this sad and apostate condition amongst a people who once stood as one man in the things of God, and worshipped in the place of His choice, is to be found in the actions of Solomon, of whom we read, "Solomon loved many strange women" (1 Kings 11. 1). He built an high place "for Chemosh the abomination of Moab... And so did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods" (1 Kings 11. 7-8).

By the time we reach the record of 2 Kings 14. to 17., which brings us to Hosea's ministry, things had degenerated to such an extent that God sent the Assyrians to invade Samaria and carry away captive the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh (see 1 Chronicles 5. 25, 26). This was followed in the reign of Hoshea, by the carrying away of the ten tribes into Assyria, and the cities of Samaria were re-peopled with Gentiles (see 2 Kings 17. 22-24).

In God's governmental dealings with His people, the purpose was twofold, that He might chastise them for their sin and disobedience, and in His love, seek their repentance and restoration.

We do well to remember that while God never compromises with His people while in a state of departure, He waits patiently for their repentance and obedience.

To such a people was Hosea sent by God, and his was the unpleasant task of presenting to them a picture of how they appeared in the eyes of God. Like a woman who had broken her sacred marriage vows, and sought after other lovers, so had Israel done with the God who had redeemed them.

It was suggested that when God told Hosea to take a wife of this kind, we should not regard this as literal, but figurative. His going amongst them with God's message brought him into an association answering to a righteous man and an adulterous woman. [However distasteful the thought, we cannot treat what Hosea was told to do as simply figurative. We view the command as literal and both wife and children as persons. —J. M. ]. This explanation seems at least a logical answer to what would otherwise be an outstanding violation of the law of God, and more particularly in one whom God had called to be His servant. [This is just the point, that it was no more seemly Hosea's association with Gomer, than for Jehovah to be the God of such a people as Israel had become. Hence the prophet's message is thrust home upon Israel by the prophet's action of taking a woman such as God commanded him to take. —J. M. ].

To be consistent with this explanation, however, we must regard the birth of the daughter and sons as being figurative also. In that case, their significant names, Lo-ruhamah, and Lo-ammi, were used by Hosea in his message to tell the people that God had written over them the sad commentary: "Ye are not My people," and that there would be no mercy (see Hosea 2. 1). [But surely this is a matter of figures run riot. Hosea took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim. Did he take a wife or a figure? Then if he did, a figure had a son and then a figure had a daughter, which were both figures. These had names which were figures of something else and so on we go. —J. M. ]. If, however, the marriage of Hosea was an actual experience, which some believe it was, many questions arise. Could it be a sovereign act of God, used to portray the evil condition of the people? What effect would the ministry of the prophet have in view of such an association? With even the slightest consciousness of their own condition in the pure light of God's requirements they would be quick to regard Hosea as one who had stooped to their own level [No, surely not! He took a wife of whoredom, but he was not guilty of whoredom. The association of a holy prophet with a woman of this sort was the matter which God, concerning His own experience with Israel, wished to be forced upon them. —J. M. ] and his divine interpretation with its application to them would be disregarded. We are inclined to regard the figurative explanation as correct.

*R. Armstrong.*

From Atherton. —To get the real setting of the subject before us, and the history of the book, we need to read the lives of the kings and the prophets involved. We find that Hosea was contemporary with Isaiah and Amos, his prophecy extending for a period of 60 years, indicating he would be old, when his work was completed. His message appears to be to Israel, the object being to bring Israel back to the way of God.

Israel at this particular time were in a state of spiritual adultery. We wondered whether the adultery of Israel was moral and spiritually. [Both were rampant I should say. Idolatry and fornication were almost always wedded together. —J. M. ]. Hosea in his message seems to be stressing the spiritual side. [When idolatry ceased then moral uprightness followed. —J. M. ].

It was thought that this absence of the mention of other kings of Israel, especially in view of the fact that Hosea prophesied in the reigns of others besides Jeroboam II, possibly reveals something which is not otherwise mentioned; that is, that Hosea belonged to Judah, for a number of Judah's kings are mentioned, and this is significant when we consider that Hosea's prophecy was to the ten tribes. Isaiah, in contrast, with a message to Judah, is referred to as prophesying in the reigns of the same kings.

This fact seems to be borne out by what we have in chapters 1. and 2., that Hosea is told to take a wife of whoredom. This, it was suggested, does not mean that his wife was an harlot, but that she belonged to a people who had committed spiritual adultery. [We believe that what is said is literal not spiritual. See notes in Vancouver's paper. —J. M. J. By this we see that Hosea must go and join himself to a woman of whoredom, who had spiritually departed from God. The query was raised as to the necessity for Hosea to take such a step, but it seemed to be the will of God, with the object in view of restoring Israel from the wickedness of their ways.

In chapter 3., Hosea is again commanded to take a woman, but it would seem from verse 3 that her position was not to be that of a wife to commune with; certain conditions are laid down, with which she must comply. Verses 4 and 5 bring before us the teaching of the Lord in Hosea's conduct, that Israel as a nation were to be cut off, with no king, no prince, no sacrifice, no pillar, ephod or teraphim. Then we read of their return, that they might seek the Lord their God, and David their king.

*D. H. Butler, G. Sankey.*

From Ilford. —The Book of Hosea presents to us a picture, in symbol form, of Israel's gradual departure from God's will for them, to the state of rebellion and adultery, in that they sought other gods and worshipped them.

The symbol of the three children which were born to Gomar, would seem to indicate this gradual departure we have mentioned. The meaning of the names seems very significant, regarding this point. With the birth of Lo-ammi it seems that Hosea presents God's final judgment of His people, when He gives them over to their idolatry, and the dreadful consequences of their refusing to hearken to His continual pleading to put aside their idols, and return to Himself.

If it is quite clear, however, from the chapters considered, that God's whole object in the punishment of His people, was that they might repent of their evil ways, and return, acknowledging their sin, which is ever God's object in dealing with His children in all times.

It was suggested that the early verses of chapter 2. indicate Israel's fall into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, when they suffered that of which God had warned them (particularly verse 11 of chapter 2. ). This was, however, intended to restore them eventually, and we suggest was partly fulfilled in the return from Babylon in the times of Ezra and Nehemiah. The complete fulfilment of the latter portion of chapters 2. and 3. was suggested to be yet future. [Are not our friends confusing the captivity of Israel in Assyria with the captivity of Judah in Babylon?—G. P. ]

It was interesting to note the change in attitude from chapter 1. as shown by the names of the children, to that of verses 22 and 23 of chapter 2., when the complete opposite of the names pertains.

*T. E. Jarvis.*

### EXTRACTS.

From Glasgow. —First in connection with Hosea's ministry stands the statement that the word of the LORD came to him. Hosea means "salvation"; his father's name, Beer, means "my well." Both are typical names.

Critics have pointed out that Hosea was undoubtedly a resident of the Northern Kingdom of Israel, yet he mentions but one of the kings of Israel, Jeroboam, while four kings of Judah are given in this introduction. Inasmuch as Hosea long survived Jeroboam, the king of Israel, and the kings of Judah extend far beyond the time of the one Israelitish king, it has been alleged that the second part of the superscription does not harmonize with the first. Such is not the case. The superscription is made in this manner for some purpose. Hosea marks his prophecy by the names of the kings of Judah, because in Judah the theocracy remained. He mentions Jeroboam II, whose reign ended in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah (2 Kings 15. 8), because he was the last king of Israel through whom God acted and vouchsafed help to the rival kingdom. All the other kings of Israel who came after Jeroboam, by whom the Lord sent deliverance to the ten tribes (2 Kings 14. 27), were therefore unrecognized by the prophets of God; the kings which followed were robbers and murderers, whose names the Spirit of God finds unfit to mention in the prophetic ministry of Hosea.

In the beginning of **his** ministry, when Hosea was a young **man**, the Lord commanded him to take unto him a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms and that for the reason, because the land hath committed great whoredoms, departing from the LORD. This command was at once executed by the prophet; he took to wife Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim. **We** are confronted with an interesting question. **What is** the nature of these transactions? **Were** they real events, that Hosea literally took this woman and had children by her, or were they nothing but pictorial, visionary illustrations of the spiritual adultery and unfaithfulness of Israel? Did the prophet actually and literally enter into such an impure relationship, or is it wholly an allegory? Luther supposed that the prophet called his lawful wife and children by these names at a certain time to perform a kind of a drama before the people and thus remind them of their apostasy. The objectors to the literalness of these events and defenders of the allegorical explanation, have pointed out that it would be unworthy of God to command and sanction such an unchaste union. The allegorical meaning is entirely excluded by the text, which speaks of a literal transaction. All is related as real history, the marriage and the birth of the children. We quote first Dr. Pusey's words in support of the literal meaning of this command of the Lord.

" We must not imagine things to be unworthy of God, because they do not commend themselves to us. God does not dispense with the moral law, because the moral law has its source in the mind of God Himself. To dispense with it would mean to contradict Himself. But God, who is absolute Lord of all things which *He* made, may, at His sovereign will, dispose of the lives or things which **He** created. Thus, as sovereign Judge, He commanded the lives of the Canaanites to be taken by Israel, as in His ordinary providence, He has ordained, that the magistrate should not bear the sword in vain, but has made him His minister, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. So again, He whose are all things, willed to repay to the Israelites their hard and unjust servitude by commanding them to spoil the Egyptians. He who created marriage, commanded to Hosea whom he should marry. The prophet was not defiled by taking as his lawful wife, at God's bidding, one defiled, however hard a thing this was. "

This is the strongest defence of the literal interpretation of this incident. But there is another interpretation possible, which we believe is the correct one. The context shows that the symbolical meaning of Hosea's marriage is to illustrate Israel's unfaithfulness. But Israel was not always unfaithful, she played not always the harlot. Of necessity this had to be symbolised in the case of the prophet's marriage. The question then arises, was Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim an impure woman when Hosea married her, or did she become unchaste after her marriage to the prophet? We believe the latter was the case. [We cannot escape in a maze of symbolism from the plain statement that Gomer was " a wife of whoredom " when Hosea took her and not what she became afterwards. —J. M. ]. The Hebrew does not require the meaning that she was impure at the time of the marriage; in fact, as already indicated, the supposition that Gomer lived the life of a harlot before her marriage to the godly prophet, destroys the parallelism which the prophet's message embodies, with the relations of God to Israel [Was not Israel (the ten tribes) a harlot from the beginning of their separate existence from Judah? Did they not commence with the calves at Bethel and Dan?—J. M. ]. The expression, " a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms " simply intimated to Hosea what the woman he married was going to be. [Oh, no !] If not taken in this sense it would mean that Gomer had already children when Hosea married her. Gomer was called " a wife of whoredoms " by the omniscient LORD in anticipation of her future conduct. She fell and became immoral after her union with Hosea, and not before.

Hosea 1. 10 is quoted by the Holy Spirit in Romans 9. 25, 26, and gives full light on the meaning of the passage here. It shows first that Israel shall be reinstated, but it also involves the call and salvation of **the** Gentiles, and Gentiles called in sovereign grace are to be called the sons of the living God. It is **a** prophetic hint on the blessing to come to the Gentiles, and that blessing is greater than Israel's.

Verses 18-23 of chapter 2. show that the Lord of love will not forever abandon His people, and though Israel has played the harlot so long, with no willingness to return unto Him, **He** himself in infinite love is going to woo her back. **He** will allure her, as He brings her into the wilderness, and there speak "to her heart" (see R. V. M. ). That will be in a coming day when the LORD will remember the remnant of His people during the time of Jacob's trouble and save them. Then she will get her vineyards, her place of blessing promised to Israel as His earthly people. The Valley of Achor shall be the door of hope. In that valley Achan died, on account of whom all Israel had known defeat (Joshua 7. ). Then judgment had been enacted, and after that blessing was restored to Israel and the ban was removed. Achor means "troubling." When Israel is in that great trouble, the great tribulation, the valley of trouble will become the door of hope, for then the LORD will forgive them their sins, cover them with His grace, and redeem them by His power. She will be fully restored to her former relationship, typified by marriage. "It shall be at that day, saith the LORD, that thou shalt call Me Ishi (my husband); and shalt call Me no more Baali (my Master)." She will be remarried to the LORD symbolically speaking [I am glad that our friends use the words symbolically speaking of Israel's marriage to Jehovah. Their land will be called Beulah, but this is a figure of speech. The idea of the Lord having two wives or brides is contrary to the mind of God in creation. There is one answer in scripture to Adam and Eve, Christ and His church, His bride and wife. —J. M. ] and become the earthly wife of Jehovah, while the Church, the espoused virgin, becomes in glory the Lamb's wife (Revelation 19. 6-8). But greater blessing will be connected with that coming day of blessing, when Israel is received back. Romans 11. 15-18 tells us that creation will then be blest, the time of its deliverance will have come. In chapter 3. 4 we have a very remarkable prophecy as to Israel's present condition. It is to be their state for "many days." These "many days," unreckoned, are the days of this present age, in which Israel is in the predicted condition, while God visits the Gentiles. Israel's condition is to be without a civil polity, without king or prince, without the appointed Levitical worship; without the practice of idolatry, to which they had been given, without image, ephod and terephim, which they used before the captivity. Judah had princes; there were to be no princes during the "many days." The real approach to God according to the Levitical service was to cease, for during the "many days" there would be no sacrifice. This has been Israel's condition for nineteen hundred years. What a wonderful forecast of the present we have here ! Clearly then, this describes the present condition of Israel—the most anomalous spectacle the world has ever seen, a people who go on generation after generation without any of those things which are supposed to be essential for keeping a people in existence. They have lost their king, their prince, they have neither the true worship nor the worship of idols. They are unable to present a sacrifice, because they have no temple and no priesthood. This prophecy is yet another evidence of the supernatural character of the Scriptures.

*W. R. Wallace.*

From **Edinburgh.** —In the days in which Hosea lived there was a departure from God. His message therefore called Israel to repentance. At the time that Hosea was speaking to Israel, Isaiah was prophesying to Judah (compare Isaiah 1. ).

Hosea took a wife of whoredom, which would speak of the condition of Israel before God. Significant names were given to the three children of the marriage. Each name speaks of judgement upon Israel. God's trouble with Israel, as typified in Hosea's domestic affliction and unfaithful wife, makes sad reading.

It was suggested that the day of Jezreel in chapter 1. 11 might point forward to the day of the Lord, but blessing would appear to be the promise here, not judgment.

To break the bow in the valley of Jezreel would speak of scattering into captivity, but blessing will result when all are gathered again. While this is to Israel, a lesson to us can be read. The God of Israel is our God, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy in this day of departure from God.

Hosea pleads for a return to first love, and points out the earthly benefits to be received even in the wilderness. Our valleys of Achor (trouble) become doors of blessing and places of song. Achan paid the price of sin. Sin was in the camp, but it was confessed and punished, and Israel went on to victory. Therefore it was a valley of hope indeed, for when sin is confessed and dealt with, blessing will accrue.

Verse 19 would point us forward to Israel's return to God, not to the marriage of the Church, which was a mystery first revealed to Paul. Verse 23 was linked with Philippians 2. 11, but the latter would appear to refer to all earth at **His** coming; the former refers to Israel only.

The change of names, not Baali (Lord), but Ishi (husband), would point forward to the millennial reign, when Israel's reunion will be complete.

Chapter 3. tells of the ransom price paid. The redemption of Hosea's wife, equal to 90 pieces of silver, was costly, but Israel's redemption price was paid at Calvary. From the time of the captivity to the Lord's return to earth Israel is without sacrifice, and the period covered by verses 4, 5, would appear to refer to this.

As John was the apostle of love in the New Testament, so might Hosea be called the prophet of love in the Old Testament. Out of the depths of degradation and despair caused by family and moral ruin, emerges a pure knowledge of God's love to **His** people. *K. Robertson.*

**From Kilmarnock.** —In our studies of what are known as the Minor Prophets, it is well to remember what is written in Romans 15. 4: " For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the Scriptures we might have hope. " There is much in God's messages to **His** servants the prophets that may seem strange to us, but by the guidance of the Holy Spirit there are lessons for **His** people now to be learned.

We understand that Hosea would be one that feared God, and therefore he was used to convey God's message to the nation. It may be that the word of the LORD given to him in verse 2 of chapter 1. would be abhorrent to him, but the reason is given: " For the land doth commit great whoredom, departing from the LORD. " It was a sign to the people of how they had forsaken the LORD and worshipped false gods. Jehovah had been as a Husband unto them; as Isaiah 54. 5 says, " For thy Maker is thine Husband, " but they had been unfaithful to Him, as Hosea's wife had been. **His** family also were to be signs to them. He was to call his son Jezreel, reminding them of the blood that Jehu had shed. Although he had carried out God's judgment on the house of Ahab, yet he himself had given no heed to walk in the ways of the Lord, and now judgment was about to fall on his posterity by God causing the kingdom of Israel to cease. **His** daughter was to be called Lo-ruhamah, which means, " not having obtained mercy. " God had been very merciful to the nation in the past, but now Hosea's action proclaimed that God's mercy was exhausted and He would pardon them no more.

In his second son's name, Lo-ammi, meaning " not my people, " Hosea signified to the people that although the LORD had redeemed them from Egypt to be a separated people to Himself, yet now He was about to disown them as **His** people if they did not repent of their transgressions and return to Him. Chapter 2. opens with a pleading message to the people that they might put away their sins, and he reminds them how the LORD had supplied all their needs, and also warns them that the LORD is about to chastise them because they had forsaken Him. However, verses 14, 15 seem to point forward to a hopeful time when they shall again acknowledge the LORD as " Ishi, " " my Husband. " May this not refer to the millennium? (see verses 18, 19). Then shall the LORD say of the returned remnant, " Thou art My people. "

While thinking of Hosea's prophetic life, our mind was led to James 4. 4, where he addresses some as spiritual adulteresses for having friendship with the world. The LORD in **His** prayer (John 17. 16) says, " They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. " This shows the error of those who would be **His** disciples now, and yet fail to keep separate from the world. *A. G. S.*

**From London, S. E.** —This prophet was contemporary with Amos, Isaiah and Micah, and prophesied principally to Israel (the ten tribes) who had broken away from Rehoboam, and under their king Jeroboam had set up a separate kingdom; and, far more serious, a separate religion with centres of worship in Bethel and Dan. The charge against them is one of backsliding into spiritual fornication and adultery. Hosea's own married life is similar, his wife being unfaithful, and this is used by God to show His people their own unfaithfulness towards Him.

Yet despite all this the LORD says in verses 10 and 11 that their number shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered, and that it should yet be said of them that they were "the sons of the living God." Judah and Israel, gathered together with one head; the day of Jezreel would be great because this was "sown of God." Jehovah would not revoke His promise.

The marriage of Hosea was to teach Israel that they had not been chosen for any worthiness of themselves, for they were as unworthy of marriage as Gomer.

Chapter 2, opens with a description of the adulteries of Gomer, a picture of Israel's adulteries against the LORD. Verses 6 to 13 speaks of chastisement from the hand of the LORD. Israel did not realise that it was the LORD that had given her the corn and wine and oil with silver and gold multiplied. They had used these things for the god Baal. That which He had given would now be taken away.

Chapter 2, 14 and 8, 13 seem to suggest another Egypt and wilderness experience, yet the LORD seems to remember again His promises, for in this very bringing into the wilderness He will speak comfortably (or to her heart) to her as in Isaiah 40, 2. Jehovah's tone is not one of destruction, but rather of tenderness to draw her back to Himself. He will woo her as in the days of old. Once more He will be "Ishi" (my Husband), and Baal shall no longer be her master.

The mention of Achor is suggestive. It means the vale of trouble, and was where Achan was stoned to death. This would show that Israel's punishment was designed as discipline and so leading to hope.

Then follows chapter 3, with its redeeming love—love that would pay a price. Hosea enters into some sort of agreement with Gomer, —provision made in verse 2, but with conditions as in verse 3. This is fulfilled in Israel to-day. She is not living as Jehovah's wife, but living a separate existence. They were to abide many days without king, prince, sacrifice, image, ephod and teraphim; but afterward they would return, and seek the LORD their God and David their king. Does this mean that David is again to rule over Israel? [David during the Millennium will be prince over Israel as this verse and Ezekiel 34, 23; 37, 24, 25 show. — J. M. J. H. J. Owles.]

**From Hamilton, Ont.** —The first three chapters of Hosea furnish the key to the book, in which the unfaithfulness and backsliding character of Israel to Jehovah is pressed home. The necessity of chastisement is shown, also the patience and forbearance of God and His unquenchable love for His people.

By adding up the years of the kings in chapter 1, 1, travelling backward in order, we have Hezekiah 29 years, Ahaz 16 years, Jotham 16 years, Uzziah 52 years, Amaziah 29 years, a total of 142 years (see 2 Chronicles 25, 1 to 29, 1). As it was in the fifteenth year of Amaziah that Jeroboam began to reign (2 Kings 14, 23), we must subtract 15 years from 142 years, leaving a total of 127 years. [We do not consider the basis of our friends' calculations to be sound. While we do not suggest that Hosea prophesied throughout the reigns of the kings named in Hosea 1, 1, it is perfectly feasible that he started his prophetic ministry in the closing years of Jeroboam (say about 785) and continued until Israel was taken captive in the sixth year of Hezekiah's reign over Judah (about 720). This seems a much more reasonable view than one which requires the somewhat unsatisfactory explanation given below. —G. P. J.]

As the oldest of all those kings referred to was Uzziah, whose age only reached 68 years, it can scarcely be supposed that Hosea could have lived for 127 years. So we suggest that what is meant by the word of the LORD that came to Hosea in the days of Uzziah, etc., must have been words from God concerning tilings

that related to those kings, some of which **no doubt were impossible to have happened** in Hosea's own days. So that which knowledge **made known was like a revelation of prophecy, or a continuation of history, some of which Hosea may not have heard before, regarding which God was anxious to communicate His people's true condition.**

The LORD called Hosea's firstborn son Jezreel, thereby prophesying that **he would avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and cause the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease** (verse 4). These words **seem** to indicate that they were spoken by Hosea prior to **2 Kings 17. 6**, when, in the sixth year of Hezekiah, God caused the kingdom of the house of Israel to **cease**. At this point Judah is still showing mercy, **as** verse 7 says, "I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them." Next a daughter is born, and her **name is** called Lo-ruhamah, indicating that the LORD would have no more mercy on the house of Israel (verse 6). This seems to indicate the fulfilment of **2 Kings 17. 6** **as** if it had already taken place. [This surely does not follow in view of the words " **at the first** " in Hosea 1. 2. —G. P. ].

No doubt this visitation should have had **a warning voice** to Judah, for many years more Judah had the advantage of still listening to and obeying the voice of God. But no, Judah still did evil in the sight of the Lord, and departed not from the sins of Manasseh. We would think from chapter 2. 1 that there were those of His people who were spiritual, in Israel. Another son is born and called Lo-ammi, meaning "not My people" (verse 9). This again **seems** to indicate the time when not only the house of Israel ceased to be **a kingdom**, but also when Judah was carried away to Babylon (2 Kings 25. ). Both became included in the term, "For **ye are** not My people." Although spoken of as sisters, Israel and Judah acted like two different peoples, as Hosea infers by the language of verses 10, 11, "And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land. [There is insufficient evidence to support the view that the second son typified Judah. Verse 10 clearly shows that the words " **Ye are not My people** " apply to Israel. The burden of this prophecy relates to the northern kingdom. —G. P. ].

But Hosea gives **a bright ray of hope** in verse 5, when "afterward shall **the children of Israel return and seek the LORD their God.** " Hosea's **name**, which means "salvation," shall be applicable to them in that day, for although to-day they are enemies for the gospel's sake, they are still beloved for the father's sake (Romans 11. 28). "And so all Israel shall be saved: **as** it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer; He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob " (Romans 11. 26).  
*T. Ramage.*

**From Cowdenbeath.** —In the first three chapters, God has dealings with Hosea, revealing unto him His purposes concerning Israel, and causing him to understand His own feelings towards His wayward and disobedient people. It is not until chapter 4. that Hosea speaks to the nation. This is ever God's way, to speak to and instruct **His** servants in secret ere **He sends** them forth to testify publicly for Him. May we realise this!

It **seems** very strange that God should ask this young prophet (**we** would reckon him to be youthful seeing that he continued unto the carrying **away** to Assyria) to become united in marriage unto **a woman of such a dissolute character.** God's reason for this, we would believe, was to **cause His** servant to realise what it meant to **Him** for Israel to be conducting themselves **as** they did in bowing down to other gods. They were guilty of spiritual adultery. If **he** would deliver God's message to **His** people he must know how serious was their sin.

Marriage is no light matter, and Hosea would have many occasions to grieve because of his wife's conduct. Children were born **as a result of this** marriage and God instructed the prophet to give them certain names, and in so doing revealed to him **His** purposes for Israel. Judgment **is** pronounced upon the house of Jehu to which king Jeroboam, the reigning monarch, belonged. Not only so, **but** God further states that the kingdom of the house of Israel would cease. At the birth of the second child, God says that **He** will have no mercy upon His people, and at the birth of the third **He** disowns **them** completely. Yet ere chapter 1. closes

**God speaks** of a time of blessing when Judah and Israel would be united as **His** people to obtain His mercy.

In chapter 3. Hosea is instructed to make a friendship with an adulterous woman who is loved of her husband. Fifteen pieces of silver and an homer and a half of barley was all the price which he paid that she should abide with him for many days. Thus Hosea's associations with these two women was to bring him to realize somewhat of God's feelings towards His people. [Was not the voice in these happenings for Israel ?—J. M. ], *James Bowman*.

**From Birkenhead.** —It was remarked that the books grouped together as the Minor Prophets in many cases were neglected in most peoples' Biblical study. The fact, however, that they are little read or spoken upon, does not in any way suggest that they are unimportant. The Lord **Jesus** and the apostle Paul made use of the very book we have under consideration, which demonstrates their appreciation and acknowledgment of its importance.

In the first verse of Hosea we have mention of Jeroboam, the son of Joash; his name is the same as that of the founder of the Northern Kingdom and instigator of calf worship. He was a very able and warlike man, who regained much of the lost territory and prestige of this kingdom, but he failed on the other hand to stamp out the calf worship or to improve the moral standards of his subjects. The people to whom Hosea spoke were in a poor spiritual condition which is often characteristic of a period of peace and prosperity, in which luxuriousness and moral laxity seem to flourish.

In the first three chapters we have an account of the prophet's own unhappy married life, which was one filled with distressing experiences. These experiences were highly important, for the story of Gomer and Hosea is only a parable of Israel and Jehovah, and from them Hosea was to appreciate what Jehovah had to suffer by the actions of His people. The reference to Gomer as the daughter of Diblaim appears to undermine any suggestion that the account is merely allegorical.

It was remarked that a change is perceivable after verse 14 of chapter 2., the tone becoming one of tenderness and entreaty, making way for the remarkably forgiving action of Hosea recounted in chapter 3., that of buying back his erring and faithless wife. [This is a second woman, not Gomer. —J. M. ]. The price that Hosea paid was fifteen pieces of silver and one and a half homers of barley. Hosea thus came to know intimately from personal experience the effect that Israel's sin had upon Jehovah. The grief that sin brought to Jehovah no one can appreciate, but we can appreciate the fact that His love is such that He provides a ransom for the sinner.

It was felt that whilst the prophecy applies to Israel in the future, in chapter 3. we have the period through which she is passing at the moment. God's loving and forgiving characteristics are seen in the mercy of God to the Gentiles of this era, as seen in Romans 9. 24-26, and 1 Peter 2. 10. *T. M. H., R. Mc. C.*

**From Brantford, Ont.** —2 Kings gives us great help on the periods of Hosea's ministry. One noticeable thing is the fact that Elisha has just concluded his ministry as Hosea's starts. One wonders how much help Elisha's example must have been to the son of Beerī ? [Elisha died about 840 B. C. and Hosea's ministry began 55 years later, about 785 B. C. Evidence in the Book of Hosea suggests that the prophet was taken captive with Israel about 720 B. C. Certainly he was prophesying in the early days of Hezekiah, who commenced to reign about 726. Therefore we conclude that Hosea was only a young man when his prophecy commenced some 60 years earlier; he could hardly have known Elisha, though the work of that great prophet would be within living memory of some of Hosea's early contemporaries. —G. P. ]. Then Hosea was also contemporary with other great ministers and prophets, Isaiah being one of them. It was a distressing time for the godly ones, and a heart-breaking time for the LORD, who was about to bring captivity upon Israel. In view of this we believe God spared no means or words in order that He might deliver His people. Thus we see a number of mighty men at this particular time.

As Isaiah gives us wonderful pictures of millennial blessing, so we can see Hosea doing the same in chapter 2. 18. In that day **can we** not say **that** " Israel shall be **as** the sand of the **sea** " ? Certainly she **will** not be at the beginning of the Millennium, for " **a** remnant " **is** placed prominently before us. Perhaps some one could give us help on chapter 1. **10, 11, as** to time and application. Judah and Israel have not been gathered together yet, so that when the Lord comes to reign on the earth, then it **will** be possible for them to **be** gathered together and have Him **as** their Head. But when will these people be **as** the sand of the **sea** ? [It was God's purpose to make the seed of Abraham **as** the sand which **is** upon the **sea** shore, **as** the dust of the earth, and **as** the stars of heaven (Genesis 13. **16**; 15. **5**; 22. 17). The numbering of Israel **was** a matter which could bring the LORD'S displeasure (see 2 Samuel 24. ; 1 Chronicles 21. ) and when Moses numbered Israel **at** the first from **20** years and upwards, each of the numbered **men** had to give " **a** ransom for his soul, " and Israel **was** viewed **as** covered by this atonement silver (Exodus 30. 11-16). At the beginning of the Millennium, " **all** Israel shall be saved " (Romans 11. 26), which of course does not mean every Jew, for we must remember what Paul says in Romans 9. **6**, " They are not **all** Israel, which are of Israel. " **All** \* Israel in Romans 9. **6** and 11. **26** must be read **as** we read of the remnant in Ezra 2. 70: " **All** Israel in their cities. " The remnant **is** called " **all** Israel " although thousands upon thousands of Jews remained in Babylon and elsewhere **in** the Persian Empire. At the beginning of the Millennium Israel **will** be saved **in** a remnant (Romans 9. 27) even **as** at the beginning of this dispensation there was a saved, elect remnant (Romans 11. 1-7), but many Jews will **fall** a prey to the deceptions of the Man of Sin (John 5. 43). During the Millennium Israel **will** be multiplied (see Jeremiah 30. **19**; Ezekial 36. **10**; **37. 26**). David's seed and the Levites will also be multiplied (Jeremiah 33. 22). Thus will God fulfil completely the Abrahamic promise. —J. M. J.

\* In chapter 3. 4, 5, we have direct reference to captivity. " In the latter days " was discussed, **as** to whether this was at the time of Ezra or **was** future, or has **a** dual fulfilment. It may **be** that rightly the children of Israel never returned with Ezra, but rather the children of Judah. Most believe at any rate that " the latter days " **mean** the millennial time.

In the time of the Lord's sojourn on earth, Samaria and Judaea were separate entities. Did any of Israel (the ten tribes) come back at any time, or were some never taken captive, to account for the fact that Anna of Asher and Levites were there in Judaea ? Some believed that only Judah and Benjamin were represented in Judaea in the days of Christ. However, there must have been other representatives of some of the ten " lost " tribes. [In the main the remnant in **Ezra's** time were mainly of Judah and Benjamin (Ezra 1. 5) with priests and Levites. There were also the Nethinim (a servant class) and the children of Solomon's servants (Ezra 2. 58). No doubt there were some of the other tribes, for there were **a** mixed multitude which could not say whether they were Israelites (Ezra 2. 59). —J. M. J. *Alex Sproul.*

### Questions and Answers.

Question **from** Birkenhead. —Is the term " Israel " used in Hosea limited to the subjects of the Northern Kingdom ? If so, does this also apply to the prophecies which have a future fulfilment ?

Answer. —The **name** Israel at the first applied to the twelve tribes, but when the kingdom **became** divided in Rehoboam's reign Israel became the name by which the ten tribes were known and Judah described the southern kingdom of Judah and Benjamin. In Hosea's time Israel **is** the ten tribes and Judah the two, so that Hosea's prophecy **is** specially to Israel the ten tribes. In the Millennium Israel shall again be the name of the twelve tribes when the kingdom **is** united, even as it was at the first. J. M.

Question from Ilford. —What **is** the significance of Hosea 3. 2 ?

Answer. —It was the price that Hosea had to pay for this second woman which the LORD commanded him to love, even **as** He loved the children of Israel. —J. M.

# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

FEBRUARY, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Hosea's prophetic l i f e . . . . .	13
God's quarrel with His p e o p l e . . . . .	13

### HOSEA'S PROPHETIC LIFE.

From Yeovil. —In considering the first three chapters of the prophet Hosea, we have some remarkable illustrations of the spiritual adultery and departure from God of His chosen people Israel. The prophet points out in the strongest terms their guilt and danger, and uses the expressive figures of adultery and whoredom to reprove their idolatry, which implied the violation of their covenant with God, and the alienation of their affections from Him. In the most earnest manner, he calls them to repentance.

We note that three children are born and that significant names are given to them.

1. Jezreel, which means to visit with blood, or avenge. [The generally accepted meaning is: " Will be sown of God. "—G. P. ]
2. Lo Ruhamah, which means not having obtained mercy.
3. Lo Ammi, which means not My people.

We see God's judgments and purposes displayed, and the eventual restoration of His people, for in chapter 2. 14 we see a promise made which is as a door of hope. With this we linked chapter 1. 11, "And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land: for great shall be the day of Jezreel. " Compare also Zechariah 12. 10: "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication; and they shall look unto Me whom they have pierced: and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first born. "

" O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are His judgements, and His ways past tracing out ! " (Romans 11. 33).  
*Leonard Shore.*

### GOD'S QUARREL WITH HIS PEOPLE.

From Cowdenbeath. —The outstanding sin of Israel was that they forsook their God and bowed down to false deities. When there is departure from God it will always have its effect in the dealings of men one toward another. And so it was in Israel in the days of Hosea that men acted untruthfully and without mercy. They swore saying, "As the Lord liveth, " without any intention of honouring their word. Violence was prevalent, and even the kings who sat upon the throne, with one exception, obtained power by the use of the sword. Theft and immorality were included in the list of evils which abounded, and everything gave evidence that the knowledge of God was lacking. This was the root of their trouble as verse 6 shows. There was a lack of knowledge, yet sadder still this knowledge might have been theirs, but they rejected it. For this reason they were rejected by God. The mother was to be destroyed (verse 5), the children to be forgotten (verse 6). The mother as referred to Israel would seem to mean the nation as a whole with all the privileges which belonged to it as such since its establishment; the children referring to the individuals of the nation or a

generation of the nation. The carrying away of Israel into Assyria meant the destruction of the privileges and status of the nation. The forgetting of the children would mean the withdrawal of God's protecting hand, and their experiencing of the dreadful punishments which He allowed their enemies to inflict.

Not only had the common people gone astray, but folly and departure marked the behaviour of the kings and the priests. Therefore judgment is pronounced. The land shall be desolate and mourn, and the people who had acted so stubbornly and who refused to give heed to the prophets would go away, led by their enemies into a strange land to feed as a lamb in a large place (chapter 4. 16).

The nation appears to have been looked upon by God as being divided into three: Israel, Ephraim and Judah; Israel being the northern tribes with Reuben and Manasseh across the Jordan, Ephraim being the central portion comprising the tribe of Ephraim and possibly portions of the surrounding tribes, and Judah as being the name given to the two tribes Judah and Benjamin. Israel was carried away first in the reign of Pekah, Ephraim being taken away at the final captivity of the ten tribes some twenty years later (see 2 Kings 15. 29 and 17. 6). God said that He would tear as a lion, and carry them off, leaving them in a strange land till they should acknowledge their offence. [I am disposed to the view that Israel and Ephraim are almost, if not quite, interchangeable terms in Hosea. As Judah stands for Judah and Benjamin, so Ephraim, the chief tribe of the northern kingdom, stands for Israel. —J. M. J.]

The first three verses of chapter 6. would have a partial fulfilment when the nation returned back to the land, but the final and complete fulfilment awaits the time when they shall return to their God acknowledging the awful sin of crucifying their Messiah, and then shall they be united to Him to be severed no more. They will long for and pursue after the true knowledge of God and will obtain it. "And they shall not teach every man his fellow-citizen, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: For all shall know Me, from the least to the greatest of them" (Hebrews 8. 11). And as it is recorded in Isaiah 11. 9, "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." [There is a depth of meaning in the original in Hebrews 8. 11, that is not in our English translation of this verse. The first word "know" in "Know the Lord" is *Ginosko*, which signifies objective knowledge and means to get to know, but the second "know" — "all shall know Me," is *Oida*, intuitive knowledge and signifies the inward consciousness of the person, who in this case knows Christ by revelation to the heart. —J. M. J.]

*James Bowman.*

**From Kilmarnock.** —In the books of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles we have a record of the kings that reigned about the time of Hosea's prophecy; some of them "did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD," while others, especially Ahaz and Jeroboam, "did evil in the eyes of the LORD." We cannot tell just when Hosea's message regarding the LORD'S controversy was given, but we think it was about B. C 780, according to Newberry's dates.

Chapter 4. seems to be a drawing aside of the veil, showing the condition of the people, as the LORD viewed it, especially the ten tribes of Israel (see verse 15). The cause of this condition is given in verse 1, "because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land."

What a contrast to this we get in 1 Kings 8. when Solomon and all the people dedicated the temple! The king, priests and people were all as one, and were \*joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the LORD had showed to . . . Israel His people."

The knowledge of God was then in the land, and the result was, peace and prosperity temporally and spiritually. God had not changed, but because His people had rejected knowledge and forgotten the law of their God, He was about to reject them. It was God's purpose that the priests should guide the people in the right way, but alas! the priests had gone astray. It was "like people, like priest," and instead of the priest's lips keeping knowledge, as Malachi 2. 7 says, they were turning to idols for counsel. Turning away from the knowledge of God always leads to disaster, as we find from Romans 1. 28. Some did not like to

retain God in their knowledge and God gave them up. It is God's will now that all **men** should be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2. 4).

Hosea's message in chapter 4. 17 is, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." **We** wonder if this applies to the tribe of Ephraim only, or does it include the whole of Israel's tribes. [To the whole of Israel, I judge. —J. M. ]. Chapter 5. 3-5 would seem to **make a** distinction, and Judah also is brought in. It is evident they **had all** alike transgressed, and although they might seek the Lord they shall not find Him, until, **as** verse 15 says, they "acknowledge their offence." This reminds **us** of what we get in Revelation 2. and 3., where the Lord reveals the condition of the seven churches, and calls to repentance, or **He** would deal in judgment. If, however, there is the acknowledgement of failure, what joy it must give to His heart to hear His people say, "Come, and let us return unto the LORD"; then to follow on to know the Lord, and practise what we know. **A. G. S.**

**From London, S. E.** —In the previous subject, metaphor was used very freely, but the opening of chapter four gives place to direct interrogation. The children of Israel are to hear the word of Jehovah.

Chapter 4. The Lord has a controversy, and those who have had dealings with Him will readily agree that there were sufficient grounds, for there was no truth, mercy, or knowledge of God. Instead there were swearing, breaking faith, killing, stealing, adultery, breaking out, and blood touching blood. In consequence the land is promised both mourning and languishing. The children of Israel were to lack flesh, fowl and fish. Despite the famine, violence is to cease together with any reproving, because, by striving they are similar to those who strive with the priest.

The results of their failure, **as** described in verses one and two, are now stated. They shall stumble by day, and in the night, even the prophet too. This is, indeed, a sorry plight, for it is one of the duties of the prophet to illumine the darkness, and so make plain the way of the LORD that His people will not slip. Because of their stumbling, the mother (a reference to chapter 2. verse 2), who presumably personifies the nature of their sinfulness, is to be destroyed. Following this is the exclamation concerning "My people " being destroyed, because there is a lack of knowledge; to whom is this "lack " attributed in verse 6 ? Is this Hosea or " thy mother, " or Israel ? [See Cowdenbeath's paper. I agree with their view of the mother and the children. "Thou " of verse 6 views the people of Israel as one unit, as though God were speaking to one person. God often uses this mode of speaking to His people. The nation of Israel here is viewed as God's priest. In chapter 11. 1 Israel is compared to both a "child " and a "son. "—J. M. ]. Israel was, of course, a kingdom of priests. Rejection of God means rejection by God. The children were to be forgotten, perhaps because the blessing came only by the reading and observance of the law of God. The development of the argument goes on to indicate that as they increased, so they sinned. Sin brings judgment in its train, and for this reason the glory of Israel must fade, and leave its people in the dust of shame.

The pronoun is now suddenly changed to " they "; can **this** refer to the priesthood, seeing " My people " is clearly shown as a separate party ? There does exist at least one example in scripture, of a priest obtaining a living by participating in sin (*i. e.*, Judges 17. 7-13; and 18. 1-31).

It seems a natural thing that **if** the land is generally given over, in spirit, to whoredom, the priests who come naturally from the people [Whilst Jeroboam " made priests from among all the people which were not of the sons of Levi " (1 Kings 12. 31), it was not so by the law. The priests were of Levi and **of** the house of Aaron. —J. M. ] will be tainted with the same sin, for these things will take away the understanding, and lead the people into error.

All the divine principles and claims were ignored and flouted. They sacrificed upon the tops of mountains, and burnt incense upon the hills and under oaks and poplars and elms; and they did so in company with persons expressly excluded from divine service by the law. This controversy concludes with the statement that though Israel had behaved stubbornly, yet would the LORD " feed them as a lamb. "

Chapter 5. A fresh indictment of judgment is now given to: (1) the priests, (2) the House of Israel, and (3) the King's House; that is the religious, social and political representatives of the nation.

The judgment is against them for the following reasons: —(1) the snare at Mizpah, (2) the net upon Tabor, (3) the revolvers going deep in making slaughter, (4) dealing treacherously, (5) whoredom, (6) bearing strange children, and (7) pride.

The effect of these sins would be to make them stumble, and when afterward they seek the LORD, they will find that He will have withdrawn Himself.

The final state is now prophesied. "The day of rebuke is coming" (verse 2), albeit with the proper sounding of the alarm of trumpet and cornet.

To Ephraim is to be given, desolation, oppression and crushing, while God will be as a moth to them, because they were content to walk after vanity (R. V. M.).

To the princes of Judah, God's wrath is poured out, and God will be as rottenness, because they are like them who remove the landmark.

How foolish were these people who, though realising their sickness and wound, went to others to be healed and cured!

The LORD by simile says He will be unto Ephraim as a lion and as a young lion to the house of Judah, but, even worse still, He intends to leave them desolate until they acknowledge their offence, and they seek His face.

There is a real sting in the last part of the paragraph when the Lord states: "In their affliction they will seek Me earnestly."

Chapter 6. Happily the subject is rounded off with the three beautiful verses of this chapter.

Can it be that the people, priest and prophet are seen in us?

The hearts of the Lord's people can indeed agree: —He hath torn; He will heal. He hath smitten; He will bind up. On the third day; He will raise us up. His people shall *live* before Him—the bright glories of the Gospel flood into full brilliance at this prophetic realisation of the truth of resurrection.

To those who have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour, and have been baptized, can this claim of the LORD reach out and constrain them to "follow on to know the Lord," and live in the rich knowledge that "He shall come . . ." (verse 3).

*R. D. Wood.*

### EXTRACTS.

**From Brantford, Ont.** —The reasons for God's controversy with His people in Hosea's day are not far to seek. Even casual reading of the portion would reveal that they had estranged themselves from God. By careful study we begin to apprehend the enormity of their sins. The specific charges preferred against them by God reveal a people which had forfeited all their rights to claim the blessings of the Lord. Any form or type of sin is an abomination to the LORD, but theirs were transgressions and iniquities far surpassing that which is common to mankind. They sinned high-handedly and presumptuously. Moral and spiritual delinquency were the order of the day. Whilst the indictment commences with moral sins, the spiritual delinquency referred to later was the greater abomination of the two evils.

We noted the things which were lacking in the land—no truth, no mercy, no knowledge of God. It is not surprising to read that where these were lacking, swearing, breach of faith, killing, stealing and adultery were rampant.

Observe the recorded progression of their declension. It began with forgetting the law of the Lord (4. 6); then setting their heart on iniquity (4. 8). Finally they left off to take heed to the Lord (4. 10). Their lack of knowledge of God can be traced to its cause in chapter 4. 6. They rejected knowledge. This was a deliberate act on their part. Wherefore, like others of whom we read, "God gave them up." God said:

"They sinned against me" (chapter 4. 7).

"They feed on sin" (chapter 4. 8).

"They have gone a whoring" (4. 12).

"They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains" (chapter 4. 13).

"They burn incense upon the hills" (chapter 4. 13).

Israel... behaved... stubbornly" (chapter 4. 16).

" Ephraim is joined to idols " (chapter 4. 17).

<sup>44</sup> Ephraim... committed whoredom " (chapter 5. 3).

God had said expressly in the law, " Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. " By sacrificing to strange gods they brought down upon themselves the righteous indignation of God. Their persistence in these excesses was the cause of their destruction. The judgment of God is indicated against **His** people as in

Chapter 5. 10, " I will pour out My wrath upon them like water. "

5. 11, " Ephraim is crushed in judgement. "

5. 12, " I **am** unto Ephraim as **a** moth " (to destroy).

5. 14, " I will be unto Ephraim as **a** lion " (to tear).

5. 14,<sup>44</sup> I will tear. "

5. 14,<sup>44</sup> There shall be none to deliver. "

Despite **all** they had done, God still remembered mercy. In verse 15 of chapter 5, we read, " I will go and return to My place, till they acknowledge their offence. " Truly His mercy endureth for ever ! Chapter 5. verses 1 to 3 appear to us to contemplate a future time (not in Hosea's day) when God's ancient people shall say: " Come, and let us return unto the LORD. "

*A. Walker, Wm. Walker.*

**From Ilford.** —After the first three chapters of this prophecy, which gave us a complete picture of the checkered **life** of God's people, we now come to **a** more detailed account of the tragic circumstances which resulted in God's departure from them.

God's quarrel with **His** people is clearly stated in verse 1, and then enlarged upon in the following chapters. **A** truly sad state when such words as " no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land, " could be used of them. The children of Israel, led by the priests and the princes, sought after other gods and worshipped them. Spiritual adultery was rampant despite God's warning as to the results of such actions. The greater responsibility, however, rested with the leaders. They had in their hands the oracles of God, which were explicitly clear as to God's desire for His people, but this responsibility they failed to fulfil, and so we **see** how the gap between God and His people gradually increased. There **is** a solemn warning in this for us. We, too, are entrusted with God's will and desire for us. The more light one has concerning God's things, the greater the responsibility involved. In the things of God there **is** no standing still, there must be progression, or retrogression. This is borne out clearly in connection with God's people. The further that one drifts from the things of God and His desires, the harder it becomes to return.

God's attitude to His people **is** the same as that displayed throughout **His** word, one of patience, longsuffering, mercy, and continual warnings **as** to the result of disobedience to His word. **A** time must come, however, when God's righteousness forces **Him** to judge those who persist in wrong doing, despite warnings. But the object **is** always the same, that those with whom **He is** dealing may repent of their sin, and in a spirit of humility, confess and seek repentance of God.

Israel's sin was so great that their pride prevented them from turning to their God, and in an effort to save themselves from the disasters befalling them, they sought help from outside, but how futile ! There **is** only one help for them and that **is** God Himself. He only can heal them, and cure them of their wound, which has been the result of seeking after other gods, for God will not give His glory to another.

*E. H. Jarvis.*

**From Paisley and Barrhead.** —Although God addresses the people **in** chapter 4., **He** addresses especially the priests and rulers in chapter 5., and tells them that unto them pertaineth the judgment. **He** seems to hold them responsible, as it was the priests' duty to instruct the people in their relations to, and activities before God. In this instruction they had failed to arouse an exercise of heart towards devotion and dedication. They had probably been taught with care the intricate details of the sacrifices and offerings, but the lack of the knowledge of God was the main reason for their rejection. In spite of meticulous detailing to **His** ancient people of the ceremonial law, God has always desired obedience before sacrifice (1 Samuel 15. 22).

In Hosea, we see alternately utterings of warning **and** judgment, **and** words of comfort and promise of reconciliation. Their return required **an** acknowledgment of their offence (chapter **5. 15**). Not **as** the return of sinners back to God, but **as** the return of the people of God back to their LORD, with God withdrawing Himself until full repentance was accomplished. Chapter 3. tells us of God's constant love for Israel, when **He** exhorted Hosea, who was in a similar position to his **wife as** God was to Israel. God may punish Israel, may even put them aside, but will never cast them off for ever.

The frequent references to Ephraim are notable, because God **seems** to compare the ten tribes and their **sin** with Ephraim and his sin. The tribe of Ephraim was consistent in its backsliding, idolatry and spiritual fornication, and forfeited many rights and privileges by doing so, and **is** not mentioned in Revelation **7. as a** tribe. [Ephraim was given the birthright by Jacob and in consequence **is seen in** Revelation **7.** under the name of Joseph. —J. M. J. For Ephraim there **was** no return [But what of Hosea 14. **8** and of course chapter **6. 1-3** speaks of Ephraim's restoration. —J. M. ] which indeed was the lot of the ten tribes. Judah **is** exhorted not to offend by imitating the sin of Ephraim, but to leave him **alone** to his idolatry, and consequent shame.

The statement in chapter 4. **5**, "I will destroy thy mother" probably refers to Jerusalem [Israel, nationally], **as** being representative of the nation. It has often **been** referred to **as** such and history has proved its fate.

The incidents of Gibeah, Ramah, and Bethaven were notable examples of Israel's sin, and so God reminds the people vividly and warns them of the danger of **a** repetition of such events. Probably **in** God's reference to Himself, **as** a moth to Ephraim, and **as** rottenness to Judah, **He** was showing that they had departed from **Him** so far **as** to consider **Him** something to be avoided and prevented at all costs.

The desired effect upon the people **seems** to have been brought about at the opening of chapter 6., when they said, "Let us return unto the LORD," and with this change of heart, new hope of blessings and of the coming of the Messiah, **as** verse **3** would **seem** to indicate. The latter rain might speak of the second coming of the Lord to earth, the former of **His** first advent. **As a** nation Israel will **be** greatly blessed by that coming, when, **He** who showed them many and sore troubles, shall bring them up again out of the depths of the earth (see Psalm 71. 20). Restoration for Israel always entails **a** returning to the land.

The two days mentioned (verse 2) contrastingly speak of the speed by which God will restore His people, against the slow, but gradual decline and departure over the centuries. It was also thought that it might correspond to **a** period of time which might elapse after the deliverance at the Mount of Olives, and before the Lord fulfils completely the words of chapter 2. 18-21. *Jack McK. Gault.*

[We welcome this first contribution from our friends in Paisley and Barrhead. —Eds.]

**From** Atherton. —In chapter 4. and onwards solemn indeed are the words of the LORD to Israel by **His** prophet! The opening verse fully signifies the seriousness of the situation. The word "controversy" **is** elsewhere rendered strife, contention, pleading, cause (Young). How significant then the divine word "plead!" Still amidst all their sin and depravity, God pleads.

The marginal rendering in the Septuagint **is** "judgment is towards you." Therefore we can in **a** small way arrive at what has been termed "God's lawsuit with Israel." How void they were of the attributes of God, and there was no "knowledge of God in the land." The following verses remind us that oftentimes when people depart from God into spiritual sin, it **is** not long before the moral and physical sins take control in **a** once consecrated and separated life. The **absence** of truth and mercy, and the knowledge of God causes us to think of the Lord's indictment of the Pharisees, **as** seen in Matthew 23. **23** and Luke 11. 42. **We** have also another parallel in the words of Hosea 4. **17** in connection with Ephraim: "Ephraim **is** joined to idols; let him alone": of the Pharisees the Lord said, "Let them alone" (Matthew 15. 14).

Why, it was asked, is the name Ephraim taken **up** so often in this book ? Ephraim is here **seen as** representative of the ten tribes. God had honoured Ephraim because of Joseph's faithfulness, and God had desired great things from him, but he had utterly failed. God had been pleased to pitch His tent among them in Shiloh, in Ephraim, but because of continued flagrant sin they had **been** forsaken of Him (Psalm 78. 59-68). Ephraim means "fruitful," and this is significant when we consider their failure, since it might have been otherwise.

God points out that grave responsibility rested upon the shoulders of the priests and the rulers. They failed utterly in carrying out their responsibility, **and** God speaks thus: \*' Hear this, **O** ye priests, and hearken ye house of Israel, and give ear, **O** house of the king, for against you is the judgement " (Hosea 5. 1, R. V. M.).

God condemns Israel's use of the high places. In this, it was suggested that they had become like the nations, and Solomon was referred to **as** an example from 1 Kings 3. 3. Here we have **a** divine censure of Solomon's failure. **He** walked in the statutes of David his father, **only** he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places. **We** were caused to consider God's plain statement, reiterated time and again, that only in the place of the name must they offer sacrifice to Him (see Deuteronomy 12. 1-19). The question was raised regarding Solomon, did God accept his thousand burnt offerings which were offered in the great high place at Gibeon ? The question was asked concerning this matter in the light of 2 Chronicles 1. 3-6. [What is said in 1 Kings 3. 4 is explained in 2 Chronicles 1. 3-6. The high place in Gibeon was not an idolatrous high place, but was where the Tent of Meeting and altar were. A study of this peculiar time when the Ark was in Zion, and the Tent of Meeting was in Shiloh and later in Gibeon (1 Chronicles 16. 39; 21. 29) will help in the understanding of those days. Undoubtedly God accepted Solomon's sacrifices in Gibeon. —J. M. ]

*G. A. Jones, J. K. Southern.*

From Glasgow. —Hosea 4. 12-19. Having left Jehovah, Israel had turned to idols, asked counsel of a piece of wood and practised divination. This abominable idol worship was practised upon the tops of mountains and under trees, and they gave themselves over to the vile rites of Baalpeor and Ashtoreth; both men and women abandoned themselves to the grossest sins of the flesh. The LORD threatened that **He** would leave them alone in their vileness and not correct them, that they might be brought back. The first chapter of Romans **is** illustrated by verse 14. They glorified not God, became idolators and then God gave them up to their vile passions. Then there **is** a warning to the house of Judah in verse 15. Sacred places, like Gilgal, had become the scene of the idolatry of the ten tribes. Bethel, house of God, became Bethaven, house of vanity. If Judah offended and committed the same whoredoms, she would not escape judgment. The warning was unheeded. " Ephraim **is** joined to idols; let him alone. " Ephraim was too far gone, further remonstrances would not help, and so the evil **is** permitted to go unchecked, to run its full course.

The first verse of chapter 5. shows who are addressed, namely, the priests, the house of Israel, and the house of the king. Judgment was in store for them, for Mizpah and Tabor, places of hallowed memory, had been turned by their idolatrous worship into **a** snare. An old and interesting tradition among the Jews states that at Mizpah the apostates waited for those Israelites who went up to Jerusalem to worship there, to murder them. The next verse **seems** to indicate something like this tradition, "And the revolvers are gone deep in making slaughter, but I am **a** rebuker of them all. I know Ephraim, and Israel **is** not hid from Me " (chapter 5. 2, 3). **He** knew the whoredoms of Ephraim and the defilement of Israel. Their evil deeds kept them from returning to their God, for the demon of whoredoms had taken complete possession of them and it kept them in sin and rebellion. Pride was the leading sin of Ephraim; both Israel and Ephraim would stumble on account of their guilt, and Judah would share the **same** fate. And though they go with their flocks of sheep and their herds, willing and ready to sacrifice, they **shall** not be able to find **Him**, for **He** hath withdrawn Himself.

Then follows a vision of judgment. The judgment is seen as having already fallen upon the guilty nation. The horn (shophar) is blown in Gibeah and the trumpet in Ramah, the alarm is sounded. Gibeah and Ramah were situated on the northern boundary of Benjamin. The enemy was behind Benjamin, pursuing. There will be no remedy and no escape (verse 9). The princes of Judah have become like the removers of landmarks. I will pour out upon them my wrath like water (verse 10). A curse is pronounced in the law upon those who remove the landmarks (Deuteronomy 27. 17). Judah, instead of taking warning from the disaster coming upon the northern kingdom, the ten tribes sought gain by an enlargement of their own border. The princes of Judah, instead of weeping over the calamity, rejoiced at the removal of Israel as the means of removing the boundary line and increasing their estate. Wrath was in store for Judah. To Ephraim the LORD would be as a moth. To the house of Judah He would be as rottenness. The moth destroys. Both terms, moth and rottenness, are symbols of destroying influences working against the house of Israel and the house of Judah (see also Isaiah 50. 9; 51. 8; Psalm 39. 11; Job 13. 28). Then they turned to the Assyrian for help and to king Jareb. Jareb seems not to be a proper name, but an epithet applied to the king of Assyria, and means "He will contend" or "He will plead the cause."

The LORD would be like a lion to Israel, and like a young lion to Judah. The same symbolical language is used in Isaiah in connection with the Assyrian, the rod of God's angel (Isaiah 10. ). "Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall war like young lions: yea, they shall war, and lay hold of the prey, and carry it away safe, and there shall be none to deliver" (Isaiah 5. 29). Thus judgment came upon them and they were carried away as a prey. And like the lion after his attack withdraws to his den, so the LORD would withdraw from them, leave them and return to His place, waiting till their repentance comes and they seek Him early in their affliction.

The last verse of this chapter has a wider meaning than the past judgment which came upon the house of Israel. The Lord of Glory came to earth and visited His people. He came with the message of the kingdom to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. He came unto His own, but His own received Him not. After they had rejected Him, and delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified, He returned to His place. There He is now at the right hand of God, waiting for that day when the remnant of Israel will repent and seek His face (Acts 3. 19, 20). That will be in their coming great affliction, in the time of Jacob's trouble.

The first three verses of chapter 6. must not be detached from the previous chapter. Here we have the future repentance of the remnant of Israel; that is, during the great tribulation. Believingly they will acknowledge His righteous judgment and express their faith and hope in His mercy and the promised blessings and restoration. They express what their great prophet Moses so beautifully stated in his prophetic song, that great vision given to him ere He went to the mountain to die. "See now that I, even I, am He, And there is no God with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I have wounded, and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of My hand" (Deuteronomy 32. 39). "After two days will He revive us: on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him" (literally, before His face). They have been dead spiritually and nationally, but when the two days of their blindness and dispersion are over, there is coming for them the third day of life and resurrection. Jewish expositors have pointed out the fact that a day is with the LORD as a thousand years. They state that they will be in dispersion for two days, that is, two thousand years, after which comes the third day of Israel's glorious restoration. One Rabbinical commentator says that the first day we were without life in the Babylonian captivity, and the second day, which will also end, is the great captivity in which we are now, and the third day is the great day of our restoration. Like Jonah was given up by the fish on the third day, so comes for Israel a third day of life and glory. Then the latter and the former rain will fall upon the land again, and, blest by Him, their Saviour-King, they will live in His sight. But the passage, no doubt, also points to the resurrection of our Lord, the true Israel in a hidden way. *W. R. Wallace.*

# BIBLE STUDIES

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " Acts 17. II).

VOLUME 15.

MARCH, 1947

---

## CONTENTS,

	<i>Page</i>
God's quarrel with <b>His</b> people	21
The Difficulty of God	<u>22</u>

---

### GOD'S QUARREL WITH HIS PEOPLE.

From Hamilton, **Canada**. —Among the opening statements **in** the portion under consideration is, "Jehovah hath **a** controversy with the inhabitants of **the** land." The reason given is because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. **As** we think **back** to the time when Jehovah **was** speaking to His people through **His** servant Moses, prior to their entry into the land, they were told in Deuteronomy **7. 2** to "utterly destroy" the nations of Canaan. Not having carried out this command, we find God's people in the terrible **state** before Him, **as** recorded in Hosea. Similar words are found in Jeremiah **6. 13**: "From the least of them unto the **greatest** of them . . . from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely." What **a** solemn lesson for **us** to-day, — for it is also possible for spiritual adultery to creep into the assemblies! **We** think of the word to the church in Ephesus: "I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love." If the people of the "land" to-day are to **be** for His glory, they **must be a** separated people.

Sad words are recorded in chapter 4. **17**: "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." This reminds **us** of the word to Noah: "My Spirit shall not always strive with man." **We** wondered why Ephraim **was** singled out so often in the book of Hosea, especially **as** they were descendants of Joseph, "the fruitful bough." [Ephraim was the chief tribe of the **ten** tribes, and **in** consequence often stands for the whole. —J. M.]

Who were responsible for the condition of God's people? In chapter 5. 1 the judgment is three-fold: priests, house of Israel, house of the king.

In chapter 4. **9** we read, "Like people, like priest." The people worshipped through the priest. What **a** heavy responsibility was the **priests**! Instead of leading the people to God, they were leading them to the idols of the nations around. What **a** wonderful and faithful High **Priest we** have to-day! **He** is Great Priest over God's House, and will always lead **us** to God and never fail **us**. How much less **excuse** therefore for **us** turning away from God!

Judgment is also pronounced on kings. **Kings** were not merely figure-heads like so many on the earth to-day, but had full control over the people; **and** it is noticeable that when **a king** arose and did that which **was** evil, all the people seemed to follow. Then when one did right, the people did likewise. This places heavy responsibility on the leaders of God's people in **any** dispensation.

The people **as a** whole are also guilty, and the LORD brings them all in with the word of chapter 5. 1. In the first three chapters, it **was seen** that through Hosea's actions, the people should have known that **repentance was** demanded **by** God. This not being forthcoming, **we** read in chapter 5. **6**, "**He** hath withdrawn Himself." Not only had the people heard the word of the LORD, through His mouthpiece Hosea, **but** they had **seen** the example of the prophet. In spite of this two-fold warning from Jehovah, they continued in their wilful sin against the LORD.

It is noticeable how few are the times in this prophecy that Israel returned to the LORD, even though Hosea lived during the reigns of Hezekiah and Uzziah, both of whom did that which was right in the eyes of Jehovah. Perhaps the words of chapter 6, 1-3 refer to one of these periods. In these verses we see the long-suffering and loving-kindness of Jehovah. It is refreshing to see times of revival and turning to the LORD, and as "the things written aforetime were written for our learning," it encourages us, no matter how far we are away from God, to return to Him and He will abundantly pardon. The word for us to-day, as it was to Israel, is "Let us follow on to know the LORD." *N. McKay.*

From Birkenhead. —The change or division in the book is noticeable after chapter 3. In fact, the first three chapters seem to serve merely as an introduction, although they help us in some degree to appreciate more fully the words of denunciation that came from the prophet.

In these chapters we have brought before us a picture of the spiritual state of Israel—an appalling situation, the very opposite to what God desired; murder, perjury, theft, adultery being rampant, whilst faithfulness, truth, love and knowledge of God are non-existent. On account of these facts, calamity shall come, a curse shall result, and all and sundry shall be included, even the prophet and the priest. The guilt, therefore, not only shall fall upon the nation but also upon the religious guides of that nation.

These priests are especially guilty since the people are perishing through lack of knowledge, and the priests rather encourage than check their iniquities. It was suggested that this may have been due to the portion they received by fines and sin offerings, thereby using their spiritual status to effect temporal gain.

Moral declension followed idol worship, for example, such as a nature-goddess in which the priests, as well as the worshippers, joined in the evil practices. Judah is warned not to fall into the apostacies of Gilgal or Bethaven (House of Sin). It was wondered whether Bethaven was an actual place or merely the name given to Bethel (House of God). [Young says that it was a town in Benjamin near Bethel. The map shows also a "wilderness of Bethaven."—J. M.] The state of Israel is terrible; all, irrespective of social standards, are drunken and shameless, the rulers to an even greater degree than the remainder of the inhabitants.

The condition of the people is such that they are unable to return to God because they do not know Him on account of the evil within them. They sacrificed, but such sacrifices are of no avail, seeing that the people are treacherous. The people attempt to avert the coming disaster, because closely connected with immorality is the weakening of the nation from a military standpoint, by making an appeal to the King of Assyria to assist them.

The portion concludes with a cry of penitence from the people as a result of God's action. *R. F. McCormick.*

### THE DIFFICULTY OF GOD.

From Paisley and Barrhead. —There seems to be a certain amount of goodness in the hearts of the people of Ephraim and Judah, when God expresses His difficulty. The work of the prophets and the very words of God had no effect as regards making them wholly good, and God now compares their goodness to a morning cloud, or early dew, which quickly dispersed at sunrise, and failed to give moisture and nourishment to the earth.

They had transgressed the covenant (presumably of Deuteronomy 5. 2), dealing treacherously with God, and as a treacherous person's nature is often concealed, so God had difficulty in knowing what their attitude was, and how best to deal with them. [There is no defect in knowledge with God. God's difficulty is the moral one. God does not coerce men's wills. Ephraim (Israel) and Judah were not wholly bad; there was a desire for goodness, but there was no steady purpose to pursue it. God had done everything possible for them. Isaiah in the Southern Kingdom was declaring, "What could have been done more to My vineyard that I have not done in it?" How often our aspirations after goodness fail to be realised because we lack a steady purpose! Paul could pray for the Thessalonian saints, "May our God... fulfil every desire of goodness."—S. B.].

God illustrates their treachery **by** referring to Gilead **and** Shechem. Gilead, while **being** another instance of **sin**, was also a place of healing **and** rest, yet God says **it was** polluted with blood, **a seat** of iniquity. Shechem, the place where normally one would flee for refuge and safety, **is** now so **unsafe**, that even those entrusted with the administration of God's mercy, the **priests** themselves, are committing murder there.

Ephraim **is** referred to **as** a cake not turned; **a waste** of time **and** energy **in** its preparation; **a disappointment** to whoever had made **it**.

Gray hairs, **a sign** of declining strength, were **seen** upon him, and like **a silly** dove he had lost his natural instinct to return to God. **A true picture** indeed of the people! God's original plan was not carried out. The preparations and strivings of **a past day**, had come to naught. Israel was **a disappointment**, **a failure**, and **was** now about to be set aside. They had declined **in** strength, and would not return to God. Like **a deceitful** bow, promising truthfulness and accuracy, they had missed the mark.

The trend towards Egypt may, **in part**, be accounted for by the fact that Ephraim's mother was an Egyptian, and that they had already sojourned **in** that place. These influences were strong; they still remembered the corn and **wine** of Egypt which had first attracted the sons of Jacob **in a past day**. The attractions of the commercial and social world outweighed any desire for God and **His** laws, resulting **in a return** to Egypt and not to God (chapter 7. 16).

But at the end of chapter **6**, there **is** a harvest appointed for Judah, when God brings again the captivity. This probably refers to the prophecy of Joel **3.**, which **is** a future scene, although there may have been **a partial fulfilment** at the end of the Babylonian captivity. Is it possible that it may be **a harvest of judgment** considering the general tenor of the chapter? Certainly blessing and restoration will follow, but as chapter **8** says, "They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind." The time of Jacob's trouble will be **a grievous** time for Israel, but at its climax they shall find deliverance.

We would like help on the question of the simile of the oven and the baker. [The oven **is** used here **as** an illustration of the inflamed passions of the people of Israel. **One** form of such inflamed passions **is** described **as** "the heat of wine." Romans 1. **27** speaks of how men "burned in their lust" and **in 1** Thessalonians 4. **5** we read of "the passion of lust." Both king and princes **in** Israel were glad **in** the thought of the increase of the wickedness of the people. "They made ready their heart like **an oven**."—J. M.]

The ancient eastern type of oven was open, and **was** put on top of the fire to **be** heated to the temperature required for baking. It required constant watching to regulate the heat. Hosea probably had such **an oven in mind when he** thought of the licentiousness of the people prior to the dissolution of the ten tribes. Their lust and anger had been allowed to ferment, under the influences of such things **as wine**, and was like the oven left on the fire all night, which **had** acquired **a devouring heat** by morning.  
J. McK. Gault.

**From Atherton.**—**One** of the greatest difficulties that God **has** ever had to deal with, so far **as man is** concerned, lies **in the fact** that while He may **make** repeated, tender entreaties, the heart of **man is** "deceitful above all things, and desperately sick." "I the LORD **search** the heart, I try the reins" (Jeremiah 17. **9, 10**). The word heart occurs four times **in** Hosea 7., showing the crucial difficulties that arose before God. "They consider not **in** their hearts" (verse 2); "they have made ready their heart like **an oven**" (verse 6); "Ephraim **is** without heart" (verse 11, R. V. M.); and "they have not cried unto Me **with** their heart" (verse 14). Well might God exclaim, "What shall I do unto thee?" Ephraim, **in** spite of early divine favours through Joseph, produced **an amount** of goodness which **was** practically negligible; it **was** comparable to the morning cloud and early dew that so quickly disappears. Yet it **is** significant that **amidst** the **many** failures of Ephraim, one such **as** Joshua should **come** forth, for **he came** from that tribe which **had been** so remarkably honoured of God (Numbers 13. **8**).

Well it is **when** God can use His prophets and His word to reviving and gathering, instead of the scattering and hewing of His people. Mercy and the knowledge of God are placed side by side with sacrifices and burnt offerings, the permanent contrasted with the temporary. That which is eternal and durable is brought into bold relief when compared with things that were really valueless, except to indicate the perfection of the great Sacrifice to come. The real problem of heart condition arises here again, and shews the word of God as being of paramount importance. Temples made with hands, rites and ceremonies, sacrifices and offerings, are all of no avail unless there is the trembling at God's word (Isaiah 66. 1-3).

Chapter 7. introduces God's desire to heal His people, which could only be accomplished on the basis of chapter 6. 1-3. A return to the LORD would bring about the necessary revival; but even when oppressed by the Assyrian powers, Israel turned to Egypt for help (see 2 Kings 17. 4). We linked this with Isaiah 31. 1, and its typical teaching; the LORD desired to redeem, **but** they refused to seek unto Him, for their zeal and devotion were manifestly toward the idol sacrifices. The charge is laid at the door of Ephraim that "he mixeth himself among the people." Affinity, conciliation, and intermingling brought Israel very low. How vital are the principles of separation! Such appeals have travelled down the ages in all dispensations; to Abraham, to Israel as a nation in the wilderness and later in the land, to the remnant on their return, to the Apostolic Churches, and now to us to-day (see 2 Corinthians 6. 17 and 18).

Reference was made to chapter 6. 8, with regard to Gilead, and we were unable to determine what place is meant, as it is spoken of as a city. It was thought that Genesis 31. 48-49 might help, where we have the name "Gilead" associated with Mizpah, but Judges 10. 17 seems to indicate that they are two separate places.

We sought an explanation also of chapter 6. 9. Shechem was a place of refuge on the west side of Jordan, which gave the manslayer opportunity to flee thither, but the priests (men with responsibility as to the teaching of the law of God) were found violating this by murdering in the way to Shechem. This seems to agree with chapter 4. 2, where we have reference to "killing" and "blood touching blood."

In chapter 7. 8, Ephraim is spoken of as "a cake not turned." This indicates that the cake was not fit for eating, and in connection with Ephraim that he was fit for nothing as before God. Had he been turned, and responded to the will of God, then there would have been that fitness which would have given God pleasure. The fire, it was thought, spoke of the word of God, to which Ephraim had failed to turn.

[The fire cannot be the word of God. Verse 8 says, "Ephraim, he mixeth himself among the peoples; Ephraim is a cake not turned." Ephraim was in a half-and-half condition. He tried to fulfil two conditions, (1) to **be** the people of God, and (2) to mix with the peoples at one and the same time. The consequence was that he was in a half-baked state, as a cake not turned, baked only on one side. Such is the believer in Christ to-day who seeks to claim that he is a Christian, but lives like a man of the world, whose portion is in this life. Such were those of whom the apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians (3. 18\*, 19) who were enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end was perdition, whose glory was in their shame, and who minded earthly things. The believer in Christ cannot really live for both worlds. He cannot walk with men and walk with God at the same time. Hence the truth of divine separation from the world and worldlings is vital to Christian life. —J. M. ]

*E. Birchall, J. K. Southern.*

### EXTRACTS.

From Cowdenbeath. —The opening words of the portion show God's hesitation to descend in judgment. He yearns over His people, longing for their repentance and return unto Himself. He could never cease to love them, for He had said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31. 3), yet He could not continue to own and dwell in the midst of a rebellious and sinful people.

## THE DIFFICULTY OF GOD.

Sin must **be** judged. God **makes** a careful scrutiny of the condition of His people, **and** there is little to commend **but** much to condemn them.

In Judah **the** temple worship was being continued. Sacrifices and burnt offerings were being offered, **but** mercy and the knowledge of God were lacking. Lifeless formality is loathsome to God, and when the worship and service of God are **reduced** to this standard, and the condition of His people ceases to correspond with such **a** high service, then this is not acceptable to God. As **He** looked down upon Judah and Ephraim, God saw that sometimes there seemed to **be** a little effort **made** to return to Himself, **but** this was not of an enduring nature. Some of the kings of Judah sought to do what was right, yet do we read these solemn words during such a time, "And the people did yet corruptly" (2 Chronicles 27. 2).

Ephraim was particularly guilty of worshipping false gods. "Ephraim is joined to idols" (Hosea 4. 17). **He** cast away his separation and mixed with the peoples, and thus became as a cake baked on one side, unpalatable to eat, thus were they to God. The very sad thing about Ephraim was that he was unaware of his real condition. His association with strangers was sapping away his strength, and evidences of approaching decay were beginning to appear upon him. Surely this is exactly how friendships with worldly people will re-act upon us. Like Samson, to lose our separation will be to lose our strength for God.

Conditions in the land were most displeasing to God. Four of the last five kings of Israel obtained the throne by means of conspiracy and murder, and those occasions seem to have been celebrated with much drinking of wine and much indulgence in scorning. Not only were kings murdered, but judges as well, whilst the priests are named as being guilty of such wicked crimes. God's people failed to consider that such wickedness was being remembered by Him and would return upon their own heads again. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" !

How wonderful that God should desire the repentance of a people in such a sinful state ! Yet twice do we read of His willingness to receive them: chapter 7. 1, "I would heal"; verse 13, "I would redeem." In contrast to this, twice it is recorded that they made no effort to avail themselves of His mercy: verse 7, "None among them calleth unto Me"; verse 14, "They have not cried unto Me." Thus it was that the ever-opened ear of their God waited in vain to hear the penitent's cry from His wayward people. "How oft would I . . . and ye would not" (Matthew 23. 37). Thus with God's mercy despised, and with their guilt stamped indelibly upon them, there was nought awaited them but the **severity** of His judgment. "Woe unto them !" (chapter 7. 13). *James Bowman.*

From Kilmarnock. —In the first three verses of chapter 6. of Hosea there is a call to repentance, with a promise of revival from the Lord. If there was any response at all it was very short-lived, as the LORD'S message to Ephraim and Judah says, "Your goodness (or kindness) is as a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away." God is caused to consider, as it were, "What shall I do unto thee?" This cannot mean that the all-wise God is at a loss to know how to deal with His people, but that He may have to chastise them in another manner. They may have carried on the outward forms of sacrifice and burnt offering, **but** the inward condition of the heart, that God desired, was lacking. This was the condition of the religious leaders of the Jews when the LORD was on earth (see Matthew 9. 13).

Verses 7 to 10 give a record of the condition of Israel in God's sight, and though He desired to heal them, they continued in their evil ways, and considered not that God remembered their wickedness.

Ephraim was likened to a "cake not turned." They were being tested in the fire of chastisement, **but** they refused to return unto the LORD. They mixed with the nations, seeking help from Egypt and Assyria, and failed to recognise that God could chastise them even there. God likens them to a "silly dove, without understanding." They have not the knowledge of God that His chastise-

ment is in order that they might return unto Him, and though they felt the suffering they failed to cry unto Him with their heart. How this brings before us the truth of "chastisement" as we have it in Hebrews 12. !

"My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art reproved of Him." Satan would seek to try and blind us to the love behind the discipline, and to blame the circumstances around us.

[There is in the Scriptures chastisement for wrong-doing and there is chastisement for well-doing. Hebrews 12. particularly deals with the latter, and this should not be confused with God dealing with His sinful people, as indicated in Hosea's prophecy and elsewhere in the Old Testament. In Hebrews 11. and 12. we have the summing up of all the experiences of the faithful, and their sufferings for what they believed. The greatest example of faith is in Him who is the Author and Perfecter of faith, the Lord Himself. Then follows the exhortation to us as sons, during this time when God is instructing His sons by chastisement or by discipline. Chastisement has for its objective—"that we may be partakers of His holiness." Is it not true—the greater the saint the greater the chastening? Where there is little saintliness there is but little chastening. Often God cannot winnow many of His children, for there would be but little left, the most in their lives is chaff. But those who are sons, not simply sons by regeneration, but sons in character and likeness to their Father, with these the Father reasons, "My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord." One may be as Job and know no reason for the chastening hand of God, yet it is for one's profit, and will afterward yield peaceable fruit, the fruit of righteousness if one is truly exercised as to divine chastening. All this is different from chastisement or punishment for wrong-doing, and we do well to observe the difference.—J. M.]

Verse 16 says, "They are like a deceitful bow." The bow was a powerful weapon in battle, and Ephraim might have been a power for God among the nations. Yet they proved unfaithful, as Psalm 78. 9 says, "The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle."  
A. G. S.

From **Glasgow**.—As we see the heart condition of God's people in the time of Hosea's prophecy, we can in some degree measure the difficulty of God. It was not that He could not save them, but in spite of His pleadings towards them, they in return showed the untowardness of their iniquities. Truly their sins and iniquities had separated them from their God! There was a time when Ephraim (Israel) and Judah were a delight to God, to which we judge God alludes in chapter 6. 4 when He says, "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 dew that goeth early away." The LORD grieves over His people because He loves them with an everlasting love, yet while He loves them, their love was like the morning cloud, like the dew that soon vanishes away. The morning cloud looks beautiful, gilded by the rays of the rising sun, but it quickly disappears through the heat of the sun. Thus was their love fluctuating and changing. How often is this like God's people!

We find God dealing in judgment towards His people by the prophets through the words of condemnation, instead of words of comfort and cheer. These godly men came to hew down the cumbersome trees, and what sharper instrument could be used to do so than His own Word?

"I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." Hosea's ministry in some respects was like that of John the Baptist, a call to repentance, a confession of their sins. It was also like the Lord Jesus' ministry, for He Himself said to the chief priests and scribes, "Go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice." In Hosea's day the people were being accused of formalism in their worship. They were offering sacrifices and had no mercy, or kindness, or knowledge of the God to whom they were offering. This should be a warning for us to-day against such a condition of heart.

\* They like Adam have transgressed the covenant; there have they dealt treacherously against Me. " As God had made known His covenant to Adam, that is given to him a commandment which Adam agreed to fulfil, so also He had made a covenant with them to which they agreed, saying, " All that the LORD hath spoken, will we do, and be obedient " (Exodus 24. 7). Like Adam, who had been placed in the Garden of Eden in a divinely favoured and blessed place, they also were brought into a divinely favoured position, being called the people of God, a peculiar people, a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. Adam transgressed, and after his fall was driven out. He forfeited his divine and favoured position by transgressing the covenant to which he agreed. So also Israel were called of God, but when they transgressed, like Adam they were driven out. Iniquity and blood were everywhere; even the priests lurked as a band of robbers, and murdered the travellers on the way to Shechem, one of the cities of refuge. The horrible thing was that Israel was steeped in whoredom. They were not only spiritually adulterers, but, following idol worship, lived in literal harlotry and lewdness.

In chapter 7. we see a reproof for their manifold sins. Their condition was such that God could not look upon them with pleasure. He says in the first verse, " When I would heal Israel, " suggesting that He had hopes of recovering them. Then is described the condition of Ephraim, which was discovered also in Samaria, the committing of falsehood. God likens them to a thief entering in, and to a troop of robbers which spoileth without; truly a hopeless condition to be in. They were so far away from God that they considered not in their hearts that God remembered all their wickedness, and to add still further that He saw their own doings also had beset them about.

We see also the declining strength of Israel; twice is repeated, " He knoweth it not. " Thus their strength is being sapped, and ultimately their spiritual vitality has gone. Only the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of resurrection, could restore or revive a people in such a condition. We have also the picture of Israel's state likened unto a silly dove, which is aimless and of no purpose whatever. Then we have brought before us Egypt and Assyria, the two great enemies of Israel, speaking to us of spiritual adultery. In verse 13 judgment is foretold for their **sin**.  
*Fred Harvey,*

From Yeovil. —God asks the question, " What shall I do ? " The wickedness of His people was so great, that although some professed to return to the LORD, God decided to return unto His place until they acknowledged their sin and sought Him (chapter 5. 15).

Their condition was likened to a husband and wife, which expresses the greatest form of human love, yet the wife had committed whoredom.

God's people, Israel and Judah, had gone so far away from Him who still loved them and longed for their return, that He enquires, \* " What shall I do ? " He also says that just when He would be gracious unto Israel, the sin of Ephraim is discovered (chapter 7. 1).

Their lovingkindness was a temporary thing, like the " early dew " or a " morning cloud " . . . therefore God had slain them by the words of His mouth (Hosea 6. 5).

They will reap the consequences of their sins, and in their affliction they will seek God early. Chapter 3. 4, 5, says, " The children of Israel shall abide many days without king, and without prince, " etc. Afterward they shall " return and seek Jehovah their God, and David their King; and shall come with fear unto Jehovah and to His goodness in the latter days. "

Chapter 6. says: " He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us: on the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him. " The lesson for us to-day is, " Take heed lest there be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief in falling away from the living God. "

*E. W. Shattock.*

From **London**, S. E. —In 6. 4 the Spirit expresses **the** lovingkindness of **God** towards His rebellious children, **and** His readiness **to** meet the smallest movement in their heart towards good. **But** any goodness shown on their part was as the morning cloud and dew, which soon passes away.

Therefore had God sent unto them the testimony of the prophets, an extraordinary means for the maintaining in grace the relationship of the people with God, and that morally and in reality. In the mind of God it was not a question of outward forms, the moral relationships with God had failed. Does verse 6 mean that the ceremonial law is of less importance than the moral law ?

God raises up prophets as a means of relationship with Himself **to** bring back the hearts of the people to Himself. But as Adam did in the Garden of Eden, they had broken the covenant on which the enjoyment of the blessing God had heaped upon them depended. They had acted treacherously toward Him. The question was asked, Did God make a covenant with Adam ? or what covenant did Adam break ?

How touching is the mixture, on God's part, of reproaches, of lovingkindness, of appeal, of reference to happier moments, but all was in vain. He must needs judge, and had recourse to His sovereign grace, which would bring Israel back to repentance and to Him. If at times under the urge of their misery they howled upon their beds (chapter 7. 14) they did not cry unto God with their hearts. What a picture of man under the effect of sin, who will not return **to** the LORD.

*J. D.*

From **Edinburgh**. —It is observed that the morning cloud is a small insignificant thing. Dew rises early and is gone. Contrast verse 3, and see that the LORD'S goodness is great, but our reply is small, insignificant. Though Israel had been cut down and punished, they could not bring themselves to return to God. Verse 6 has a cry that can be traced throughout all dispensations: mercy, not sacrifice; knowledge of God, not offerings. Compare verse 6 with Matthew 9. 13; knowledge of God is linked with repentance.

The position is very bad here, even the priests sinning wilfully and openly. The story of Eli and his sons is repeated again, so low had the service of God sunk in Israel's eyes. God was robbed of His portion, viciously and by consent of the sacrificers. All God's goodness and mercy were cast aside.

Ephraim had sinned, and note that all Israel was defiled. Spiritual fornication had done its vile work, and God could not take pleasure in the outward show of the priest. Their reward is found in the words of Malachi 2. 1-3, 7-8. The temple service was now formal, and priests indulged in anything that took their fancy.

Ephraim, outstanding, continues to lead Israel astray. Despite warnings he continues in his self-chosen path. The wickedness rises before God, and we read the sad words, " I remember all their wickedness. " In contrast to-day our assurance is, " I will remember them (our sins) no more. "

Priests, kings and princes, all the leaders, were glad with their wickedness. What a picture of God's chosen people ! Every ruler or guide was now following the old track with their back to God, and they were rejoicing in the freedom they believed they had found. Truly a little leaven worketh much and increaseth ! The fire had crept insidiously, and gently had the strength been sapped, till we see Ephraim pictured as an old man, left wallowing in desires and lusts of the flesh.

Pride of Israel is still there, and the outward show is maintained, but none will return. Since Ephraim is singled out so pointedly, it would appear that his sin was outstanding, and he had also caused Israel to follow him. Without pity or compunction, God is now bringing his weaknesses to light. While idolatry was rampant in the people, Ephraim had gone deepest and vilest, and now all Israel is enmeshed and held secure.

Ephraim is a cake not turned: bound hot to earth, but still cold and uncooked Godward.

*T. Hope.*

# BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

APRIL, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Difficulty of God . . . . .	29
God forgotten . . . . .	31
Questions and A n s w e r s . . . . .	36

### THE DIFFICULTY OF GOD

(Hosea 6. 4-11 and 7).

From Brantford, Ontario. —Sad is the lesson and solemn the warning of this portion of God's word ! The record of Israel is one of the long-suffering of God and the faithlessness of His people.

What was there in this people that God could commend ? He could find but little, if anything. Their goodness was as a morning cloud, which is soon dispersed by the rising sun. Of all the love and grace of God bestowed on them they had returned to Him little or no fruit. The people whom Jeroboam the son of Nebat had caused to sin had gone on their downward course until God Himself was forced to say: " What shall I do unto thee ? "

God compares them with Adam, who forsook the knowledge of God for the knowledge of good and evil with very disastrous results. Ephraim forsook the knowledge of God for the knowledge of his neighbours, who were devouring his strength and making an old man of him.

God refers to His dealings with them through His prophets, by whom, He says, He hewed them. This suggested two very different operations:

(1) Hewing as the craftsman hews a log or stone into a thing of beauty or utility. This is laborious and slow, but very gratifying when the material yields to the craftsman in the way he had planned.

(2) Hewing as Samuel hewed Agag, having in view their destruction.

The condition of Ephraim at this time shows that he has nothing to present of either use or ornament. His works answer to the works of the flesh listed for our warning in Galatians 5., and they are so prevalent that they prevented God from healing Israel. When God wanted him to return, we find he has completely forgotten Him. He is prepared to seek help from his former oppressor the Egyptian, or to pay tribute to his future oppressor the Assyrian, who in a few short years will bring an end to the kingdom of Ephraim. *S. K. Seath.*

From Birkenhead. —God is confronted with the people's cry as recorded in Hosea 6. 1-3, and it appears that He treated it as a superficial repentance on account of the people failing to recognise the magnitude of their offences and not having a conviction of their sins. The people seem to imagine that forgiveness is procurable by simply offering sacrifices which in fact only demonstrated their sinful condition. They failed to apply their religion in their business lives and thereby separated the practical outworking of their worship, reminding one of the words—" The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses's seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe, but do not ye after their works, *for they say and do not*" (Matthew 23. 2, 3),

It was pointed out that the expression " I desire mercy and not sacrifice " is used on two occasions by the Lord **Jesus** (Matthew 9. 13 and 12. 7). This **message** of the need for the practical application of religion was not peculiar to Hosea. For example, Isaiah 1. 11: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifice unto Me ? . . . " " **Cease** to do evil: learn to do well. " Also Micah 6. 8: " Do justly . . . love mercy, and . . . walk humbly with thy God. "

The people have transgressed the covenant and the more God viewed **His** people the more apparent their iniquity became to **Him**: "In the house of Israel I have **seen an** horrible thing: there whoredom is found in Ephraim, Israel is defiled "

Their condition is such that true repentance by such a people **seems** almost an impossibility. " They are all adulterers "; from the king upon the throne to the workman, immorality is rampant and unchecked. Thus the nation in a moral **sense is** corrupt, and **this has** its bearing upon the international status of the nation. The people **seek assistance** from Egypt and Assyria, but no such alliances of foreign powers **can** avert that inner decay consequent upon the rejection of the claims of God—no material power or prosperity and self-indulgence **can** replace righteousness, mercy, justice and judgment; **in** fact the former are obstacles to the latter. *N. G. A., R. F. Mc.*

**From** Vancouver, B. C. —The fact that God's people Israel had become estranged from Him, **and had** lapsed into idolatry, such as is depicted in Hosea's message, was of no small concern to God. **We** wonder at **His** wondrous ways with them. What were they in **His** sight ? They were the fewest of all peoples, **and** not for their goodness or numerical superiority had **He** chosen them, but because **He** loved them, and had made promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, which envisaged future world blessing (see Deuteronomy 7. 6-9).

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance, and not one word of promise could be abrogated. The seed of this rebellious people must be preserved. In this way only **can** we understand God's longsuffering and forbearance.

As God spoke to them through Hosea it is evident that **He** was mindful of some good that had been in them, but this had proved to be **as** the passing of a morning cloud (Hosea 6. 4).

God's requirements are set forth **as** mercy, not sacrifice, and the knowledge of **Himself** more than burnt offerings. Their sacrifices were being offered to idols and not to the God of heaven. The cold and lifeless formalism of this false worship **was** worse than the practices of the heathen nations around them. There **was** nothing to be **seen in** the ways of the seed of Israel which reflected or corresponded to the holiness, mercy and truth, so abundant in the character of God, who had called **them** and given them **His** holy law. There is no thought here that sacrifices and burnt offerings were a thing of the past. God's refusal to accept them was only because of where they were offered, how they were offered, what was offered, to whom offered and **the** spiritual condition of the offerer. These are **all** vital and solemn considerations **in** the worship and service of God. **He** will accept nothing that bears the mark of human invention. Jeroboam had invented a form of worship in his day, the disastrous effects of which were still seen in the days of Hosea's message (I Kings 12. 25-33). Wrong practices may be clothed with innocent intentions, and have small beginnings, but it is where they will eventually lead to **in** years or generations to come that counts. **We** need to beware of little foxes that spoil the vineyards.

Then **we** have a view given us in Hosea 6. 9 of the priesthood of Israel, presenting the terrible condition of the divine office and service of men who had once been the people's means of approach to God. Such men, who in the past had been called and set apart by God, and were holy in body and spirit, fitted to minister **in** the holy things of the divine dwelling place, were replaced by " the lowest of the people " (another invention of Jeroboam), and named priests **in** the hollow mockery of a man-made priesthood.

These **men** are described **as** " lying in wait to murder in the way by consent, " and they spoiled the people who became their prey. What a sad

**contrast this** affords when we consider the divinely appointed occupation of the priests of the Aaronic order !

**We marvel** at the opening words of Hosea 7., where we find God willing and ready to **heal** the dreadful wound of Israel's sin, but we learn of further sin and lawlessness to such a degree that there **is** no remedy. " They... devour their **judges**; **all** their kings are fallen: there **is** none among them that calleth unto Me" (chapter 7. 7).

Then **we** come to a condition which has been a pitfall in the path of God's people **in all** ages, that of mixing with nations and peoples around them. " Ephraim, he mixeth himself among the peoples... Strangers have devoured his strength " (verses 8, 9). God desires that **His** people whom He has called and separated from the world should maintain their separated position. There **is** an ever-present tendency to relax in our vigilance in the matter of separation from this **present** world. Being mixed with other nations resulted in Israel becoming **like them**, and thus they were unequally yoked with those who knew not God or His ways.

R.

*Armstrong.*

## GOD FORGOTTEN (Hosea 8. and 9.).

**From** Liverpool. —The chapters under review continue in the same strain **as** the previous ones. The prophet seems to set down thoughts as they occur to **him**, without arranging them in a logical sequence or argument; **yet** there **is** certainly an underlying theme in the many expressions which the prophet **uses**. " Israel hath forgotten his Maker... they shall not dwell in the LORD'S land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt. "

When Israel were no people, when they were down-trodden slaves in Egypt, denied any pretence of national dignity. God brought them out and set them **in** a place of privilege and covenant relationship, such as was not vouchsafed to any other nation. He brought them into the land which He had promised to their fathers, and established them there in such prosperity and splendour as had never before been known. But Israel had forgotten this, and had forgotten the Lord who had brought it to pass. Therefore, says the prophet, they would return to Egypt, to their former estate of slavery and humiliation.

When the enemy should come upon them, with the fierceness and strength of the eagle among the sheep, then they would remember and seek to claim Jehovah as their God. But the answer comes: " Israel hath cast off that which **is** good. " Again in chapter 8. 4 are enumerated some of their failures to fulfil their side of the covenant, by which they could claim to call upon Jehovah as the God of Israel. Apparently the calves still stood in the cities of Israel to shame them as they cried to the true God, even those golden calves which Jeroboam had erected and concerning which he had proclaimed, " Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of Egypt. " Having sown the wind, by following the example of the nations in idolatry, Israel must reap the whirlwind of judgment which those nations so often experienced. They were to be swallowed up, **and** would feel the burden of foreign princes. In times of rejoicing their joy would be **an empty** thing. They could not rejoice as other peoples, for they had known relationship with the living God, and had turned away; how could they console themselves to follow a useless graven image ? In times of sorrow there would be none to help them. They had built palaces and multiplied fenced cities, **but** they had forgotten their Maker. Without the help of Jehovah their efforts **and** their defences would be of no avail; their cities would be devoured and their children slain, while the remnant would be wanderers among the nations (see 2 Chronicles 36. 17-20).

J. Wannop, U. S.

**From** Glasgow. —" Set the trumpet to thy mouth. " This imperative injunction is alarming, and well may it be because of the words which follow, "As **an** eagle against the house of the LORD. " Such words would perhaps reflect the words of Deuteronomy 28. 49, which deal with the issue of the departing of Israel from the LORD unto other gods. This chapter tells of the stringent dealing of the strange nation whose tongue they (Israel) know not.

Israel had transgressed the covenant **and** trespassed against the law of the LORD. These two actions caused the anger and judgment of the LORD to come nigh unto them. By covenant relationship, they as a nation had pledged their obedience to the LORD in the words: "All that the LORD hath spoken will we do, and be obedient." But now they had gone a whoring from God and multiplied altars unto sin. So that not only was the covenant violated, but the law of the covenant had been trespassed in sin, which always brings death. Therefore having forgotten their Maker, the righteous judgment according to the law they knew was to have its full effect, "as an eagle against the house of the LORD."

Too late shall be their cry, "My God, we Israel know Thee." Oftentimes had the LORD pleaded and borne with them. His longsuffering was to them a thing to be despised and ignored. The calf of Samaria was more to them than the LORD God of Israel. With high-mindedness they had set up kings of their own choice, kings who led them further away from the LORD and sought alliance with other nations. They sowed the wind, and now it was to reap the whirlwind; and what a blast of judgment it was to be!

To Ephraim, the man who had the spirit from the LORD was mad, and the prophet a fool, so self-possessed and confident were they in their corruption. But the days of visitation, the days of recompense were coming, and Israel was to know it. The sweetness of Israel was no longer known to God. He remembers how satisfying they were to Him at the beginning when He set to make them the head of nations. As grapes in the wilderness they refreshed His heart, and lie saw their fathers as the first-ripe in the fig-tree at her season. How longingly could the LORD look back and see them in their first love, all-glorious and in true holiness! Now that had all ceased and become dimmed; it had flown like a bird. They who had forgotten God were to be forgotten of God for a season, to be cast away and become wanderers among the nations. What a sad and pitiful plight was to be theirs!

The place of bondage, Egypt, from which they had been redeemed, was to gather them up, and Memphis was to bury them. Oh that they would be wise, and return to the LORD to remember Him, and dwell in His land! But nay, Ephraim shall return to Egypt and eat unclean food in Assyria. Such is the effect of the words of the law which they trespassed (Deuteronomy 28. 68, 29. 1). Well may the trumpet be set to the mouth, as such a catastrophe overtakes the inheritance of the LORD, who forgot God their Maker!

T. McIlrenvy.

From Birkenhead. —Chapter 8. opens a new phase in Hosea's prophecy. From this point Hosea puts his lips to the trumpet and blows a call of warning for everybody to hear, and he details the disasters that face Israel for her sins. The heading of our portion is "God forgotten," and that is the summing up of all the reasons for God's wrath. Israel deliberately turned aside from God to worship Baal.

If Hosea is speaking of himself in verse seven of chapter 9., we can understand the torture of his mind that underlies these words. He himself was in direct contact with God, knowing the reality of God and the punishment that God must inflict upon His people. All around was a careless people, rushing on to destruction and laughing at Hosea and his warnings, striving with all their might towards death and darkness, and this one man in his loneliness stood impotent. He was a vessel of the LORD to convey His message to the people.

Jeroboam II., who was a king during the time of Hosea's prophesying, made great material conquests and extended the borders of Israel. Hosea was not concerned with material prosperity, but with spiritual poverty. Behind all the sin of Israel lay the will of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the first king of the ten tribes, and his evil in setting up the two golden calves. Departure from the house of God may lead the people into a darkness so black as to be deeper than paganism, for eyes that have seen the light are more blinded by darkness than the eyes that are accustomed to it. We cannot look on Israel's downfall without realising the possibilities in each one of us of departure from God (Romans 11. 17, 18; Hebrews 10. 30, 31). God will not recognise a people that have departed from Him.

In chapter 9. 5 God asks, " What will ye do in the day of solemn assembly, and in the day of **the feast of the LORD** ? " The feasts of Jehovah **were** intended to cause the people to remember the God with whom they had to deal, a solemn occasion. **Was** it to be simply a holiday or a time for re-consideration ? Mechanical adherence to **the** word of God is of no value; set leasts and empty ordinances were only sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.

Ephraim had sown **the** wind and God's reward to them was that they should reap the whirlwind. They had gone into sin, and because they were deaf to **the** warnings, they would go into greater sin until they were altogether given over to it. Ephraim, whose **name** means fruitful, shall bear no fruit. *L. B. Home.*

### EXTRACTS.

**From** London, S. E. —Once again in these two chapters, the prophet employs the metaphor extensively. Many of his comparisons were such that his contemporaries would understand them perfectly, but over 2, 500 years have elapsed since they were written, and in consequence we find it difficult to understand. But it was words such as these that the apostle Paul said " were written for our learning, " and if we could arrive at their meaning we would find in all probability that they have a message for the present day.

In these two chapters especially, the prophet hardly seems to have finished one thought before he is off on another, so we have not attempted to deal with the two chapters as a whole, but have picked out verses here and there and endeavoured to remark upon them.

" Set the trumpet to thy mouth, " not that cornet that was referred to in chapter 5. 8. Attention was drawn to Leviticus 25. 9, and it was suggested that the trumpet was to draw attention to the Word. 1 Thessalonians 4. 16 was also referred to.

" As an eagle against the house of the LORD " ( R. V. M. ). In common with other students of Hosea down the ages we had difficulty in deciding when the prophet was using a figure, and when he meant to be taken literally. Some suggested that the eagle referred to was the Roman power. [ I presume it was the Chaldeans first, though Rome came afterwards and repeated the work of the Chaldeans. — J. M. ].

" They sow the wind, and they shall reap the whirlwind. " This saying has often been wrested from its context and applied in recent years to the aggressor nations in Europe. But the truth is the same as in Paul's words: " For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. " If Israel sows to herself " wind " ( perhaps meaning tribulation ), it will yield " seed after its kind. " The desert whirlwind is but a little picture of the whirlwind of God: see also chapter 10. 12, 13.

" Israel is . . . as a vessel wherein is no pleasure. " Surely that is the state of Israel to-day ! A vessel that renders no practicable use, and which gives no pleasure to the onlooker.

Judah has multiplied fenced cities, but they are of no avail. The whirlwind of God, like the love of God, cannot be stayed.

In chapter 9. Hosea begins on the same lines as in chapter 2. 9. The outlook for Israel is grim, all brought about by their deliberate neglect of God and His things. Yet Ephraim had **been** a watchman with God (verse 8). This is thought to have referred to Ephraim's geographical position. But they had corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah, possibly a reference to Judges 19. 22.

They " became abominable like that which they loved. " Possibly Paul was thinking of such words as these when he penned Romans 1. 28: a further proof that one cannot touch sin and not be defiled !

From verse 11 to **the** end of chapter 9. the prophet foretells misery and despair for Ephraim, and it seems amazing that men could have ignored these warnings. Verse 17 has been fulfilled, and " they have become as wanderers among the nations. " They are a nation without a home, despised world-wide, and a **living** proof of the truth of God's word, *K, HM,*

From Atherton. —Why **was** God forgotten ? The **main** contribution to Israel's waywardness, departure, **and** declension from the **divine** pathway seemed to be their desire for that which could be seen by the natural eye. They must have something upon which they could set their **gaze, as in** the golden calf which Aaron made, and the calves set up by Jeroboam in Bethel and Dan. The mount that could not be touched, the quakings and tremblings of God's created earth, the glories and emotions of **a** loving God, had no appeal to their hearts. The manna covered ground, the gushing rivulets of the wilderness, together with the smiting of alien nations, what were these compared with **a** golden **calf** set upon its pedestal ? There **was** something fashioned by their own hands, calling too for sacrifice on their part, namely, the giving up of their rings and golden bracelets. Oh deluded Israel, that they should **again** repeat what their fathers had done in the wilderness ! Hosea **8. 5, 6** seems to have reference to Jeroboam's calves, for it was thought that Samaria **is** mentioned **in** the **same** way **as** the name Ephraim **is** throughout the prophecy, i. e., representative of **the** ten tribes.

Another reason for their forgetfulness of God was their **alliance** with alien nations, which sapped their love and devotion. Intermingling with the idolatrous nations brought about their low spiritual condition. It was God's purpose, **as** seen from Deuteronomy 28., that Israel should be the supreme nation, "the head and not **the** tail," but the opposite to this was the result. "The stranger that **is** in the midst of thee shall mount **up** higher and higher" (Deuteronomy 28. 43, 44).

A query was raised about the words: "And I knew it not" (Hosea 8. 4). It would appear to have direct reference to many of Israel's kings who took the throne by violence and bloodshedding, not having been put there by God **as** anointed rulers over **His** people. The mention of Jeroboam **only as** king of Israel in Hosea 1. 1 might indicate that he only of Israel's kings had divine recognition during the prophecy of Hosea.

God's message in chapter 8. 12 **is** both touching and significant: "Though I write for him My law in ten thousand precepts, they are counted **as** a strange thing." The "precepts" here mean the charges of the LORD, and remind **us** of the many charges of Paul to Timothy: "This charge I commit unto thee," and "I charge thee" (see 1 Timothy 1. 18; 2 Timothy 4. 1, etc.).

How important it **is** that we in our day keep the commands of the Lord ! Israel kept up her solemn assemblies, but her heart was far from God. This **is** a solemn consideration, that **in** finding our regular place **at** the assembly gatherings we should ever seek that our heart be perfect toward God, thus to serve **Him** in sincerity and truth.  
*G. A. Jones.*

From Cowdenbeath. —The **real**, underlying cause of Israel's departure was their failure to give heed unto God's spoken word. They trespassed against the law, and the precepts, though so numerous, were counted **as** strange unto them. Into this serious state we may **fall** through neglecting God's word. May we strive to have communion with God through **a** constant and daily reading and meditation upon **His** precious word ! To become unacquainted with the Scriptures will be to allow ourselves to lapse into **a** condition which must lead to departure.

God's warnings and entreaties had been despised which **He** spake through **His** prophets. Indeed, such was the hardened state of Israel towards such pleadings, that the prophet **was** accounted **a** fool, and the **man** with God's Spirit **as** being mad. Therefore the inevitable hour of judgment must come. The enemy was on his way. Therefore the trumpet **is** sounded which gives warning of his approach. From of old Israel had been instructed to blow the trumpet when they went to war against the oppressor, and God promised that He would hear and would remember them (Numbers 10. 9). In spite of their departure and forgetfulness of God, Israel claimed remembrance in the evil day of judgment. They claimed to know God when their lives bore eloquent witness that they had forgotten Him. So shall it be in a day yet to come when many shall say, "Lord,

Lord. " Yet such lip service when face to face with judgment **is** not enough. If the opportunities of life have been despised, a belated acknowledgement will not suffice to **save in** that awful day.

To Judah also the warning had been given, and her reaction to such was that she multiplied fenced cities. Through her own efforts she sought to defy the fulfilment of God's word. Her strength and confidence lay in her fortified cities by which means she thought to be able to resist the efforts of the enemy to capture and carry her away. Alas, that many a sinner awaits the day of judgment relying upon himself and refusing to take refuge in the Rock of Ages.

A very powerful and searching appeal **is** made in chapter 9. 5. " What will ye do in the day of solemn assembly, and in the day of the feast of the LORD ? " Israel **is** contemplated as being away in captivity, completely severed from the house of the LORD, and all the privileges associated with it. The seriousness of being in such a position **is** brought very solemnly before them. The course of the backslider who wilfully refuses to mend his ways must inevitably lead to this. Sometimes it **is** not until we lose a thing that we are able to estimate its real value. Alas ! that this state should be possible to us all. May the seriousness of suffering the inestimable loss of being deprived of the privileges of God's house enliven our desires to please and serve **Him** faithfully and with a whole heart.

*James Bowman.*

**From Kilmarnock.** —The nations around, in their ignorance of the true God, might rejoice, but the prophet calls on Israel to " rejoice not, " for they had gone a whoring from God, and knew not the " joy of the LORD as their strength. " Chapter 9. 3 says: " They shall not dwell in the LORD'S land "; it was the land promised to Abraham and to his seed, but they had forfeited all claim to it by their disobedience to God's law, and now they shall return to Egypt and Assyria. Here they would meet with trouble and sorrow, and would be glad to eat of all kinds of unclean meats. Truly " the way of transgressors **is** hard ! "

In verse 10 the LORD makes known through the prophet the joy and satisfaction He had in their fathers when they covenanted with **Him** in the wilderness, " I saw your fathers as the first-ripe in the fig tree, " and " like grapes in the wilderness "; but alas ! " they came to Baal-peor, " and mingled with the heathen in their idol worship, thus losing their separated position. **As** their descendants, Israel had given no heed to the prophet's warnings, and now God's message to them is, " I will drive them out of Mine house: I will love them no more " (verse 15).

These things have been written for our learning (Romans 15. 4), and we need to see that our manner of life **is** in keeping with the position we have been brought into by God's grace, for it **is** possible to lose that position (see Hebrews 3. 6, 12).

*A. G. S.*

**From Barrhead and Paisley.** —God **is** forgotten in spite of all that **He** had wrought for **His** people. The impressions created by their salvation and deliverance from Egypt, and all it entailed, had grown dim in their minds; as Psalm 106. 13 says: " They soon forgot **His** works. "

Since they no longer recognised God as their king, they decided to appoint a king from among themselves, and the principles of democracy which are ever contrary to God's order for rule and government were adopted, and they chose a man to rule them.

In chapter 8. 1 God **accuses them of** transgressing the covenant, and trespassing the law. This involves much, but **He** continues to say, " They have set up kings, but not by Me ; . . . of their silver and their gold have they made them idols. " It **is** possible that the covenant in question **is** God's covenant with David concerning the throne, of which we read in 2 Chronicles 13. 5, and 1 Chronicles 17. [The covenant of chapter 8. 1, **is**, I judge, the covenant of Sinai. —J. M. ]. The throne of David was to be established for ever, and this

covenant confirmed the promise to the sons of Jacob, given by their father when he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah" (Genesis 49. 10). The kings who were not of the covenant were failures; Saul the first, and Jeroboam the second, were outstanding examples, and we know that Jeroboam **was** responsible for setting up the calves in Bethel and Dan, in direct violation of the law: this is possibly the sin referred to in chapter 8. 4.

The calf as an object of worship was a relic of their sojourn in Egypt.. They had often seen this idolatry in practice, and naturally when they turned aside from God, they reverted to it. They had forgotten the solemn warning given in Deuteronomy 9. 19 that if they walked after other gods and served them they would surely perish. Indeed, they were like a wild ass obeying their own stubborn resolves, and were oblivious to the warnings of the prophets. They are to-day a people swallowed up by the nations, their numbers diminished by reason of persecutions (Hosea 8. 10).

Gilgal was an outstanding place in Israel. It seemed to be a centre of some kind, because it was to Gilgal that Samuel said, "Let us go . . . and renew the kingdom there." Saul also returned there from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and that was where God rolled away the reproach of Egypt from the people (Joshua 5. 9). The place should have been sacred to the people, but there they had polluted the altar with the spoil of the Amalekites in direct disobedience to God's command. God spoke in that day and said, "Behold, to obey **is** better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams"; and in the same strain in Hosea 9. 17 He said that he would cast them off **if** they would not hearken to Him.

*Jack McK. Gault.*

#### Questions and Answers.

Question from London, S. E. —Are the sins mentioned in Hosea 6. and 7. literal or figurative: —6. 9, murder, lewdness; 6. 10, whoredom; 7. 1, falsehood; 7. 3, **lies**; 7. 4, adultery.

Answer. —Such sins were literal. Immorality **is** allied to spiritual wickedness, such as idolatry. The history of the human race makes that fact only too manifest. Departure from God ever brings with it such scenes as were characteristic of times before the Flood in the days of Noah and of Sodom in the days of Lot. "The fear of the LORD, that **is** wisdom: and to depart from evil **is** understanding" (Job 28. 28). —J. M.

Question from Brantford, Ont. —Does chapter 6. 11 of Hosea have reference to a still future time?

Answer. —This scripture may have a double application, true of the return of the Remnant, as in Ezra and Nehemiah, and having a still wider fulfilment in the return of **the** captivity of "my people," not simply a remnant, mainly of Judah and Benjamin. Departure from God was widespread in the land in Hosea's time. **He** mentions Gilead, as indicative, no doubt, of the state of Israel east of the Jordan; also of Ephraim and says that Israel **is** defiled, a fact true of **all** the northern kingdom. Then he turns to Judah, as describing all the southern territory of God's people, and says that there will be a harvest for Judah, because of that tribe's evil doing. They would yet reap the sorrows sown in earlier days. The consequences of sin **last** for many generations, indeed rolling millenniums do not wash away the results of wrong-doing. **We** should fear to do evil!—J. M.

Question from Atherton. —Is there any record of Israel returning to Egypt, thus fulfilling the words of Hosea 8. 13 and 9. 3?

Answer. —If we compare Hosea 8. 13 and 9. 3 with 11. 5 we find the Lord saying in the last scripture, "**He** shall not return *into* Egypt; but the Assyrian shall be his king. The two former scriptures **seem** to indicate returning to Egypt for help, rather than going down to dwell there. See 2 Kings 17. 4 where **it** says, "And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hosea; for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt." \* This scripture in 2 Kings **seems** to confirm this view. —J. M.

# BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

MAY, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
God forgotten. . . . .	37
The Compassion of God. . . . .	38
Question and Answer . . . . .	44

## GOD FORGOTTEN.

From Brantford, Ontario. —" Israel hath forgotten his Maker. " These short and plain yet terrible words give **us the** key to **the** sore straits in which **we** find Israel in Hosea chapters **8.** and **9.** They ceased to fear **that** glorious and fearful **name,** " The **LORD thy** God. " The promises of their fathers, All **that the** **LORD has** spoken **we** will do, and their words to Joshua, " God forbid **that we** should forsake the **LORD,** to serve other gods, " **seemed** to have no hold on this later generation. How true were the words of Joshua, " **Ye** cannot serve the **LORD;** for **He is an** holy God " ! (Joshua 24. 19). They forgot those solemn words, " I the **LOUD** thy God **am a** jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation. " **His** mighty **acts** were something in the **dim** past; they gradually forgot **His** existence altogether, until the Lord **came** down **in judgment** upon them. For them **it** would be a rude **awakening** to realise that the **LORD** doth not slumber nor sleep (Psalm 121. 4).

Jeroboam in a very subtle manner lured Israel away from their Maker. Self-preservation and gratification **came** first with him. **He** dared not stop the worship of the people altogether, so his reasoning is made attractive to them. Too long have you journeyed to Jerusalem. How much easier **is** to worship **at** home ! Why the arduous journey, when you **can take** the pleasant one to Samaria ? **Once** they forsook the house of the **LORD,** it was **easy** for them to count the laws of the **LORD as** a strange thing. They would choose priests, **but** were careful that they did not belong to the Levitical order; all the easier to have them carry out their own sacrifices **and feasts.** " Israel hath **cast** off that which is good " (Hosea 8. 3). Their **man-made kings and** princes were no part of God's order for His people. In their downward career they were guilty of all the outstanding sins of their fathers, for they turned to idolatry, and worshipped the material thing instead of their Creator, something of their own creation which their **eyes** could behold, instead of the **unseen** God.

The God they have forgotten **will** bring to pass the words of Deuteronomy 28. 49. **When** the enemy swoops down suddenly **as** the eagle, and snatches them away to **a** strange land, he would come to the very house of the LORD. The Lord found little pleasure there; it too would share in the ruin of **a** guilty people. Israel must once again stiffer the dire consequences of forgetting God. All the sufferings and hardships of **a** captive race **will be** theirs until they repent of their evil ways. They became **a** hated people, despised and shunned **by** the peoples of the land. They were **a** living **example** in their sorry plight of **a** people foolish enough to turn away from the living God. *J. McL., O. Burbridge.*

From **Edinburgh**. —Hosea, sent by God, **calls** upon Israel—Judah and Ephraim—to return to their God: \*' Set the trumpet to thy mouth. \*' The trumpet **is** associated with alarm calls, and **is** intended to proclaim **a** message to which attention should be paid. God warns that judgment **will** come **as** an eagle **because** of transgression. The eagle strikes **swiftly** and **silently** and seldom **misses its** prey. The warning was plain to **all** who would listen. They had transgressed again and again, **but** suddenly destruction would come upon them.

Throughout their history, in trouble they had cried unto God, **but** in prosperity they **waxed fat** and kicked. Trouble **was** therefore **a** necessary part in their inheritance that they **be** kept in remembrance of the great things God had achieved for them. They were in prosperity and had departed from God, establishing a king that He knew not.

Chapter 9. opens with **a** feast, **but** not to God, **a** feast of their **lusts** with God outside of **it** all. It **is** better to go to the house of mourning with God than to the house of joy without God. They shall not dwell in the land, **but** shall return into the world. God had no pleasure **because** the feast **was** a feast to idols. He took no **pleasure** in **lip** service and spurned the sacrifices. Their **places** were **left** desolate. Prophets and spiritual men had been sent with the **message**, **but** " My people doth not consider. " Even when the Lord **was** on earth, **He** was rejected **as** **mad** or demon possessed. When the day of visitation comes, where shall they **flee** ?

Israel had stood watching for God against the designs of Satan, to **keep** clean the house of God, **but** they were now corrupt and **we** read the sad words: " **He** will **remember** their iniquity, and **will** visit their sins. "

Israel **was** a picture of good to God, **but** had become separated unto shame and followed her own devices. Deliberate wantonness had brought untold misery in **its** train. *T. Hope.*

### THE COMPASSION OF GOD.

**From** Cowdenbeath. —Israel were given the opportunity to repent of their evil ways and turn to the LORD, **but** they refused. Therefore with great reluctance God had decided that **He** must punish **His** people and allow the enemy to carry them captive to Assyria. **But** when the **time** arrives for such **a** thing to **take** place God finds the parting grievous.

He discloses the intense longings of His heart towards them. "**Mine** heart is turned within **Me**, My compassions are kindled together" (chapter 11. 8). The word "compassion" is derived from a Hebrew verb meaning to sigh, i. e., breathe strongly. The words "kindled together" are as one word in the original, and there are only four occurrences of the same in the O. T. In two of the occurrences it is translated "yearn." The usage of the word in Genesis 43. 30 and 1 Kings 3. 26 is very appropriate, and serves to reveal to us somewhat of the deep yearnings of God's heart over His people. "And Joseph made haste; for his bowels did *yearn* upon his brother." Joseph had to deal sternly and speak roughly with his guilty brethren because of their sin, but beneath the austere countenance of the lord of the land of Egypt there pulsed a heart of tenderest love, and this was especially true when he looked upon his own brother Benjamin. In the other instance, where the exceptional wisdom of Solomon is exercised to reveal the true mother of the living child, these words are recorded concerning her whose the boy was, when Solomon had given orders to divide the child: "Her bowels *yearned* upon her son." The yearning of Joseph over his brother, and of the true mother over her son, would describe in some measure the yearnings of God over Israel, whom He calls "My son."

When a child, God loved Israel. As a son He called him forth to obey **Him**. The duty of a son is to honour and obey his father, and in this Israel failed. God fulfilled far and beyond any earthly father the obligation required of **Him** to bestow His love and care. God is faithful, and His gracious dealings toward Israel stood as a witness to this. The charge could never be laid against Him that through lack of fatherly care His wayward son had gone astray. A very homely picture is presented to us in Hosea 11. 3. In the bestowal of His tender love and care God is likened unto a father patiently teaching His child to walk, and betimes taking him into His arms. What affection God bestowed upon them! Yet oftentimes they went astray, as they heard and obeyed the call of other voices, and bowed themselves down to worship false gods. Such failure on their part did not and could not affect His love, and so He drew them unto Himself again. He released them from their bondage, and treated them with the greatest kindness. The obstinacy and self-will of Ephraim is seen in that they refused to return to Egypt when (as verse 5 would imply) they were given the opportunity to do so. The son relied upon his own counsels and despised the advice and warnings of his father. [It is not that Ephraim refused to return to Egypt, but rather God's decision that he should not return thither. Their place of servitude this time was not to be Egypt, but Assyria—not Pharaoh, but the Assyrian was to be their king.—J. M.]

How great the contrast between Israel as God's son and our Lord Jesus Christ! He too was called out of Egypt, but His life was one of perfect obedience. The Father was richly rewarded for the love which He bestowed in beholding the beautiful walk of His Son. He afforded His Father boundless delight, but unlike Israel, for Him there was no modifying of the judgment. He endured God's wrath in **all** its fierceness. "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over Me" (Psalm 42. 7). It was as the Holy One that God dealt with His Son in regard to sin.

In spite of Israel's backslidings, God could not give them up to utter destruction such as He caused to descend upon the cities of the plain in the days of Lot. His love was too great. Therefore He modified the judgment, and not only so, but He spoke of a time when they would return again unto the land.

The last two verses of the portion direct attention to the people whom He loved and with whom He dealt so kindly. There was nought in them to merit such kindness. Yet such is God's grace. It is bestowed upon an unworthy people.

" His patience bearing much and long  
 With those who from Him rove,  
 His kindness when He leads them home  
 Attest that God is love. "

*James Bowman.*

**From Melbourne, Australia.** —The crowning sin of Israel was laid to the charge of Jeroboam, and it was continued by every king succeeding him. " The two transgressions " of chapter 10. 10 were, we understand, the two golden calves in Bethel and Dan. [The word " transgressions " is rendered " furrows " in the A. V., and by another translation " rings. " The Hebrew word here, the word *Onah*, is only twice used in the O. T., in Hosea 10. 10 and Exodus 21. 10, and in the latter scripture it is translated " duty of marriage, " or " conjugal rights. " Gesenius is of the opinion that the context in Hosea 10. 10 requires that the word should be rendered " sins. " It would appear to me, comparing it with Exodus 21. 10, that the meaning is, that when they (Israel) are bound to the worship of the golden calves (in spiritual fornication, which is frequently the way God describes idolatry) God will chastise them by gathering the peoples against them (in the threatened and coming invasion of the Assyrians). Instead of Israel remaining a pure and chaste wife she had gone after the gods of Jeroboam. —J. M. ] This was an outward indication of what was going on inwardly, and a fulfilment of the prophecy of Jeremiah 2. 13. When men turn away from God, they generally have someone or something else to worship, and here they not only set up idols, but increased their idols or altars.

In spite of all this we find that Jehovah still loves them. As a father remembers his children in their tender years, and their love for him, so God reminds them of their first love, when they sought after and followed Him, and pleads with them to return to it.

Chapter 11. 9 shows His slowness to anger. He also reminds Israel in chapter 12. of the time of Jacob's birth as an example of His sovereign choice.

*T. L. Fullerton.*

From London, S. E. —We get the lovingkindness and compassion of God in regard to His dealings with Jacob mentioned in chapters 11. and 12. God loved him from childhood, and He drew him with the bands of love (chapter 11. 4). As Jeremiah says in chapter 31. 3, " I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. " Jehovah appeared to him at Bethel, and throughout his life, although he had many trials and difficulties, yet the grace of God sustained him, and the angel of the Lord redeemed him from all evil, as he testified before Joseph when he blessed the two lads Ephraim and Manasseh.

The main theme of chapter 12. is to call to Israel's remembrance God's goodness to them, entreating them to repent of their evil doings and backsliding, for they were using balances of deceit and oppression (verse 7).

The Holy Spirit sets His seal on this book as being divinely inspired, in that it is cited frequently in the New Testament, e. g., Matthew 2. 15. " Out of Egypt did I call My Son" (Hosea 11. 5). Luke 23. 30—"Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us " (Hosea 10. 8). This prediction seems to be a punishment on Israel because they had sinned more than in the days of Gibeah, which is a reference to the Benjamites' crime in Judges 19. 22.

In chapter 10. 12 we have one of God's exceeding great and precious promises, viz., that if Israel were to seek the Lord, then He would rain righteousness upon them. This is a prophecy relating to the Lord Jesus Christ, which has been partly fulfilled at His first coming, but will have complete fulfilment in the Millennium, as set forth in Psalm 72.:

" He shall come down like rain on the mown grass:  
As showers that water the earth.  
In His days shall the righteous flourish. "

Therefore, in view of the Lord's coming, the Israelites are exhorted to keep mercy and judgment, and to wait on their God continually (Hosea 12. 6).

*Wm. F. Shulver.*

### EXTRACTS.

From Paisley and Barrhead. —We read in Isaiah 5. that when the husbandman looked for grapes, the vine brought forth wild grapes. Although Israel is seen as a luxuriant vine in Hosea 10. 1, its fruit was wild fruit. Their prosperity had caused them to sin, and they were no longer wholeheartedly in the things of God.

They had been delivered from Egypt, brought through the desert and established in the land. God had given them laws and ordinances and had made them His people, a people with whom He could dwell, and from that time onward they knew the Lord as Jehovah. In their wanderings they had not known God as such, but their judgment started to accumulate when they were a gathered together company. The wild fruit is seen stated in the previous chapters; the erection of false altars and pillars, the breaking of covenants, disobeying of commandments and many other misdeeds, but now they are about to be judged. They worshipped the work of their hands, and when they gave to God they gave the halt and the blind. They were plowing wickedness and were about to reap judgment, which was springing up like hemlock in the field.

Those who compose the house of God to-day can learn from this that while they are functioning in the capacity of a gathered together company, they are responsible for any deviation from God's instructions. No sin can harm our salvation, but our position in God's house is entirely dependent on our conduct before, and our faithfulness to God.

It seems that God intended to punish His people by sending them to Egypt, but in His compassion, like a father to an erring child, He allows them to refuse to go. [See note in paper from Cowdenbeath. —J. M. ] He remembers how He loved, nursed and healed them, and once again God seems to have a difficulty when He says, " How shall I make thee as Admah ? how shall I set thee as Zeboim ? " (chapter 11. 8). Divine intervention through Abraham had enabled the kings of Admah and Zeboim to regain their liberty after twelve years'

**subjection.** Lot was the person who was the cause of the intervention, but when God would be compassionate to Israel He could find none worthy to influence Him; the people as a whole were intent on backsliding. [Deuteronomy 29. 23 shows that Admah and Zeboim were overthrown with Sodom and Gomorrah. The reference in Hosea 11. 8 is that God will not deal with Israel as He dealt with those cities which He completely destroyed, for in wondrous love His heart was turned toward Israel. —J. M.]

God will demonstrate His power and strength when He shall roar like a lion. His people shall return from their dispersions, driven by persecution, trembling for fear like a bird, and trusting none. Like a dove their bitterness will have gone, their desire to serve God will dominate any lust after this world's goods. God will make them dwell in their houses again, although not before they remember once again as they do at the Feast of Tabernacles, the fact that at one time they dwelt in tents and booths and experienced the delivering power of God.

It is remarkable the way the Spirit uses verse 1 of chapter 11. in Matthew 2. 13. We find difficulty in linking the two portions, but we realise that the Son of God who was called out of Egypt is the Deliverer of the people [Christ is the true Israel. See Isaiah 49. 3. —J. M. ], the Messiah who was rejected, yet who was the manifestation of the compassion of God. *Jack McK. Gault,*

**From Atherton.** —Several things stand out very prominently in this portion. In chapter 10. we have the imagery of a vine; there are a number of references to the people of God under this figure, notably Isaiah 5. 1-2 and Psalm 80. 8-11. We noted that the R. V. and the A. V. seem to give different thoughts. The A. V. gives the words "empty vine." It was thought that this expression indicates the truth borne out in Isaiah 5., that when God looked for precious fruit there was nothing for Him but wild grapes.

On the other hand, it was suggested that the vine here contemplated Israel (the twelve tribes in this instance) over a long period of years, as is indicated in the scripture already cited (Psalm 80. 8). Israel was thus a luxuriant or strong vine, blessed by God in so many ways. They knew material blessings in abundance, which God desired should be used in the worship and service of His sanctuary. They were also blessed of God in that He brought them to Himself and constituted them to be a Holy Nation and a kingdom of Priests. Yet now, alas, God says of this erring people that there is no knowledge of God in the land, and here we see them multiplying their altars to strange gods, and making their godly pillars.

Attention was drawn to the divine compassion shown by God to His people in varying circumstances, e. g., when in bondage in Egypt; during His chastening of them in the wilderness; His compassion as seen here in the face of their wrong doings. God's heart went out to His people in the land of Egypt. He pitied them in their groanings, so that the words of Hosea 11. 1 are very significant: "I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." Now in the midst of their idolatrous condition God's yearning cry is heard: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? . . . Mine heart is turned within Me, My compassions are kindled together" (verse 8).

How good it is to see the boundless compassion of God as thus He longs to bring back His people to Himself! God's attitude towards Judah in a latter day would certainly be shewn towards Ephraim. We read in connection with Judah that God sent to them by His messengers, "rising up early and sending;

because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling place: But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets" (2 Chronicles 36. 15, 16).  
*J. Bullock, G. Sankey.*

**From** Liverpool. —The writings of Hosea are characterised by the prevalence of a tragic discord. We can learn much from the glimpses we are given of Hosea's life. He married a wife who proved unfaithful, and yet in his bitter disillusionment he saw his wife's infidelity as a parable of the sins of Israel against God, and of their long-standing history of unfaithfulness

" Their heart is divided " (chapter 10. 2). God wants men whole-heartedly in His service; Satan does not mind so long as he can see a divided heart, as is illustrated by the women who came to Solomon, each claiming the infant as her own. The true mother could not countenance any division, even though the alternative meant losing the whole: but the evil impostor was content so long as she had her share.

The identity of king Jareb (verse 6) is something of a mystery to us, for we can find no king of that name mentioned as ruling over Assyria. [Note the R. V. marginal reading in 5. 13 where king Jareb is said to mean " a king that should contend " or as the A. V. marginal reading gives it " to the king that should plead. " Another translation gives king Jareb as " King Contentious. " I am of the opinion that Jareb is not a proper name, but a name which described this Assyrian king's character. —J. M. ]

In these final chapters there is a note of misery and dejection, and even of suicide. The prophet predicts utter ruin for king, calf, temple and shrine, and in the latter part of verse 8 they prefer death rather than life. These actual words were used by the Lord concerning the terrors of the impenitent in the fall of Jerusalem (see Luke 23. 30), and by the apostle John in Revelation to denote the extremity of despair.

The two transgressions referred to in verse 10 are probably the two golden calves set up by Jeroboam, the one in Bethel and the other in Dan (1 Kings 12. 28). We continually read of the " sin of Jeroboam, " and of the kings that they " walked in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin, wherewith he made Israel to sin. "

<sup>44</sup> And Ephraim is an heifer that is taught, " or, as another translation puts it, " Ephraim is a trained heifer that loves to thresh. " Here the idea may be that Ephraim loves the easy and free work of threshing as opposed to the heavy work of ploughing, or it may be that the act of threshing points to the rough treatment which Ephraim, in her pride, meted out to her neighbours and enemies. [Is there not a contrast here between Ephraim and Judah? Ephraim loved to thresh (no doubt because of the abundance of provender, for the ox must not be muzzled that threshes), but Judah had the harder work with no provender: "Judah shall plow. "—J. M. ]

Verse 12 brings some gleams of hope in the desolation. The eternal law that makes reaping a consequence of sowing still applies. The mercy and compassion of God is the harvest, or in this case, shall be the harvest of a sowing to the Spirit. This momentary rift in the storm-cloud would serve to show the light behind it.

In **verse 8** of chapter 11. in the depth of despair, the prophet delivers himself of one of **the** most pathetic passages in **Hebrew** prophecy. **Yet** it would **seem** that on the darkest cloud **gleams** the bow of **a** promise. It is little wonder that **a** nation so **much** beloved **as** Israel, could not be destroyed by Him who had fostered it so tenderly. Admah and Zeboim, were two of the cities of the plain (Deuteronomy 29. 23). Even **as** the prophet loved his faithless wife, God continued to love His people. The passage is remarkable **as** drawing illustrations from human emotions and yet casting off all human weakness. There is **a** hint of God's mercy and of His justice; both of which being infinite, they can adjust themselves beyond the power of human experience and imagination. Divine compassion pleads with divine justice.

*R. Jones, F. Jones,*

From Glasgow. —In chapters 10. and 11. **we have** brought before **us** the sins of the ten tribes of Israel, Ephraim no doubt being the predominant tribe in leading the rest away from God. Sad it **was** that they should go astray themselves, but sadder still to drag others with them ! **As we** think of Israel's condition at this time, **we** are reminded of the parable of the unclean spirit when he is gone out of the man, speaking to **us** of Israel's redemption from the land of Egypt, for Hosea 11. 1 says, " When Israel **was** a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt. " Then **we** read further in the parable that the unclean spirit passeth through waterless places and findeth no rest. Then he taketh seven other spirits more evil than himself, and returneth to the man, and findeth his house swept and garnished. **He** enters in **again** and dwells there, thus making the **last** state of the man worse than the first. **We** find that Israel in Hosea's day, after being delivered from Egypt, instead of their heart being filled with the truth and righteousness of God, were in **a** state of sad departure from God. Their heart was open to receive the sin of idolatrous worship, the priest defiling the service of God and of His house. Truly **as we** read of their presumptuous sins towards God, **we** come to the latter portion of the parable that their latter state is worse than the first.

Yet God in His tender mercies **is** yearning after them saying, " 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 compassions are kindled together. " **Of a** truth, love never faileth, and it also covers **a** multitude of sins, especially when God **Himself** corrects **His** people.

**We** find that Ephraim did not live up to his name which means fruitful, but rather became something like the **fig** tree which the Lord **Jesus** cursed because there **was** no fruit to be found thereon.

*Fred Harvey.*

#### Question and Answer.

Question from Brantford. —In regard to the House of the Lord mentioned in chapter 8. 1 **we** wondered if it referred to the House **at** Jerusalem or embraced the whole nation of Israel ?

Answer. —I understand it **is** the former, not the latter. —J. M.

# BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

JUNE, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Gospel <b>in</b> Hosea. . . . .	<b>45</b>
The Compassion of G o d . . . . .	<b>46</b>
The Call to the Backslider. . . . .	<b>47</b>
Questions <b>and</b> A n s w e r s . . . . .	<b>52</b>

### THE GOSPEL IN HOSEA.

The sinful condition of Israel, **as** depicted so prominently throughout Hosea's prophecy, **is** a very true picture of man in his disobedience and departure from God. In such **a** condition he has no claim upon God's mercy. The picture given to us of God, reveals **Him as** being rich in mercy, longing and yearning for the return of those who have sinned grievously against Him. In spite of **man's** unworthiness to be forgiven, God waits to bestow **His** mercy abundantly.

The scene **in** Hosea **is** ripe for judgment. In such **a** record there **is** nothing to commend Israel, yet God considers, saying, " What shall I do ? " Surely these words of Hosea 6. 4 find their echo in Luke 20. 13! There, according to the meaning of the parable, after man's hatred and sinful enmity have unmistakably evidenced his forfeiture of divine mercy, **as** a result of many pleadings having been despised, God considers what **He** might further do in His love towards **His** creatures. **His** love **is** to the uttermost. " God *so* loved the world. " If we can know the meaning of the little word "so," then we can measure the love of God to man. Our efforts to do so will but impress us with the infinitude of God's love, which passeth knowledge. **His** last and final offer of mercy surpassed all previously given: "I will send My beloved Son. " Even when men had slain **His** well-beloved Son on Calvary, God's love did not cease towards them, but rather did it flow out in all its boundless magnitude to guilty and unworthy sinners; not because of, but in spite of, what man had done. Such love **we** cannot comprehend !

In the purposes of God the death of Christ was absolutely essential. Apart from this God's blessings could not reach man. Hosea 13. 14 could never have been fulfilled but for Christ's death. By no other **means** could the ransom or redemption price be paid, save by the blood of **Him** who alone **was as** " a Lamb without spot or blemish. " " I will ransom them from the hand of Sheol (R. V. M. ); I will redeem them from death. " Man's position was hopeless, and one from which **He** could never extricate himself. **He** **was** perishing. For this reason God gave **His** Son, who died on Calvary, that whosoever believeth should not perish. " The Son was given **in** love, not that **men** might be consigned to hell, but that they might be ransomed from it. Christ entered into the realms of death, and brought to nought him who had the power of death. Through **His** rising again, **as** the Firstfruits, which **is** to be followed by the resurrection of countless believers, these words shall have their complete fulfilment: " **O** death, where **is** thy victory ? **O** death, where **is** thy sting ? "

Many are the warnings of judgment throughout the book, but these **seem** to have gone unheeded. Yet God **is** not slack concerning **His** promise **as** some count slackness, for the day of judgment must come even **as** it did for Israel. Hosea 9. 7 says: " The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are

come. " Then it was with Israel that many claimed a knowledge of God as their right to escape the judgment (chapter 8. 2). We think of how the Lord speaks of those who shall say to Him, " Lord, Lord, " only to be told, " Depart. " When God's judgment did descend upon Israel, many desired death, saying to the mountains, " Cover us, " and to the hills, " Fall upon us. " These identical words are recorded as having been spoken by others in like case when Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus (Luke 23. 30). Again when the Lord shall appear in judgment in a day to come, many shall desire death in this way, asking to be hidden from the face of Him who sits upon the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (Revelation 6. 16). How solemn that the Lamb who died amid such agonies and in such love at Calvary, will yet show His wrath towards those who disobey the gospel!

But for those who do return acknowledging their fallen condition, and asking to be received graciously (chapter 14. ), from such God's anger shall be turned away, and by such shall His love be known. For these blessing is in store, not only the millennial bliss, wonderful as that shall be, but theirs shall be the fulness of joy and the endless pleasure of God's eternal presence. The salvation which He has provided, which is in Christ Jesus, is with eternal glory. " Who is wise, and he shall understand these things ? prudent, and he shall know them ? " (Hosea 14. 9).

*James Bowman,*

### THE COMPASSION OF GOD.

From Vancouver. —Hosea 11. opens with words of compassion, " When Israel was a child, then I loved him. " What words could be found equal to these, breathing the very essence of God's nature of love, and coming as they did to a people who had descended into a lower moral and spiritual state than the heathen ? They were calculated to move their sinful hearts to repentance. God was yearning over them like a parent over a wayward child, and was looking for some hearts that would respond to the impulse of love and return to Him.

Back to the time when God led His people forth out of Egypt goes the prophet in his message, " I called My son out of Egypt. " What memories it would stir up in the hearts of those who knew the book of Moses, wherein had been inscribed with an eternal pen the wondrous acts and power of God on behalf of His people ! He uses the similitude of a father taking his child by the hand and teaching him to walk.

Thus are the years of God's patient dealings with Israel touchingly portrayed in the scenes of a happy home circle where parental affection is centred on their young. How true was it also that God " drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love " ! (Hosea 11. 4).

In Hosea's message God revives the memory of the complete destruction that had overtaken the kings of Admah and Zeboim, in the days of Abraham, but because of His kindness and compassion He refrained from dealing thus with Ephraim. In spite of the fact that they had " plowed wickedness and reaped iniquity, " God gives them opportunity to break up the fallow ground (the result of plowing), and sow in righteousness, for only by this means could they reap mercy. They learned by bitter experience that it is righteousness alone by which a nation can be exalted, and sin is a reproach to any people. In God's mercy they are granted time to repent. " It is time to seek the LORD, " the prophet warns, because His offer of mercy may be withdrawn from that generation (Hosea 5. 6).

As we meditate on the compassion of God here set forth, we are moved to ponder well the lesson it teaches. We who have become the objects of divine love and grace in our time, " Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound ? God forbid " (Romans 6. 1). The things written aforetime have been written for our learning, and these things happened unto them by way of example, and are for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come (1 Corinthians 10. 11; Romans 15. 4). God requires that we yield ourselves to Him, and our members as members of righteousness, and not to the sins of our **past** life. *R. Armstrong.*

**From Brantford, Ont.** —We considered again the words, "When Israel was a child." This would speak to them of their early days. Then Jehovah loved Israel and called him as His son; yet God had in view His own Son (Matthew 2. 15). We thought how the Lord was identified with them in all their wanderings, in all their afflictions; in His love and pity He redeemed them (Isaiah 63. 9). Truly He taught Ephraim to take his first step, holding out His mighty arms and directing his ways. Yet they soon forgot those early days when God drew them. It is still God's desire to draw us to Himself from false ways through the Man Christ Jesus. Their backsliding and idols destroyed all the freshness and power of those happy days. "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent" (Revelation 2. 5). They were bent on backsliding till there was no remedy, yet the loving heart of God yearned after them, "How shall I give thee up?" He could not bear to make them like the cities of old which came under the judgment of God (Genesis 14. 8).

We noted the contrast between Ephraim and Judah. The iniquity of Judah was not seen so much as that of the ten tribes whom Jeroboam led astray, causing Israel to sin. "Judah yet ruleth with God, and is faithful with the Holy One" (11. 12). There seems to be a measure of devotion in Judah, yet God had a controversy with them (chapter 12. 2). He was not satisfied with Judah. We have brought before us Jacob as one who could lay hold upon God; when unable to struggle he claved to the Angel. This was his power, and should have been their power, and must be our power (chapter 12. 4). God "found him at Bethel, and there He spake with us." In the place where God was, the House of God, men could keep judgment and mercy, and wait on their God continually.

*Neil Sproul.*

### THE CALL TO THE BACKSLIDER.

**From Barrhead and Paisley.** —These concluding chapters seem to be a general summing up of the whole book. In them we see references to other portions of the same book; also a confirmation of the various judgments, the promise of resurrection, and a call to the backslider with full assurance of restoration.

The name Ephraim means "fruitful," and in chapter 14. 8 we see that the fruitfulness was found from God. But though he may appear among his brethren to be fruitful, the east wind after which he followeth will be the cause of his desolation (chapter 13. 15). It was suggested that the east wind may typify Assyria, the country with which they made a covenant and whose favour they sought, which was in turn used by God to overrun and devastate the land.

In chapter 13. 3 it is possible that God may be referring to the idols and images of verse 2, when He speaks of the morning cloud and the early dew and also uses other similes to convey an impression of a temporary nature. Certainly when He uses the comparisons in verse 6 He is meaning the people, but in this case when we link it with verse 4 God seems to emphasise His eternal existence in contrast to the transitory images, by saying, "Yet I am the LORD thy God."

The 13th chapter seems to be a brief outline of the history of the children of Israel. After a reminder of who and what He is, God brings before them the days of their sojourn in the wilderness, and His faithfulness in days of drought and hunger. Then He refers to their request for a king after they had been safely established in the land. This major transgression had caused God much displeasure, but in His anger He gave them a king, and laid up their judgment in store. Verse 13 brings us to the travail which Israel as a nation will undergo, the travail as of a woman with child as foretold by Isaiah 13. 8, Matthew 24. and Revelation 12. The nation unitedly will bear pain and sorrow for they will not be delivered until first they have endured the tribulation.

The promise of resurrection follows for the nation in verse 14, confirming God's promises to the fathers, who in their faith wrought great works, endured great ordeals, and even suffered death, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. In verse 16 the curtain seems to be lifted on the Great Tribulation, and we catch a glimpse of the atrocities which will be committed on those then living.

At the end of this book of alternating judgment and blessing, the unmerited grace and mercy of God is clearly seen, being extended to the people when God says, "O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God." The promise of blessing is again evident, although perhaps chapter 14. is yet a future scene.

The day when Israel will return to the LORD is still in the future, but they will return with words of repentance, like the prodigal son of Luke 15., but not until then will the land be fruitful, and not until then will Israel spread out his branches, or his beauty be like the olive tree. *Jack McK. Gault.*

**From Ilford.**—The last three chapters of Hosea present the recapitulation and conclusion of the book. Chapters 12 and 13. deal almost entirely with Israel's past sins, which were then being repeated, and contain reminders of previous punishments. Chapter 14. has the greatest appeal to the backslider, for it contains promises of forgiveness and blessing; but the call is, essentially, two-fold. It is true that blessing will be received on repentance (chapter 14. 4), but disobedience must bring punishment (chapter 13. 6-9; 14. 9).

Israel had been instructed in right and wrong very early in their history. The people had been reminded of this by the prophets, by Hosea's allegorical life (chapters 1. -3. ), and by the punishments they had received in the past. Their sins sprang from disobedience and very often led to idolatry, which is shown to be a much greater sin than we usually consider. The several references to previous idolatry, in chapters 12. and 13., show how easily Israel wandered from God (e. g., chapter 12. 11; 1 Kings 12. 25-33).

The way back to God was as clear as the blessings that would follow. The people had simply to acknowledge their sin, their inability to put it right (chapter 14. 2, 3), and to repent. Once again they had the history of Israel—which had always been governed by the same God—to help them.

Although their God had not changed, the children of Israel seemed to have developed in their conception of Him. Chapter 14. 2 seems to be a foreshadowing of the new dispensation, since it is now the "fruit of lips," which is seen to be the ideal sacrifice. By the use of the words "as bullocks" this sacrifice is particularly connected with the peace offering. *E. A. G. M.*

### EXTRACTS.

From Atherton. —In the word of the Lord through His servant Jeremiah, we are taken right back to consider Israel's good days—short-lived as indeed they were, both then and later. "Thus saith the LORD, I remember for thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals: how thou wentest after Me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown" (Jeremiah 2. 1-2). It was God's deep longing that His people should go after Him. We can well imagine the people in that pristine condition, which gave God great delight as they looked towards Himself and His dwelling-place with love and affection. From them He got precious fruit, "the firstfruits of His increase," but now it must, be recorded, "I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto Me?" (Jeremiah 2. 21). Of them God has to say, "\* They have forgotten Me days without number" (chapter 2. 32); forgetting ever leads to forsaking, and Israel had been guilty of this.

But the gracious, loving, and compassionate call is to return—to turn back, since they have fallen away backward. The basis of God's choice of the nation was love—"because the LORD loveth you" (Deuteronomy 7. 8). Further, He would honour the terms of that long-standing covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and whilst from time to time they are laid aside, they are never cast off. The day shall yet dawn when the prophecy of Hosea shall be fulfilled, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely" (chapter 14. 4).

In considering the solemn matter of backsliding we cannot fail to observe that usually it is a gradual process. It is clear, too, that there are degrees in the backsliding condition. How sad to read: " \* Israel hath behaved himself stubbornly, like a stubborn heifer " (Hosea 4. 16). Again, " All their princes are revolvers " (chapter 9. 15). Thus they were guilty of clear rebellion against the word of the LORD.

From several New Testament scriptures we sought to trace the degrees of backsliding. Hebrews 12. 12, 13, contemplates a condition within the sphere of the Assembly. of God, and the exhortation is to " lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees. " Here we have inactivity in service, a condition never in keeping with the will of the Lord. From verse 13 we would learn the principle that we are to help, assist, and encourage rather than that we be guilty of causing an occasion of stumbling.

Hebrews 3. 12, 13, brings before us a possible condition which may be far more serious—an " evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God. " How sad when the people of God have no faith in the doctrine of the Lord, when that which they once held fast they now let go !

From Hebrews 12. 15-17 we have again presented a most serious condition. " Looking carefully lest there be any man that faileth back from (R. V. M. ) the grace of God. " Here again we see an influence for evil; the condition of the one may cause others to be defiled. In the Esau-like condition we see the full extremity of backsliding, that for such there is no repentance (see Hebrews 6. 4-8). There is then a sad condition of backsliding from which there is no recovery, Hymenaeus and Philetus being examples of this (2 Timothy 2. 17 and 18).

Yet for Israel there will be recovery. God's heart is toward them. The story of the prodigal shews not only repentance on the part of the erring one, but indicates very preciousely the Father's heart going out towards his son. Yet on the part of the backslider there must ever be repentance. This is a divine condition. God longs that Israel take up yet again the strain of Asaph's prayer, " Turn us again, O LORD God of hosts; cause Thy face to shine, and we shall be saved " (Psalm 80. 3, 8, 19).

*J. K. Southern, G. A. Jones.*

**From Glasgow.**—" The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah " (Hosea 12. 2). Here are revealed the tender mercies of God, in that He is reasoning with Judah, and warning her of her ultimate end if she continues in the way she is going. Again, He "will punish (or visit upon, R. V. M. ) Jacob according to his ways; according to his doing will He recompense him. " It has been suggested that He is speaking to the nation, and that Jacob is being used here figuratively. Thus we have the characteristics of Jacob revealed in those of Ephraim—see Hosea 12. 3-5, and compare with chapter 12. 1. Ephraim in character is not unlike Esau, for he counted his birthright of no value. So great is the sin of Ephraim that judgment is laid up in store. Samaria must bear her iniquity for her rebellion against God. All her effort will be unfruitful through the east wind. How solemn is the lesson for the people of God ! The severity of the forsaking of God is a lot to be eschewed, as the punishment upon Ephraim reveals. How dark and hopeless is the lot of this faithless people, who had turned from the fountain of living waters ! Had the words of Hosea the prophet ended with such a message, then truly the portion of Ephraim was severe. But the mercy of God exceeds His wrath and indignation ! " O, Israel, return unto the LORD thy God. " What a glorious ray of the sun of righteousness, sending healing into the inwards of this downcast forsaken people ! " I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely. " What love and compassion is felt in this expression of grace and mercy ! Abundant blessing and restoration is presented in the closing words of Hosea. Well may the exhortation be, " 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 transgressors shall fall therein. "

*Henry McCubbin.*

From **London, S. E.** —The principles governing the return of a prodigal nation are so strikingly similar to those enunciated by the Lord Jesus Christ for a prodigal individual, that one proposes to confine this study to Hosea 14., especially inasmuch as it follows the familiar lines laid down in Luke 15. 11-32. The comparison of these two portions should amply repay study. Let us consider them under three headings: —

1. The cause of departure from God.
2. The method of return to God.
3. The response of God to the returning one.

### 1. *The Cause of Departure.*

The cause of departure from God is sin. When the younger son asked for his portion of the substance, he evinced an independence which led him to the far country, to riotous living and wasted substance. God graciously does not enlarge on the riotous living, neither does He paint true but hideous pictures of the extreme depths of debauchery reached in such a condition. But as we have studied the book of Hosea, we have been astounded by the comprehensive catalogue of Israel's sins enumerated so minutely by the Spirit-guided hand of Hosea. Priest and people, ruler and ruled, had fallen by their iniquity (14. 1); they were "bent to backsliding" from Jehovah (11. 7).

### 2. *The Method of Return.*

When the prodigal son had touched rock-bottom, it was to his father he desired to return; he did not mention his elder brother, relatives, or even his one **time** friends, only "*My father's* servant. " "I will arise and go to my *father*, " and say, "*father*, I have sinned "; " he arose, and **came** to his *father*. " In like manner, Israel was called by Hosea to "return unto Jehovah thy God: . . . return unto Jehovah. " The returning son brought with him words: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight. " Perchance a lump in his throat prevented his concluding his prepared little speech, or maybe the father's compassion cut short the confession; at any rate, the son made his confession. Likewise, Hosea counsels Israel, "Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and accept that which is good: so will we render as bullocks the offering of our lips. " Assur (or Assyria) could not save them; the strength of the war-horse was totally inadequate; idol-worship was futile; in Jehovah alone were salvation and mercy (Hosea 14. 3).

### 3. *The Response of God.*

The overjoyed father of Luke 15., while his son was yet afar off, "saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. " "Love in action" quickly produced the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf, the festivity and the merriment. The God of the returning prodigal was also the God of returning Israel. \*I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew to Israel: he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon. They that dwell under his shadow shall return; they shall revive as the corn, and blossom as the vine: the scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon " (Hosea 14. 4-7).

Israel's dew was the leading source of fertility; if withheld, barrenness resulted. Jehovah promised a repentant and returned Israel that He would be as the dew, "from the womb of the morning, " bringing youth, freshness, and life and beautiful vigour; gone the barrenness of recent years and in its stead the fertility caused by the early morning dew (verse 5). "He shall blossom as the lily" (verse 5); the lily grew among thorns, rapidly self-propagating, one root very often producing fifty bulbs. The velvety softness and majestic glory of the lily contrasted markedly with the tangled thorns about it. "Instead of taking the lily into a conservatory, God leaves it out among the thorns. The same soil, from which one nature can only extract the harsh astringent sloe with its cruel spines, yields in another flexible leaves and balmy blossoms. " Thus Israel,

surrounded by godless, idol-worshipping nations, could be a people for God's own possession. " So the life of faith is not lived in the convent or in the sanctuary (alone), but out of doors in the unsympathising world, in the midst of secular men. " The believer's excellent attributes of grace are often in evidence in a most repulsive environment; the boundless love of Christ contrasted at Calvary with the uncontrolled hatred of men, **just as** the composure of a Spirit-filled Stephen only emphasised the mad fury of his murderers.

The beauties of Lebanon were also to be transferred in figure to returned Israel. As the trees of Lebanon cast forth their roots deep into the fissures of rocks, so Israel would firmly trust in Jehovah. The odorous flowers and aromatic shrubs yielded the characteristic " smell of Lebanon "; so the fragrance of Israel would be pleasing to God and man, providing a delightful place of retreat from the sultry plains of sin. The fatness of the olive, the reproduction of the grain of wheat, and the joy of the vine, were to be the portion of a forgiven people.

In spite of all Israel's backsliding and iniquity, the cry of Jehovah was clear,... " Return,... I will love them freely. " And Israel's God is ours.

" Returning ones **He** kisses,  
And with His robe invests;  
His perfect love dismisses  
All terror from our breasts. "

*F. L. Evans.*

From Cowdenbeath. —There are two calls given in the portion. The first is in chapter 12. 6 unto Judah, with whom God also had a controversy; the second is in chapter 14. 1 unto Israel who, it would seem, were in captivity when the call was made. Unto Judah it was " turn, " but unto Israel " return. "

God would have His people to be reminded of Jacob's personal history. He was a man who prevailed. Although born second, yet he obtained the right to be recognised as the first born, and with this right went the blessing. He also had power with God, yet here the blessing was not obtained by physical strength or by human wisdom, but by a defeated man clinging and weeping as a child whilst making supplication. Such a man was instructed to go to Bethel, and there God again pronounced blessing not upon the man alone, but upon his posterity. Unto Jacob's seed at a later time God revealed Himself as the LORD (Jehovah). He who was the God of the man Jacob was the God of his descendants. Yet from Him they strayed. God calls them to return. No doubt He desired that as His people they should prevail among the nations, yet more earnestly did He desire that they should have power with Himself and determinedly, like Jacob, should obtain His blessings. He was waiting to recompense them in blessing, but if they should refuse to return He must punish them in judgment.

The blessing of the Lord which maketh rich (Proverbs 10. 22) had not been desired by Ephraim, but contrariwise, in independence of God, they had sought to make themselves rich by deceit and oppression. God had blessed them bountifully, and the very bountifulness of His blessings had caused them to forget Him. They provoked the Lord to anger most bitterly. In His anger He is unto them as a lion, for its strength, as a leopard, for its suddenness and sureness of spring, and as a bear robbed of her whelps, for its fierceness. From such destruction they cannot be saved. They are against the One who alone can be their Saviour. Neither kings nor judges nor princes shall avail to deliver from such awful judgment. Sorrow of a most extreme sort shall be experienced, for the enemy shall enter into Samaria and the sword shall mercilessly devour even infants and mothers.

Those who escaped the sword were taken as captives to Assyria, even as had been spoken unto them. Yet God still loved His people. His desire was that they should return unto Himself. The message of the prophet unto them was, " Take with you words. " Upon their confession God was ready to forgive and to be unto them all that they would desire. They would know His healing touch, His tender love, the turning away of His wrath, and the abundant bestowal of His blessing.

Surely we have here a picture of the returning **and** repentant Israel of a future day, who shall experience God's wondrous blessings through their Messiah whom they shall acclaim.

One very notable lesson was learned by Israel as a result of the captivity. They were completely weaned away from idol worship. Following upon the return of the remnant we read no more of their worshipping false gods. Ephraim could truly say, "What have I to do any more with idols?" To these he never returned, yet other forms of departure were seen in their later history. In Malachi's day their sin was the sin of formality, and to a great extent the same conditions prevailed in the days of the Lord. Ostensibly they worshipped God. Their lips paid Him honour, but their hearts were far from Him.

Let us be warned by Israel's failures and let us know more of the gracious character of God, as shown in Hosea's prophecy towards those who wandered from Him. Let us strive to show our gratitude by our lives, and above all let us be sincere, stripped of all hypocrisy, and with nothing to claim our love or attention above our God and His service.

*James Bowman,*

#### Questions **and** Answers.

Questions **from** London, S. E. —(1) Hosea 13. 14 is cited in 1 Corinthians 15. 55. The former Scripture refers to Ephraim; the latter refers to the saints at the Rapture. Does this suggest that Old Testament saints will be raised at the Rapture?

(2) Does Hosea 14. refer to Israel's blessings during the Millennial reign of Christ?

Answer (1). —No, the Old Testament saints will not be raised when saints who are in Christ are raised, that is, saints who are in the Church which is Christ's Body. The words of 1 Thessalonians 4. 16 settle the matter—"The dead in Christ shall rise first."

The use to which the Spirit-guided apostles put the Old Testament Scriptures is one which will yield much help to the diligent student of the word. Peter's use of the Joel prophecy shews a principle of interpretation which runs through the epistles. We cite two portions in the epistles in proof of what we say. In Romans 15. 9-12 we have four quotations from the Old Testament in each of which we have allusions made to the Gentiles. The fulfilment of these Old Testament prophecies will be in the Millennium, but now, in this dispensation, there is an application of these to Jews and Gentiles who with the same mind and with one accord, and one mouth, glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 4. 27 we have a quotation from Isaiah 54. 1, and in that passage we have the apostle Paul showing in allegorical language the Old and New Covenants under the figure of Hagar and Sarah. We in this day are already children of the New Covenant, but in the Millennium the New Covenant will also bear its children, when God restores Israel, not on the basis of the Sinaitic Covenant, but the New Covenant, of which Jeremiah 31. 31-34 speaks. Then the barren woman (the New Covenant, of which Sarah was a type) shall bear her children, and because of the multitude of her children shall enlarge her dwelling, stretching forth her curtains, lengthening her cords, and strengthening her stakes. We commend to our friends the study of such matters. We might enlarge upon what we say, but we forbear.

Answer (2). —Yes, I understood so. But the principle of repentance and restoration to God might be made operative at any time had Israel willed to return to the LORD their God. The fruits of repentance shall assuredly be theirs, but at any time they might have known the goodness of God had they willed to  
repent. —J. M.

# BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

JULY, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Call to the Backslider. . . . .	53
The Prophet Joel. . . . .	54
The Call to Humiliation and Repentance . . . . .	56

## THE BOOK OF HOSEA.

### The **Call** to the Backslider.

**From** Hamilton, Ont. —The history of Israel had its times of consecration to God, but how much more noticeable is Israel's backsliding ! From the time of their deliverance from Egypt this condition became manifest, and they forgot their pledge to keep and do all the commandments of the Lord. Their hearts turned back to Egypt or they were seeking after strange gods.

Even the warnings in Deuteronomy 11. of judgment for failure to keep God's commandments were forgotten. In Judges 1. we find that they all failed to drive out the nations, and history proves the truth of God's word in chapter 2., in that the nations would become thorns in their sides and their gods a snare to them.

The failure wholly to keep His word led to spiritual departure in which they forgot God (Hosea 13. 6). Hence we hear the call of God going out to Israel through Hosea in chapter 12. 6: " Turn thou to thy God "; again in chapter 14.: " Return unto the LORD thy God. "

God had sent His prophets early and late, seeking to lead them in the paths of righteousness, but with the result which caused Stephen to ask, " Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute ? " This is a parallel thought with the parable of the Husbandman sending forth His servants for the fruit of the vineyard.

This knowledge of Israel's failure would be of little value to us if we did not learn from it something for our good. So we too hear the words, " Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. " Although we may not be bent on backsliding, as was recorded of Israel, yet it is possible that we may let the things of the Lord drift away from us or we from them. Let us remember that God hath no pleasure in them that shrink back. The Lord when on earth had those who followed **Him**, of whom we read, " They walked no more with Him. "

It makes one happy to know that in a future day God will heal Israel's backsliding; the idols will be put away, and the Husbandman receive His fruit (Hosea 12. 9). God will yet make them to dwell in tabernacles as in the days of the solemn feast. This is a time of rejoicing before the Lord, and Israel will yet know a time of rejoicing.

*P. Thomas.*

**From** Brantford, Ont. —The backslider must become conscious of his true condition and position, and this the prophet sought to convey to Israel, although they were bent on backsliding. In chapter 11. 7 God pleads with Israel to turn aside from her evil doings, and her backsliding. In chapter 13. 9 (A. V. ) we read, " O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in Me is thine help. I will be thy King. " How compassionate are God's words to His people who had forgotten **Him** (chapter 13. 6), as He seeks to plead with them to return, as in chapter 14. 1, " O Israel, return unto Jehovah thy God; for thou hast fallen " ! The cause of their departure from God is given—it was because of sin and iniquity, and this matter must be dealt with before they are received back again. Truly the backslider shall be filled with his own ways (Proverbs 14. 14).

The words of instruction are **these** (chapter 14. - 2), " Take with you words, and return unto Jehovah: say unto **Him**, Take away **all** iniquity, and receive **us** graciously " (A. V. ). Here **is** the plea of the repentant one—Forgive our **sin** for we depend upon mercy and grace (verse 3) " for **in** Thee the fatherless findeth mercy."

Verse 4 displays the truth that although God **is** light, and justice **must be** carried out, yet God **is** love. " I will heal their backsliding, I will love **them** freely. " Here **is** a beautiful and wondrous picture of the heart of God, who pleads with **His** people to return to Him.

There **is** more **in** store for him that returns—not only forgiveness, **but** blessings in abundance. **He** will blossom **as** the lily, **and** cast forth **his** roots **as** Lebanon; his branches shall spread, and **his** beauty shall be **as** the olive tree, and **his** smell **as** Lebanon. There will be a time of blessing, of expansion, **and** with the Lord occupying their mind and hearts they will say, " **What** have I any more to do with idols ?" The centre of their affection will **be** God, who loves them freely and who blesses them abundantly. Therefore, he that **is** **wise** will return, for the ways of Jehovah are right. *John Thomas, J. J. Thomas.*

### THE PROPHET JOEL.

Joel **means**, " Jehovah **is** God. " This **name** occurs frequently **in** the Old Testament (*e. g.*, 1 Samuel 8. 2, 1 Chronicles 4. 35). The prophet Joel **was** the son of Pethuel. Numerous guesses have been made about **his** personality. A tradition states that he was from Bethom **in** the tribe of Reuben. In 1 Chronicles 24. **16** a man by **name** of Pethahiah **is** mentioned. Some have connected **him** with the father of Joel, suggesting from this that Joel belonged to a priestly family; but this, **as** well **as** other claims, cannot be confirmed. Jewish expositors **make** the statement that Pethuel was Samuel, because Samuel had a son called Joel; but **inasmuch** **as** the sons of Samuel were evildoers, this **is** incorrect. [Of course Joel **was** the son of Samuel, see 1 Chronicles 6. 33, the father of **Heman** the singer, but not Joel, the prophet, I judge. —J. M. J. The book itself does not give even a single hint **as** to his personal history.

**As** to when and where Joel exercised **his** prophetic office, we are not left **in** doubt. **He** did not prophesy like Hosea among the ten tribes, but he **was** a prophet of Judah. The entire prophecy bears witness to this fact which **is** not generally disputed. It **is** different regarding the date of his ministry. Destructive criticism has assigned to Joel a post-exilic date, with some very puerile arguments. For instance, they claim that the mention of the walls of Jerusalem (chapter 2. 7, 9), points to a date after Ezra and Nehemiah. Some critics also object to **an** early date because the Greeks are mentioned **in** chapter 3. **6**, but the Greeks are also mentioned **in** **an** inscription of Sargon (about 710 B. C.): and long before that **in** the Armana letters a Greek **is** mentioned, **as** stated **in** " Higher Criticism and the Monuments, " by Professor Sayce.

There **is** nothing mentioned **in** Joel of the Assyrian period (800—650); nor **is** there anything said of the Babylonian period (650—538); hence **we** judge that Joel prophesied either before the Assyrian period (that **is** **in** the ninth century B. C.), or after the exile. The latter **is** excluded; therefore Joel exercised **his** office **as** prophet **in** Judah during the middle of the ninth century, **as** stated above, about **860—850 B. C**

This view **is** abundantly verified by different facts found **in** the book itself. For example, the date of the Book of Amos **is** generally accepted **as** being about the middle of the eighth century before Christ. [Newberry gives **787 B. C** —G. P. ]. In the first chapter of the book of Amos there **is** a verse which many consider to **be** a quotation from the Book of Joel (see Joel 3. 16 and Amos 1. 2). Dr. Pusey reaches the following conclusion from this fact. (1) That Joel's prophecy had, at the time when Amos wrote, become a part of the Holy Scriptures, **and** its authority must have been acknowledged. (2) That its authority must have been acknowledged by, and it must have **been** **in** circulation among, those to whom Amos prophesied; otherwise he would not have prefixed to his book those words of Joel. For the whole force of the words, **as** employed by Amos, depended on them **being**

recognized by **his** hearers as a renewal of the prophecy of Joel. Other reasons for the early date of Joel's prophecy are the following: —

(1) Joel charges **the** Philistines with having invaded Judah, captured the inhabitants, and sold **them** as slaves (chapter 3. 4-6). Now according to 2 Chronicles 21. 16, **17**, this happened under Joram (B. C **889**—883). They suffered the punishment predicted for their crime under Uzziah (2 Chronicles 26. 6). Hence Joel could not have written this book before **B. C 889** nor later than 732. [Why the latter date? **Uzziah** died 758. — **G. P. J.**]

(2) The Phoenicians (*i. e.*, those of Tyre and Sidon) who in the days of David and Solomon **were** Israel's allies, had in later times become the enemies of Judah. They too had been guilty of selling Jewish prisoners to the Grecians. This would indicate that Joel prophesied before the days of Uzziah.

(3) The Edomites (chapter 3. 19) are ranked among the enemies of Judah. Their country was to become a perpetual desolation. From 2 Kings 8. **20** compared with 2 Chronicles 21. **8** we learn that they became independent of Judah in the time of Joram (about B. C **889** — 883).

(4) The fact that no mention **is** made of the invasion by the Syrians of Damascus may suggest that Joel was one of the early prophets. This occurred in the latter part of the reign of Josiah B. C **850** — 840.

(5) The high antiquity of Joel **is** further suggested by the fact that he makes no reference to the Assyrian invasion of the two Jewish Kingdoms in B. C 790. On the other hand, Amos clearly alludes to it (Amos 6. 14).

(6) As suggested above, further evidence is derived from the relation between Joel and Amos. The latter would appear to have been acquainted with the writings of the former.

(7) The mention of the valley of Jeoshaphat is a circumstance pointing to the same conclusion. It took this name from the memorable victory there gained over Moab and Ammon. The way in which Joel refers to it suggests that this event **was** a comparatively recent one, and that the memory of it was still fresh.

On these grounds we conclude that in fixing the time of this prophet, we cannot take an earlier date than B. C **890**, or a later one than 840. It most probably falls between **B. C 860** and 850. Joel therefore **is** probably the earliest of the Minor Prophets.

The prophecy of Joel **is** one which extends from his own time to the time of Israel's restoration and blessing in the day of the Lord.

Joel may well be called "The Prophet of the Day of the LORD." Five times he mentions that day—chapters 1. 15; 2. 1, 2, **10**, 11, 30, **31**; and 3. 16. The great theme then **is** the "Day of the LORD, that coming day when the Lord **is** manifested, when the enemies of Israel are judged, when the Lord restores and redeems Israel. The occasion of the book and prophecy of Joel **was** a dreadful scourge which swept over the land of Israel. Locust swarms had fallen upon the land and stripped it of everything green. There was also a great drought. All **was** a chastisement from the LORD. Hence we see in the first chapter the penitential lamentations of old and young, priests and people. Then the vision widens in the second chapter. The locusts appear no longer as a scourge of literal insects, but become typical of an invading army. This hostile army invades the land from the north and makes the land a wilderness. The alarm **is** sounded in Zion, and the repentance of the people follows. Then comes the great change in this picture of desolation and despair. The day of the LORD is announced; **He** acts on behalf of **His** people. **He** delivers them from the northern army. He restores what the locusts had devoured, the land **is** restored, and the latter rain **is** given. At the close of the second chapter stands the prophecy which predicts spiritual blessings through the outpouring of the Spirit of God upon all flesh, a prophecy which has not yet been completely fulfilled, and which **is** not now in process of fulfilment, but which will be accomplished in the day of the LORD. The last chapter is the great "finale of this symphony of prophecy." Here the judgment of the nations **is** vividly portrayed; what the day of the LORD will bring, and what will follow in blessing **is** the final theme. Some Christians have given little heed to this prophetic book, **in** which there are many important truths. A great deal of confusion might have been avoided **if** more attention had been given to the setting in which the prediction of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh **is** found.

*W. R. Wallace.*

## THE BOOK OF JOEL.

## The Call to Humiliation and Repentance.

From Atherton. —The prophecy of Joel provides abundant internal evidence to prove that the book in its message is applicable to the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin. In this respect it is unlike Hosea, whose prophecy was especially for Israel, the ten tribes.

It was probably written a little earlier than Hosea's prophecy (about 800 B. C) which in itself goes to prove that God spoke through His servant Joel quite a long time before any of the events recorded in the book took place.

The story of chapter 1. is a pitiable picture of desolation—a condition of things totally opposite to the desires of God in His promised blessings of an earlier day, if only they sought after Him. Instead of the blessing there was to be the curse.

The question was raised—Was such desolation to come upon the land to be caused by the palmerworm, locust, cankerworm and caterpillar as thus they ate up and devastated the land, or by the invading army—the nation, strong and without number? (Joel 1. 4 and 6). It was thought that the coming desolation would be accomplished by both the insects and the Chaldean army, but it was also expressed that the reference to the insects is figurative and speaks of the nation in their invasion of the land. It was pointed out that the historical record gives no mention of desolation by the palmerworm, etc., but we were directed to times of famine (*e. g.*, 2 Kings 25. 3).

The cutting off of the meal offering and the drink offering does not indicate that the people were failing in their obligation to bring their offerings, but rather that there was not the means to offer these sacrifices, even if the people so desired. We note the context of verses 9 and 10—the meal offering and the drink offering are cut off. Why?—the field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted, the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. In the divine call to repentance in chapter 2. 13, 14, mention is again made of the meal offering and the drink offering, "Who knoweth whether He will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him, even a meal offering and a drink-offering unto the LORD your God?" The answer to this question would be known and realized, as thus in the day of restoration (of which chapter 2. 18-27 speaks) the divine promise is fulfilled: "Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith" (verse 19); "And ye shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, and shall praise the name of the LORD your God" (verse 26).

In looking into the subject of humiliation we cannot fail to think of such characters as Ahab, and Manasseh, kings of Israel and Judah, who both were miserable failures. When God spoke through His servants they both humbled themselves before the Lord (1 Kings 21. 27-29; 2 Chronicles 33. 12, 13). The humble attitude of such characters as Isaiah the king of Judah and Daniel the prophet is very significant as they associated themselves with the sins of the nation. How very sad that joy and gladness, for ever associated with the House of God, should be cut off! Sorrow and anguish of heart was to be Judah's lot, until the time when God again would turn the captivity of His people. In Nehemiah's day we see the people again restored to that condition of joy and gladness; the land is again in good condition, and the message is, "Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto him for whom nothing is prepared." This was a time of great mirth, and of very great gladness (Nehemiah 8. 10-18).

*G. A. Jones, G. Sankey.*

From Kilmarnock. We have not much information regarding the prophet Joel, his name being only mentioned twice in the Scriptures, but we understand he prophesied during the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, about the year 800 B. C

He calls upon "the old men" and "all the inhabitants of the land" to give ear. We wonder if the "old men" here should read "elders," as it is in verse 14 (see R. V. M.). He directs their attention to a judgment of God on the land which they were passing through. It was not an invasion of any of the nations around them, but an invasion of insects which destroyed the fruit of the ground. In Deuteronomy 28. we get Moses telling the people of the blessings that would come on them if they would hearken unto the voice of the LORD God, and also

warned them of the curses that would follow **if** they hearkened not. It is evident that **at** that time they had forsaken and forgotten God, **as** it was not by chance that the insects had destroyed all **the** trees of the field; but this was permitted by God in order that the nation might consider their ways.

He calls upon the priests, ministers, elders and all the inhabitants of the land to humble themselves and cry unto the Lord. This is the only way that joy could be restored, for joy and gladness were cut off from the House of God (chapter 1. 16).

Verse 15 says: " The day of the LORD is at hand. " We understand this refers to the judgment they were passing through, and not to the " terrible day of the Lord, " mentioned in chapter 2. 31 [?]. The prophet calls for the trumpet to be sounded and an alarm given, for it was a " day of darkness and gloominess. " In chapter 2. 11 he acknowledges that " the LORD uttereth His voice before His army... for He is strong that executeth His word. " They had neglected **His** statutes, for the meal offering and the drink offering were withholden from the House of God (chapter 1. 13), so now they must suffer the consequences. Although God often uses strange ways with **His** people, it **is** always for the purpose of causing them to return to Him. The LORD'S message through Joel was, " Yet even now . . . . turn ye unto Me with all your heart " (verses 12, 13); " rend your heart, and not your garments. " It was possible to have rent garments as an outward show of repentance, but God required repentance and humility of heart in returning to Him, for then only would they know His mercy and forgiveness. In verses 15 to 17 the prophet calls for a fast and a solemn assembly, and his exhortation to prayer shows a truly repentant spirit. God in grace then promises to restore former blessings on the land, which causes much joy and gladness. God's purpose in the past dispensation was with **His earthly** people and with **His** land, and as they hearkened and obeyed His voice they enjoyed earthly blessings, as chapter 2. 21 to 27 shows. In the present dispensation, however, His purpose is with **a** heavenly people.

The Apostle Paul, in writing to the Church of God at Corinth says, " **Ye** are God's husbandry " (or tilled land, chapter 3. 9 R. V. M. ). While Paul planted and Apollos watered, it was God who gave the increase. He looked for fruit and development, but they were carnal and not spiritual because of jealousy and strife among them. If there is a lack of prosperity and the blessing of God in assemblies to-day, we do well to ask, in all sincerity and humbleness of heart, " Is there not a cause ? " A. G. S.

### EXTRACTS.

**From Ilford.** —In the book of Joel we have portrayed a very sad picture of the ultimate results of departure, on the part of the Israel nation, from God and **His** things. There is, however, among all the solemn charges made, **a** promise held out in verses 12 to 14 of chapter 2., if they truly repented of their evil ways; but repentance was not forthcoming.

The fact **of** the meal and drink offerings being referred to, suggested that the mode of worship was associated with the Levitical order. These offerings were not possible, as the ministers of the sanctuary were without the necessities for the offerings. The land had become stripped, and that which might have provided for the services of the house of the LORD had been allowed to perish and waste.

The day of the LORD referred to in verse 15 of chapter 1., seems to indicate the time when judgment would come, **as** in chapter 2. Not only is judgment brought about by means of famine, due to lack of fertility in the land, but also an army is come up upon the land.

It was suggested that the literal army of locusts which destroys every green thing before it and leaves the land desolate, referred to in chapter 1., **is** the **same** as that which **is** described in chapter two under the **simile** of an army of men in battle. It was found that the difficulty in accepting this interpretation was the

form of words used, and would **seem** to **suggest** a literal army of **men that** would invade the land. It **was** felt that it might possibly be referring to the siege of Jerusalem in A. D. **70**.

One particular contrast **was** noted; that of the backsliding of God's people and His abundant mercy and promised blessings, would they but return in deep humiliation and repent.

His people had been robbing God of **His** portion by not bringing the tithes into the storehouse, but **He was** still willing that the offerings should be offered, upon their repentance.

From Cowdenbeath. —Little is known concerning Joel. Like Hosea **we** do not read of him other than in his prophecy. The period of time during which Hosea prophesied **is** revealed to **us**, but there **seems** to be nothing to indicate the time when Joel spoke save that it **was** some time prior to the captivity. Although he writes **as** if he were living in Jerusalem when the enemy arrived, yet it would **seem** that, **as** God's prophet unto whom this had been revealed, he **was** **but** giving **a** vivid and realistic picture to foretell the event.

Hosea dwells **at** great length upon the sins of the people, but Joel **is** caused to speak chiefly of the land and the awful state of barrenness which would prevail because of the departure of the people. So outstanding would be the nature of the judgment, and so exceptional the desolate state of the land, that Joel calls upon the men who had lived longest to **see** if such **a** thing had ever taken place in their days, or in the days of the generation which had preceded them. The picture of desolation which he presents **is as if** the land had been thrice invaded with multitudes of locusts. That land which the LORD had said was **a** good land, **a** land flowing with milk and honey, **a** land for which **He** cared and upon which **His** eyes did ever rest, would **cease** to yield its fruit and its crops. **As a** result there would be no wine to **make** glad the heart of man or with which to offer drink offerings and no meal to offer the meal offerings. Thus it is that through departure not only do the erring ones themselves suffer, but God also loses **His** portion. "Is not the meat cut off before our eyes, yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?"

God's purpose in thus causing Joel to prophesy **was** that **His** people might be humbled and repent of their sins and so be spared the fierceness of **His** anger. Although he pictures the enemy **as** being **at** the gates, yet surely this was but to impress upon them the certainty of his prophecy being fulfilled. "The opportunity for national repentance had ceased to exist by the time Nebuchadnezzar surrounded the city, as Jeremiah shows, yet the opportunity did present itself to men as individuals to hand themselves over to the Chaldeans that they might live and not die. It seems, therefore, that the call **is** made in view of **a** judgment which would fall if they did not repent. The repentance which God desires must be real. Lip confession is not sufficient. Turn unto **me** with **ALL** your heart. **He** required the accompanying evidence of sincere repentance; fasting, weeping and mourning which proceeds from torn hearts. The gracious character of God is very prominently brought before them **in** the very **same** words as spoken to Moses after the people worshipped the golden calf. **He** who had forgiven them so graciously before **was** ready to do so again.

Not only did Joel foresee **in** prophetic vision the judgment of God descending upon the land, but by the Holy Spirit he **was** caused to see still further into the distant future when the judgment of God would descend upon the nations in the day of the LORD. Some verses would seem to have a double fulfilment and it is difficult to know sometimes whether he is speaking of the one or the other or both.

Joel could also look beyond the day of judgment to the time when the land of Palestine would again be fruitful to an unprecedented degree. When their now rejected Messiah shall be in their midst then shall the wilderness and the solitary place **be** glad, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom **as** the rose (Isaiah 35. 1). Again, in Psalm 72. 16 we read of the prolific yield of the crops in that day, and this shall be seen even upon the tops of the mountains.

This **same** land **is** assuming much of its natural fruitfulness to-day as a result of the efforts of the returning Jews. Yet this shall appear **but scanty** when compared with the degree of fertility which shall prevail when our blessed Lord shall be here **in** person, **and** when the thorns and thistles of **an** accursed earth shall no longer cumber the ground.

*James Bowman.*

**From** Vancouver. — Joel the son of Pethuel was a prophet **in** Judah, and prophesied earlier than Hosea, probably around 800 B. C. If this chronology is correct it places him **as** a contemporary of Elisha, and some authorities suggest that **in** his youth he may have known Elijah, although this **seems** unlikely.

In view of Joel's message a brief reference to Elijah's ministry **is** fitting; his powerful ministry was known and felt **in** a day when Baal was one of the many idols of the religious world by which many of God's people had become ensnared. The idolatrous priestcraft of Baal prospered **in** the land, and exercised no small influence **in** the lives of the people whose hearts were turned away from following the Lord, **as** the later chapters of 1 **Kings** make plain. The **time** to which Joel's prophecy refers **is** future, and will bear many similarities to the times of Elijah, though greatly amplified. The beast and his **image** will be the object of world wide worship (Revelation 13.) and even "the elect" will be deceived. [Surely not! See Matthew 24. 24. —J. M. ]. Against this false deceiver, the Anti-christ, the Lord issued His warning to the apostles in Matthew 24. 3-11 and 24.

Joel, unlike Hosea, gives a vivid view of things to come, the greater part of his message having to do with "the day of the LORD" (Joel 1. 15). The inhabitants of the land are asked to give ear to the message, and he challenges any to recall anything in past history that will equal the desolations and troublous times he **is** about to announce. So great are the events of his prophecy, and so far reaching their effects, that they must be repeated to their children, and kept before the minds of each succeeding generation until the time of fulfilment (Joel 1. 2, 3). The Lord Jesus said **in** His own prophetic utterance relating to those **same** days, that "this generation shall not pass away, till all these things be accomplished" (see Matthew 24. 34). The word generation used in this passage **is** "genea" (Greek) and **means** "race or kind" [*i. e.*, the same kind of unbelieving people. — J. M. ]. The seed of Israel will live to see those days of which **He** spoke coming upon them and their children.

It has been suggested that the invading nation of Joel 1. 6 refers to the coming Assyrian invasion. However, nothing appears in the prophecy which favours this view, and it **is** also clear that the Assyrian invasion affected the position of the ten tribes only, and not Judah. **We** are therefore disposed to view this prophesied invasion as referring to the Gentile armies which will yet overrun Palestine near the **time** of the end, immediately preceding the appearing of the Son of Man **in** His power and glory. (See Zechariah 12. 1-9, also Luke 21. 20-24).

The imagery of the palmerworm, locust, cankerworm and caterpillar, **as** agents of destruction, **is** used to show how completely that good land concerning which God swore unto their fathers, will be devastated by foreign powers (Joel 1. 19, 20). [Other contributors think otherwise. —J. M. ]. The locust has for centuries been the most serious agricultural destroyer in the East. The mature full-winged insects are said to appear **in** numbers sufficient to darken the skies, and destroy every green plant they touch. Their young, while still **wingless**, start marching in hordes, devouring as they go. Caterpillars are damaging to plant life by eating the leaves, while the cankerworm, being a variety of caterpillar, **is** very destructive to fruit and shade trees. When a plague such **as** **is** described in Joel 1. 4 descended upon any land, there remained not a vestige of vegetable life, so essential to the sustaining of life. Even the cattle and flocks of the field were left without herbage (Joel 1. 18). Thus does God speak in vivid terms, telling **His** people what to expect when He sends the destroying armies into their midst. (See chapter 2. 25).

**He** will send Gentile nations to scourge the land and persecute the people, and when they have passed through the "iron furnace" of affliction, **He** will send **His** once rejected Son to be their Deliverer. (See Joel 2. 32; also Jeremiah 30. 6-8).

The desolations described in chapter 1. seem to point to the time of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30. 7), and it will be in those days that God will send His sealed remnant (Jewish kingdom preachers) not only to their own land and people, but to every nation and tribe and tongue to proclaim the message of the coming King. The ministry of the remnant, coupled with the message of the two witnesses as they penetrate within the walls of strife-ridden Jerusalem, will be in the spirit and power of Elijah; indeed it appears that Elijah will be one of the witnesses (see Malachi 4. 5, 6; also Revelation 11. 3-12; 7. 4-14). The ministry of God's servants in those days, who will preach beneath the shadow of death, and the persecution of the enemies of God and His people, will be with a view to breaking down the stony hearts of His unbelieving people, calling them to humiliation and repentance, a people indeed prepared for the Lord. The great army described in chapter 2. of Joel is the host of the Lord which will accompany Him in His descent from heaven as in Revelation 19. 11-21, at which time He will appear as the Deliverer of His oppressed people and the Judge of the living nations. (See Joel 3. 2; Matthew 25. 32). The perfect order described in the ranks of this great invincible host, and their destructive power, make it clear they are angelic rather than human. A comparison of Joel 2. 1-11; Zechariah 12. 7-9; 2 Thessalonians 1. 7, 8; Jude 14, 15; and Revelation 19. 14, points to this conclusion. When the descending Deliverer utters His voice, it will be at an hour when humiliation and repentance are complete in the hearts of God's ancient people. By reason of the destruction of the enemy, and the famine and bodily suffering they have endured (see Joel 1. 10-12; and Revelation 6. 5, 6) they will be crying out for deliverance. "Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down!" (Isaiah 64. 1). Thus will begin in actuality "the great and terrible day of the LORD" (Malachi 4. 5, 6) accompanied by a great day of mourning by His people, for they will see Him whom they have pierced. Bitter remorse and regret will fill their hearts as they behold the hands and feet of their Deliverer. Who is He? The once despised Nazarene, and Man of Calvary. Well might the Lord weep as He looked upon Jerusalem and thought of His people who knew Him not. "If thou hadst known... in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Luke 19. 42).

In view of that great day of revealing, what a solemn lesson it carries with it for the people of God to-day! As our redemption draweth nigh, for it must needs come before theirs, what is our spiritual condition and our attitude towards Him, our soon coming Lord, who will not delay? Neglect, sin, self, worldliness and selfish ambitions are characteristic marks of the present age. May such things never be true of us, but rather, in a serving, waiting attitude of humiliation, be as men who watch for their Lord's return.

*R. Armstrong.*

**From Glasgow.** Nothing is known of the prophet himself further than what is stated in chapter 1. 1, but the meaning of his name, "Jehovah is God", serves to summarise the teaching of the Book. We cannot know with anything like precision the date or sphere of his ministry. The silence of God is as significant as His speech. Joel stood for God in a difficult day. It was a day of calamity. The prophet is the mouth and ear of God to the people. Israel's blessings were earthly, and their prosperity was bound up with their obedience.

In the portion under consideration we have a graphic picture of utter desolation through the visit of the locusts. The land was barren through drought. There was nothing for the people, nothing for the priests, nothing for God. The meal-offering and the drink-offering were withholden (verse 13). It took such a crisis to bring Judah to their knees. The spiritual counter-part was the dearth in their own souls. It was a time to mourn, "Rend your hearts" (chapter 2. 12-14). Yet God was gracious, and was trying His people in the crucible of affliction. How touching is the language of verse 14!—"Who knoweth whether He will not turn and repent, and leave a blessing... a meal offering and a drink offering?" God is ever the Giver, whether in nature or grace. The measure that Israel was able to give, was only in the measure that they received.

*J. McIlvenna.*

*(Other papers held over till next month).*

# BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. II).

VOLUME 15.

AUGUST, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Call to Humiliation and Repentance . . . . .	61
The Day of the LORD. . . . .	63
Questions and Answers . . . . .	68

### THE GALL TO HUMILIATION AND REPENTANCE.

**From** Brantford, Ontario. —Joel was the son of a man named Pethuel, which means "Enlargement of God." It may be that he considered whatever-increase was his to be from Jehovah, and in view of this named his son Joel, which means, "Jehovah is God."

There is little in the Book of Joel to indicate the exact period during which these solemn happenings took place. One thing is certain; it must have been given during or immediately following a very severe famine. Mr. Newbury places Joel's writings about 800 B. C. We were interested to note that 800 B. C. would be approximately during the reign of Uzziah, and that he was greatly given to agriculture for he "loved husbandry" (2 Chronicles 26. 10). Hence God could by famine lay His finger on that in which they gloried most.

The word of the LORD seems to be addressed primarily to Judah, in that there are repeated references to Jerusalem and Zion. The solemn call to humiliation and repentance is indeed an expression of compassion from a long-suffering God, whose heart longed for the return of His wayward people. We sought in vain for any graphic account of their gross sin as outlined in some of the other kindred prophecies. However, in chapter 2. 12 we have the entreaty of God that they should return to Him with all their heart. This may imply that they had departed in heart from God. Knowing that God looketh on the heart we can visualise that even though their outward ceremonies went on, the word of the LORD would be verily true in their ease, "This people honoureth Me with their lips; But their heart is far from Me" (Matthew 15. 8).

There may be times when we do not consider the set-backs in our everyday life to be the hand of God upon us. Perhaps as the swarms of insects commenced to appear, they considered them to be just another annual return of this nature. However, through the prophet Joel God revealed that He had taken up the locust, canker-worm, caterpillar and palmer-worm to be His great army (Joel 2. 25). The words of chapter 1. 4-11 reveal how terrifying they were, and how thoroughly they accomplished His purpose. God has at various times used wind, rain, and many other things to work out His sovereign will, and none can stay His hand or say, "What doest Thou?" *J. Bell, R. Drake.*

**From** Barrhead and Paisley. —We have scant knowledge of the prophet's origin and activities, and we know little of when he wrote the prophecy. The words are addressed to the old men, and all the inhabitants of the land, and as some authorities indicate that Joel lived prior to the scattering of the ten tribes, then we presume that the whole of Israel [?] is spoken to. Certainly Judah is mentioned specially in the last chapter, but then that is mainly concerning restoration, and we know that Judah and Benjamin only were restored after the Babylonian captivity. It is possible that Joel was the first of the "minor prophets." This portion under consideration is mainly occupied in describing what we suggest is a national catastrophe as a punishment for sin. God caused famines on various occasions in Old Testament days to bring His people to repentance, and here again

He destroyed their crops and trees. The description **given is typical** of an attack of locusts although this one was probably unprecedented.

Verse 4 of chapter 1. **seems to be the** key to the understanding of the portion. The four insects mentioned here are, it **is** suggested by R. V. margin, four stages in the evolution of **the** locust. Whether this **is** so or not, **is** difficult to determine, but God certainly uses the different creatures in different ways to destroy vegetation. **We see** in verse 17 of chapter 1., " the seeds rot under their clods "; in verse 18, the herds are perplexed for want of pasture, and in verse 7, the **fig** tree is barked clean bare, and the branches are made white. To restore such a position would take many years.

The object of the prophecy **seems to** be to bring home to the people the seriousness of the disaster and the reason why such a thing occurred; to exhort them to be humble and **repent**, lest a worse trouble beset them, and to remind them of the day of the LORD; to bewail the fact that they now have no meal or wine to give as a meal-offering or a drink offering to the LORD.

**We** could spiritualise and make other constructions on this narrative; **but** we think that the Israelites who were a literal people, who handled material **sacrifices** and who worshipped in a house they could **see**, and also to whom these words were addressed, would take nothing from it but its literal meaning. They were an agrarian people and such a happening was the most effective way in which to punish them. Years must pass before the vines, **fig** and other fruit trees could be grown and a yield of fruit harvested. But God said He would restore the years that the locust had eaten, and this, coupled with the promise that the former and latter rains would return, gave them the assurance of restoration, because God **Himself** declared that these rains are necessary for the harvest (Deuteronomy 11. 14).

Although this prophecy must have had an application in that day, otherwise it would have meant nothing to the materialistic Jew, yet we know that **it** also has a future application, especially the last chapter. **We** know that there **is** a plague of locusts recorded in Revelation 9., but in view of the language used in Joel, namely, " a nation **is** come up, " and " a great people and strong, " could it be thought that this refers to a nation or confederacy of nations in the future, which **will** over-run and devastate the land ?

*Jack McK. Gault.*

**From London, S. E. 5.** —The prophecy of Joel, which was occasioned by the frequent and long-lasting occurrences of drought and locusts, consists of three parts:—

1. Chapter 1. —2. 17. (Here are contained two vivid descriptions of plagues). The first chapter describes the drought and locusts **as** foretold by Moses (Deuteronomy 28. 38, 39), and Solomon (1 Kings 8. 37, 46), and the first seventeen verses of the next chapter describe the army of locusts.

2. Chapter 2. 18-29. Here the LORD promises temporal blessings, removal of Israel's **enemies**, complete restoration of **all** that had been lost. After the promise of earthly benefits come the promises of the pouring out of the Spirit on **all** flesh, universal knowledge of the LORD, the advent of the terrible day, along with the promise of salvation to those who repent.

3. Chapter 2. 30, -3. 21. The destruction of **all** nations **in league** against Israel **is** foretold on one hand. **On** the other, Jehovah abides **as** Israel's God **in** Zion. Judah lives for ever, and fountains of blessings flow from **His** house, and **are** likened unto waters, **milk** and new wine.

There are three methods of interpretation—the " literal, " which considers the locusts real; the " allegorical, " which **makes** them a type of God's **enemies**; and the " apocalyptic, " regarding them **as** pointers to the end (Revelation 9. ).

Points in favour of the " allegorical " view are:—

1. their teeth are likened to those of lions (Joel 1. 6);

2. their attacking of **cities** (2. 6-9);

3. their dispersal eastward, westward and northward, whereas locusts are carried **in** one direction only, by the wind.

Also, **in** chapter 2. 17 they are called the " heathen "; **in** 2. 20, " the northern army "; (locusts do not come from the north); **in** 3. 2 " **all** the nations "; and

**in 3. 17** " strangers. " All this evidence **seems** sufficient to enable us to employ confidently **the** " allegorical " method.

The call to humiliation comes **in** chapter 1. 11-14, and in verse 19 **a** prayer **is** **made** to **the** LORD. In chapter 2. the call to repentance **is** contained **in** verses 12-17 and **the** LORD, **in** answer to their prayers, promises salvation. But the fulfilment of these promises comes only after the fourfold invasion of Israel, **as** symbolised by **the** armies of locusts. The invasions are typified **as** follows: —

1. "The palmerworm, " representing the Babylonian oppression 588 B. C. to 538 B. C.
2. "The locust, " being the Persian oppression from 538 B. C to 330 B. C. when Persia fell before Alexander the Great.
3. "The cankerworm" showing the Graeco-Macedonian rule from 330 to 190 B. C.
4. "The caterpillar, " representing the Roman oppression from 39 B. C to 70 A. D., ending with the overthrow of Herod **and** destruction of **the** Temple. [See R. V. marg. reading. I am doubtful of above interpretations.—J. M. ]

Then after **the** trials and tribulation, came temporal blessings, plenty for **man** and beast, restoration of everything lost, salvation and the terrible **day** of **the** LORD.

*G. Evans.*

### THE DAY OF THE LORD.

**From** Liverpool. —It **seems** that the prophecy commencing **in** Joel 2. 28 **is** somewhat different from the previous verses, which may have had at least **a** partial fulfilment **in** Old Testament times. Peter cited this prophecy on the memorable occasion when he stood forth **as** spokesman for the disciples, who had just **been** baptised **in** the Holy Spirit (**as** recorded **in** Acts 2. ). It would seem, however, that here again there was **a** fulfilment of part of the prophecy. Whether we should expect to **see** all the points of the prophecy fulfilled at one time **is** rather doubtful from the wording. [The Joel prophecy will **be** fully fulfilled prior to the day of the LORD. —J. M. ] The Spirit was poured out and **men** saw the effects, but the wonders **in** the heavens were lacking at that time, so that presumably this portion refers to **a** still-future day. Since the prophecy proceeds **in** chapter 3. and speaks of the gathering of all nations for **a** reckoning concerning the children of Israel, whom they have scattered, it evidently refers to the **same** happenings **as** those spoken of **in** such scriptures **as** the closing chapters of Daniel and **in** Revelation 16. 12-16; 19. 11-21. The valley of Jehoshaphat, **we** took to be the same **as** Har Magedon mentioned **in** Revelation 16. 16; the marginal note **as** to the meaning of the word, " the LORD judgeth, " tells **us** how this name comes to be applied. [Har-Magedon is the place of the great battle, **as** described in Revelation 19., but the valley of Jehoshaphat **is** the place where the Lord will judge the nations afterwards. —J. M. ]

The time immediately preceding this " great and terrible day of the LORD " (chapter 2. 31), is spoken of in Daniel 12. **I** **as** a time of trouble such **as** never **was** since there was **a** nation. During this time of trouble, the Great Tribulation, many will be saved; saved, that is, from the judgment of the beast and the false prophet, though maybe they will suffer death.

Joel 2. 32 **speaks** of three classes. Those who " call upon the name of the LORD " are perhaps those who refuse to take the mark of the beast, or to call upon the image which **is** set up in the place of God. They call upon the **name** of the LORD **in** defiance of the will of Satan, and thereby are delivered from sharing his doom, though they suffer physical death. Then there are those who remain in Jerusalem after its fall and are not led into captivity (Zechariah 14. 2). **Again** there are those who shall escape to the valley of the mountains (Zechariah 14. 5).

The word " plead " **in** chapter 3. 2 seemed **a** strange word to **use** **in** this connection (see Isaiah 66. 16), but it was suggested that it may be used in the **sense** that God will espouse the **cause** of the children of Israel, **even** **as** **a** barrister takes **up** the **cause** of his client when he pleads **in** **a** court of law.

**We** were referred to 2 Peter 3. 10-14 for **a** word to ourselves in connection with this subject.

*H. Jones, R. Butler, Jun.*

From Glasgow. —The expression, "the day of the LORD " occurs **five** times in Joel. Events that precede **that great and terrible day** are significant. They are timely and a warning to the discerning. Creation **will be** shaken and there will **be** movements in the heavens and on the earth. The language of scripture in relation to this time is terrifying in the extreme. Darkness will cover the whole scene, **as if** through creation God would speak to men, giving space for repentance. One can only in measure visualise what effect these terrible happenings will **have** on earth's inhabitants (Joel 2. 28-32).

Pentecost was the firstfruit. The day of the LORD will be a reaping of **the** living nations. Judgment will begin from Jerusalem, the guilty city. Jerusalem shall **be** the place of the gathering of the nations, under the antichrist. The valley of Jehoshaphat (i. e., " God will judge ") is where He will **be** the Judge and Avenger. As to the manner of His coming, the New Testament reveals that it will **be** sudden and unexpected, **as a thief in the night** (see 1 Thessalonians 5. 2). In this connection, Matthew 24. **29, 30**, and Revelation 6. 12-17, are worthy of note. The Lord is revealed **as** described in 2 Thessalonians 1., coming in flaming fire. Earth is about to **be** reaped. Matthew **25. 31-46** will then have its fulfilment. There the living nations are to be judged (Revelation 14. 14-20). The earth will **be** ripe for judgment and men will **seal** their own doom. The testimony of creation, of conscience and revelation will witness against them. " The LORD cometh forth out of His **place** to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain " (Isaiah 26. 21).

**J. McIlvenna.**

#### EXTRACTS.

From Ilford. —The portion **we** have before us here appears to be divided into three sections.

The first, the latter verses of chapter 2., present to **us** the very great spiritual blessings which follow the material blessings presented earlier in the chapter. From the quotation in Acts 2. it **seems** that these promises were fulfilled just after Pentecost (see Acts 2. 4-6, 14-16), but some similar things happened **as** mentioned in Joel 2. **30-31** at the time of the cross. Some of the prophecy is no doubt future, because the extent of the blessing in **verses 28 and 29** is greater than that at Pentecost. [The outpouring of the Spirit has a double fulfilment, at Pentecost and before the day of the LORD. —J. M. ] The first part of verse **32** certainly **seems** to be a reference to the whole of the present dispensation.

The second section (chapter 3. 1-16) brings before **us** God's determination to punish the nations which have ill-used His people. **We** have presented to **us** the fierce anger which God shows towards these nations.

Does this portion, which gives details concerning this terrible conflict, refer to Armageddon? There certainly **seems** to be a close resemblance. [The gathering of the nations to the valley of Jehoshaphat is, as it **seems** to me, the **same** as the gathering of **all** nations before the Lord, as Son of Man, as mentioned in Matthew **25. 31, 32**. But Joel **3. 9-11** describes a preparation for **war**. Here it is the preparation of mighty men, men of war, and the gathering together of such. This would agree, according to my view, with Revelation 16. 12-16. This war is seen in Revelation 19. 19-21. —J. M. ] **We** are undecided whether God Himself will punish these nations, or whether **He** will **use** the Children of Israel to punish them in war. [Note how the Lord destroys the armies of the beast and of the kings with him, not by the children of Israel, but with the sword of **His** mouth (Revelation 19. 21). **See** also Zechariah 14. **1-5**. —J. M. ]

God's whole purpose in bringing these things to pass is brought before **us** in verse 17. " So shall ye know that I **am** the LORD your God. " God wants to dwell in Zion, but two things must take place first. God's enemies must be destroyed, and His people must be blessed. Brought before **us** in this portion is one of the great principles running through scripture—God's desire is to **bless**, but **He** must first remove **all** iniquity.

**From London.**—We cannot read the concluding verses of Joel 2. without our minds reverting to Acts 2. 16-21, where Peter quoted from this prophecy on the day of Pentecost. By the baptism in the Spirit, the Lord became enthroned in the hearts of His people, including both Jews and Gentiles. [No scripture shows that the Lord is enthroned in the hearts of His people by baptism in the Spirit, but 1 Corinthians 12. 13 reveals that this is how those who believed became members of Christ's Body. Alas, some who are baptised in the Spirit have not given Christ the throne of their heart. —J. M. ] Some therefore suggested that the day of the LORD began at Pentecost, and that although it is a day of grace at present, it will end in judgment. [The day of the LORD commences with the coming of the Son of Man in judgment. Compare Acts 2. 20 with Matthew 24. 29, and note the force of the word " before " in Acts 2. 20. The day of the Lord is over 1, 000 years in extent; in proof of this note the words " in the which " in 2 Peter 3. 10. The day of the LORD certainly did not begin at Pentecost, and has not commenced yet. —J. M. ] Christ is offered to the world in grace. If they do not acknowledge Him as Lord, and refuse His grace, so surely will He take the rod and smash the nations in judgment.

Others pointed out that the day of the LORD could not begin at Pentecost. Acts 2. 20 states that the happenings of that time are before the day of the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 5. states that it will come suddenly; 2 Thessalonians 2. 2 says that it is not now present. It is the subject of Old Testament prophecy; the scene is earth, and it concerns people on the earth. It is not synonymous with the Great Tribulation, which deals with persecution at the hands of men, but it is the day of the wrath of the Lord (Revelation 11. 18); there will be deliverance for suffering saints, but overthrow of His enemies (1 Thessalonians 5. 3). But the believers of this dispensation of grace will have been removed before " that great and terrible day. " In 2 Peter 3. 10 " the day of the Lord will come as a thief. " Verse 12 tends to suggest that the Lord is God the Father rather than the Lord Jesus, and Old Testament prophecies confirm this.

The day of the LORD has two aspects—

- (1) Judgment on God's enemies.
- (2) Deliverance and blessing for God's people.

(See for example, Isaiah 2. 1-21; Zechariah 14. 1-21; Zephaniah 3. 8-9; Malachi 4. 1-3). We would suggest that it begins with the coming of the Son of Man with His saints.

The concluding verses of Joel 3, end in a note of triumph. The prophet has a vision of God dwelling in Mount Zion, the hills flowing with milk, while a fountain shall come forth from the house of the Lord and shall water the valley of Shittim. Judah shall abide for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

Joel was a faithful messenger, and God gave him a revelation of things to come which cheered his heart. He may have understood little of that which he prophesied, but this he knew, that God's chosen people were to be in the place of blessing, and that the forces of evil in this world would be overthrown.

*E. C. Leamy.*

**From Cowdenbeath.** The day of the LORD shall be ushered in with great suddenness (1 Thessalonians 5. 2, 3). The day of the antichrist must first run its course during which time the man of sin shall exalt himself above all that is called God, and an image of him, which shall be able to speak, shall be set up as an object of universal worship in the temple in Jerusalem. Under his dictatorial rule men shall consider themselves to have gained their objective of peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them. This would seem to mark the commencement of the day of the LORD, and in agreement with the teaching of other scriptures, we know that this destruction shall come upon men when the Son of Man descends from heaven with power and great glory.

1 Peter 3. 10 teaches that in the day of the LORD the heavens and the earth will be dissolved. This will happen when our Lord, as the Judge, will sit upon the great white throne (Revelation 20. 11). Therefore we would conclude that the

**day of the LORD extends, at least,** from the coming of the Son of **Man** to the great white throne judgment. This covers a period of over 1, 000 years.

It is revealed that many things will **take** place when the Son of **Man** comes, **and** Joel speaks of some of these. First of all, he records something which will happen before that great **and** terrible day. During the days of the great tribulation, when the gospel of the kingdom will be preached throughout the world with a great degree of success, we learn that those who preach will be energized by divine power as a result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. The imminence of Messiah's coming to set up His kingdom will be the burden of their message, **and** men of all nations, in spite of the exceeding difficulties and persecution of these days, will believe the message.

The principal matter with which the prophet deals is the judgment of the living nations (Matthew 25. ). There will be two gatherings of the nations; the first for the battle of Armageddon, which will be the work of the spirits of demons working signs (Revelation 16. 13 and 14), and the second for the judgment of the nations before the Son of Man when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory. Is the proclamation of Joel 3. 9 a call to the nations to be gathered together to Armageddon for battle? It seems unlikely that war-like preparations should be made to appear before the Judge. [I think so, see note in Ilford's paper. —J. M. ]

The remnant are viewed as being in Jerusalem. During the tribulation they were told to flee to the mountains. Moab, Edom and Ammon shall provide sanctuary for them from the terror of the beast. Following upon the return of the Son of Man they shall come again to Zion with singing and with everlasting joy (Isaiah 35. 10). The Lord will dwell in their midst. Then He will call the nations before Him for judgment, which will be meted out according to how they have treated the people of Israel. This agrees with Matthew 25., where the Lord expressly shows that those who shall be before Him in that day will be dealt with even as they have treated His own.

Armageddon will be fought in the plain of Esdraelon. The point of gathering for the judgment of the nations will be the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which would seem to be in close proximity to Jerusalem, and is indicated by some to be the Valley of the Kidron. We know that there shall be great upheavals in the earth's surface around Jerusalem, and it is not unreasonable to think that a valley of sufficient size will be made to gather the nations, that they might be before the Son of Man when He shall sit upon the throne of His glory in Jerusalem with all the angels with Him.

In chapter 2. 31 it is stated that the sun shall be darkened. This would agree with Matthew 24. 29, 30, as that which shall take place immediately preceding the very impressive sight of the descent of the Son of Man from heaven. Again in chapter 3. 15 it is stated that the sun shall be darkened. Does this refer to the same happening, or is this another occasion of phenomenal sights being seen in the heavens ere the Son of Man sits to judge the nations? [I would understand that Joel 3. 15 agrees with Matthew 24. 29 and Acts 2. 20. —J. M. ]

Not only will judgment be passed upon men, but it will also be shewn towards certain countries. Egypt and Edom will be desolations because of violence done to the children of Judah. In that glad millennial day when the whole earth rejoiceth, God hath said concerning Edom, " I will make thee desolate " (Ezekiel 35. 14). Palestine shall be a land flowing with milk and honey in very reality, and Jerusalem, which to-day is down-trodden by the Gentiles, shall again be the joy of the whole earth and the dwelling place of God in the midst of **His** people. *James Bowman.*

From Melbourne. —This prophecy has been partially fulfilled [The prophecy concerning the outpouring of the Spirit has a double fulfilment. Joel 2. 28-32 will all **be** fulfilled before the day of the Lord. —J. M. ] **in** God's judgment of Israel and the nations **in** Old Testament times, **but** we believe that it mainly takes fulfilment after the rapture of the Church. **We** believe that the "**day of the LORD**" begins when He returns to earth (Zechariah 14. ), thus marking the **end** of "**man's** day " of which Armageddon (referred to **in** Joel 3. from verse 9

onwards) will be the climax. It will bring not only His vengeance to the adversaries of Judah and Jerusalem, but untold blessings to the nations.

*L. Fullerton.*

From Birkenhead. —The day of the LORD is undoubtedly associated with the presence of the Lord, **His** bodily presence in power. Associating the words of Joel 2. **30-32** with the description of the coming of the Lord in Matthew 24. **we judge** that the day of the LORD commences with the coming of the Son of Man. That **is** its commencement, but there **is** no mention of any cessation.

The day of the LORD begins with judgment and battle, and the forcible suppression and destruction of the enemies of God and of **His** people. The Bible contains many descriptions of the terrible destruction wrought by the armies of the Lord, and the vengeance that they will take on the armies of the earth that will gather in the valley of Jehoshaphat to give battle [See note in Ilford's Paper.] It **seems** probable that this name **is** given to the valley after the event, **as** its meaning **as** given in the margin **seems** significant. When the Lord has subjugated all things unto Himself, we know that **He** will hand over the dominion to **His** Father, and subject Himself " that God may be all in all. " There does not **seem** to be any reason to warrant the assumption that this will be the end of the day of the LORD.

From this time onwards it appears to enter into the phase of perfection and completion that God has always desired should prevail. The term itself **seems** to be in contradistinction to the times of the Gentiles, to the reign of the prince of this world, who in the Lord's lifetime offered **Him** dominion over the kingdoms of the earth.

It **seems** therefore to be in two phases. Firstly, the time when the Lord will deal with **His** enemies in judgment, punishing them in **His** righteous anger, **His** terrible anger; and then after the settlement has been finally made there will be the eternity, the never ending time of His sovereignty, of God's kingdom and man's obedience and subjection of heart. *K. H.*

From Atherton. —The pouring out of the Spirit will doubtless be an event of outstanding importance in the history of God's dealing with men in a future day. The pouring forth of the Spirit will be upon all flesh. This does not mean upon every single human being, but rather those who have embraced the gospel message to be preached in that day. Mention is made of your sons and your daughters, your old men and your young men, which obviously has to do with those of the Israel nation.

This scripture, quoted by Peter at Pentecost (Acts 2. 14-18), had a fulfilment then [as regards the outpouring of the Spirit], but its complete fulfilment will be seen in that later day.

One of the objects of the pouring out of **the** Spirit, **as far as** Israel **is** concerned, will be to bring them into that condition of heart described in Zechariah 12. 10. Whether this **is** a separate outpouring may be difficult to say. There **is** also another scripture in Isaiah 32. 15, 16, which speaks of the pouring out of the Spirit. [These scriptures would **seem** to refer to three different times: (a) the outpouring of the Spirit for the preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom, prior to the appearing of the Son of Man; (b) the Spirit of grace and supplication manifest among the Jewish remnant when Messiah **is** manifested; (c) the work of the Spirit during the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus. —G. P. ]

It was pointed out that even to call upon the name of the Lord will be sufficient to bring deliverance in that day (Joel 2. 32). In this connection, we were taken to consider the terms of the eternal gospel to be proclaimed: the nations are called upon to " fear God, and **give Him** glory " (Revelation 14. 6-7). **We** discussed the question as to when the pouring out of the Spirit will take place. It was pointed out that it would take place before the " great and terrible day of the LORD come. " Others thought **that** Joel does not give a chronological order of events; for instance, Joel 2. **18-27** gives an account of millennial conditions, and then verse **28** says, " It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit. "

*D. H. Butler, J. K. Southern.*

**From Kilmarnock.** —In the various references in scripture to the " day of the LORD," they always foretell sore judgments before or **during** that period.

From 2 Thessalonians 2. 14 we find that the saints' minds had been troubled, thinking that the " day of the LORD " was then present, but the Apostle wrote, " It will not be, except the falling away come first, and the **man of sin** be revealed." This proves that it is after the rapture of the church. Much of Joel's prophecy corresponds with what we get in Matthew 24., where the Lord says: " Immediately, after the tribulation... the sun shall be darkened, **and** the moon shall not give her light... and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man." This time is again referred to, we think, in Revelation 6. 12, when the sixth seal is opened: " And there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the whole moon became as blood."

Joel 3. 1 says, " Behold, in those days, and in that time... I will gather all nations... into the\* valley of Jehoshaphat "; again in verse 14, " for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision." This, we judge, would refer to the time spoken of by the Lord in Matthew 25. 31-32, when all nations shall be gathered before Him when **He** comes as Son of man. The close of Joel's prophecy seems to refer to the time of the Millennium, when " the LORD will be a refuge unto His people, and a stronghold to the children of Israel " (verse 16).

Judging from the prophecy in Isaiah 13". 9, and what we have in 2 Peter 3. 10-12, we think the day of the LORD continues for a long period of time, as the scriptures in 2 Peter refer to the dissolution of the earth. This, we understand, will be at the close of the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth.

Although the Church will not be on earth then, it is well to note the exhortation in 2 Peter 3. 11: " Seeing that these things are thus all to be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy living and godliness." This is the effect the knowledge of these things should have on us now. **A. G. S.**

#### Questions and Answers.

Questions from Cowdenbeath. —(1) What is the difference between the day of the LORD and the day of God ?

(2) Do Isaiah 60. 19, 20, and Zechariah 14. 7 refer to the Millennium? If so, are we to understand that the natural light of the sun shall not be required in that day ?

Answer (1). —It would seem from the reading of 2 Peter 3. that the day of the LORD, which follows and brings to an end the day of Jacob's trouble (Jeremiah 30. 7), will continue from the Lord's return to earth as Son of Man till the time of the Great White Throne (compare 2 Peter 3. 10 with Revelation 20. 11), and that the day of the LORD will be immediately followed by the day of God. Peter tells us that it is by reason of the coming (or presence) of the day of God that the heavens being on fire will be dissolved and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. The wording seems to indicate that the coming of the day of God consumes and removes a past order of material things in order to give place to a new order connected with new heavens and a new earth of 2 Peter 3. 13. I would conclude that the day of God has to do with the " new " things of Revelation 21.

Answer (2)—I have frequently compared Zechariah 14. 7 with the command of Joshua to the sun and moon to stand still. Both were seen in the heavens at the same time. The Lord's day of battle will be like Joshua's but more terrible by far, for at evening time there will be light whilst He punishes His enemies. Certain changes in the light of sun and moon are indicated in Isaiah 30. 26, the moon's light being like that of the sun and the sun's light sevenfold. How long that will continue is difficult to say, whether it will be true of the entire Millennium or during a period when the LORD binds up His people's wound. I have not thought that the sun's light would be dispensed with during the Millennium. It seems clear that the new earth will be lighted from the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21. ) which has no need of the sun to lighten it, for it is lighted with the glory of God radiating from the Lamb. As evidently we must take the words symbolically, "Thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates praise " (Isaiah 60. 18), so would I be disposed to view the references to **sun** and moon in verses 19 and 20. —**J. M.**

# BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

SEPTEMBER, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
The Day of the LORD. . . . .	69
Divine Judgement on the Nations . . . . .	72

### THE DAY OF THE LORD.

From Vancouver. "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. When they are saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall in no wise escape" (1 Thessalonians 5. 2, 3). Thus the Holy Spirit through Paul describes the coming of the day of the Lord, the time of which Joel speaks. A thief does not make his presence known, and takes every precaution to this end in his stealthy movements. This, we judge, is not the principal thought in 1 Thessalonians 5., but rather that he is unexpected by the unsuspecting. So it will be at the moment of God's appointment; without warning the heavens will cleave, and as the lightning is seen from the east even to the west (Matthew 24. 27), the skies will be filled with the divine brilliance, shining from the Person of the Son of Man as He descends to the Mount of Olives. Of the day and the hour no one knoweth, but God Himself (Matthew 24. 36; Acts 1. 7).

This sudden revelation of power to an unsuspecting world will be the signal for the commencement of swift and certain retribution from God upon those who know Him not, and who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Before that day of heavenly power dawns many of the faithful Jewish remnant will have sealed their testimony with their blood, and to such, even in death, the promise of Daniel through the Spirit will be sweet: "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Daniel 12. 3). The advent of the Lord Jesus in flaming fire will answer the appeal of those beheaded martyrs, whose souls John saw underneath the altar (Revelation 6. 9 and 20. 4), for the day of vengeance will have come.

The outpouring of the Spirit referred to in Joel 2. 28 will be the divine power behind the movements and exploits of the remnant as they carry the gospel of the kingdom to earth's remotest bounds in tribulation days, just preceding the coming of the Son of Man. Joel 2. 30, 31, indicates that immediately preceding the day of the Lord there will be great disturbances such as the world has never before witnessed. "I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come." As these mighty orbs, which from the beginning God appointed in their courses to rule the day and night, shall withdraw their shining, surely men will be wise and consider their ways, and turn to the Lord. Science with its vast store of knowledge, we suggest, will be baffled in that day, and utterly unable to account for these great changes

in the heavenly bodies. This is the time spoken of in Luke 21. **25, 26**: " There shall be signs in sun and moon and stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, in perplexity for the roaring of the sea and the billows; men fainting for fear, and for expectation of the things which are coming upon the world: for the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. " A darkened sun and the moon turned into blood will be fitting symbols indeed of the terrible days that will follow. They **will** be portents [Not portents, for the martyrdoms of saints will precede these signs which will immediately precede the coming of the Son of Man. —J. M. ] of the violence and blood-shed that will mark the closing days of Gentile authority, and stain the final pages of their history. The judgments of the Lord will be necessary to make a full end of His enemies, and to usher in everlasting righteousness.

When the Lord Jesus descends to the earth, His first act will be to smite and destroy the beast and his armies at Armageddon, those hordes who will be arrayed against the Lord and His people. No weapon that is formed against the Lord's people shall prosper, and although the nations will be armed with every device for destruction and death (Joel 3. 9, 10), it will be of no avail. How wondrous to contemplate that all His enemies shall fall before Him, as He marches on in the greatness of His conquering power ! (See Psalm 45. 3-5).

We are told in Ezekiel 39. that it will take seven months to bury the dead, and seven years to burn the implements of war after the din of that gigantic struggle has died away. The language of Ezekiel 39. suggests that the scenes here will follow the battle of Armageddon, and extend into the Millennium (see verses 17-29). [Revelation 20. speaks of Gog and Magog being after the Millennium—J. M. ].

The multitudes in the valley of decision (Joel 3. 14), we judge to be the nations of earth as they assemble for the final attempt to overthrow the people of God and divine authority. [Is not the valley of decision the valley of Jehoshaphat ? Compare Joel 3. 14 with verse 18 ? Harmageddon is **in** the north of the land of Israel. —J. M. ]. God has given all judgment into the hands of the Son, for He is worthy. None shall escape His piercing gaze, for His eyes are as a flame of fire, and none shall deceive Him who is perfect in knowledge. " In righteousness He shall judge and make war. "  
*R. Armstrong.*

From Sydney, **Australia**. —Joel 1. 4 describes " the life gone. " What is the reason for this wasted life ? **As** in the days of the Judges, the need for separation had been lost sight of, resulting in much trouble, disobedience, departure, and mixed marriages. Joel's words indeed present a sad picture of Israel

Joel 2. 20. Regarding the northern army, compare Ezekiel 38. **3, 9**.

Joel 3. 2 tells of a gathering for judgment. See also Zechariah 14. 2.

The day of the LORD will be ushered in with fearful judgment (compare 2 Peter 3. 10). When the "Day of Christ" ends, the "Day of the Lord" will commence. [The day of Christ is that to which the saints of the present dispensation of grace are taught to look forward (Philippians 1. 10). As God's saints are a heavenly people, events will be transpiring on earth which have no connection with what is transpiring between the Lord and those who are of the Body of Christ. These earthly events stand related to the Lord's coming to earth as Son of Man. It is not correct to say that when the day of Christ ends the day of the Lord will begin. This is mixing days which are related to two different peoples, those who are in Christ, the saints of the present dispensation, and Israel, God's earthly people. — J. M. ].

Joel 2. 28 had a fulfilment at Pentecost in part.

Joel 3. 17-21 describes a glorious future day for Israel.

We may draw from the book of Joel the thought that the closer the people are to God, the greater the blessing will be. Then surely how drastic will be **His** judgment if disobedience and departure are allowed to commence !

*Thos, Kirkpatrick (Jun. ).*

[We heartily welcome this first contribution from friends in Sydney—Eds. ].

From Brantford, Ont. —Joel 2. 28 says: "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh. " Did this find a complete fulfilment in Acts 2. on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostle Peter could say in verse 16, " This is that which hath been spoken through the prophet Joel" ? We think not, in view of various Old Testament prophetic scriptures, such as Ezekiel 36. 27-28, "And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep Mine ordinances and do them... and ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be My people, and I will be your God. " And again in Ezekiel 39. 29: " Neither will I hide My face any more from them: for I have poured out My Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord GOD. " Therefore we would gather that there will be in a future day another outpouring of the Spirit that will take place in the days when the Lord will redeem **His** own earthly people, and when they shall know Him as their God and none else. The blessing will no doubt go far beyond the Jew, for it says in Joel 2. 32 that whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those that escape.

In the day of the appearing of the Son of Man, His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley. We should like to ask whether this is the Valley of Jehoshaphat mentioned in Joel 3. 2. [The valley of Jehoshaphat is that through which the Kidron flows, between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives, (see Young's Concordance, etc. ). The valley made by the cleaving of the mount of Olives is not that of Jehoshaphat. —J. M. J. It is then that judgment will begin. Firstly the beast and false prophet will be cast alive into the lake of fire; Satan shall be bound and cast into the great abyss for a thousand years; and the nations shall be judged because they scattered His people, His heritage, Israel, among the nations. It is then that He will separate the nations as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. Those compared to sheep shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, but those compared to goats shall be cast into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels. The saints that died as martyrs will be raised to reign with Christ a thousand years (Revelation 20. 4-6). Then that happy day shall come when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in mount Zion and in Jerusalem (Isaiah 24. 23), **He** shall have dominion also from sea to sea from the river unto the ends of the earth. He shall be King of kings and Lord of lords. Judah shall abide for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.

*Hiel Wood.*

## AMOS: NATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

## Divine Judgments on the Nations.

**From** Cowdenbeath. —Amos was contemporary with Hosea and Isaiah, although both these prophets outlived him. He was but a labouring man, being a herdman and a dresser of sycamore trees, but God showed him many visions and gave him His message to speak to His people and to the nations. He prophesied that there would be an earthquake. No record of this is given in the history of the kings, but Zechariah of later times tells us that such an earthquake did take place (Zechariah 14. 5). This was foretold by Amos two years before it happened (see Amos 1. 2). The fact that the prophecy concerning this was fulfilled, ought to have had a voice for God's people, that the other judgments would also take place. It is noteworthy that God's judgments on the nations were also pronounced by Jeremiah (chapters 45. to 52.) because he was appointed a prophet for this purpose (Jeremiah 1. 5).

" For three transgressions, yea, for four "; these words preface each judgment, and would show that each nation was alike guilty. God did not descend in judgment because of one sin. His longsuffering waited. The guilt of each was fully evidenced.

Concerning the first five nations, namely, Syria, the Philistines, Tyre, Edom and Ammon, punishment must be meted out because of violence done to the people of God. How true were those words, in their outworking, spoken unto Abraham and Jacob long before, " Cursed be everyone that curseth thee " ! (see Genesis 12. 3; 27. 29). The sins of Syria and Ammon were committed against Gilead of which Hosea says, " Gilead is a city of them that work iniquity " (Hosea 6. 8). How wonderful that God should avenge wrong done to His people, even when they had wilfully departed from Him! " He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye " (Zechariah 2. 8). Even the mighty nation of Babylon, which carried away Judah in fulfilment of the word of God, was afterwards punished for its treatment of them (Jeremiah 51. 34-37).

With Moab it was different. Their sin was against Edom. Perhaps this would teach that the nations cannot treat one another with impunity. God sits as their Judge.

Judah was not charged with having done violence or evil to any other nation, but theirs was the sin of departure from their God. This was very grievous in **His** eyes. It was a thing unknown among the nations for a people to change their gods, which yet are no gods, but concerning Israel God had to say, " My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit " (Jeremiah 2. 11). For this they were carried away captive.

In Israel abominable things were being done. God had delivered them from Egypt and had brought them to possess the land. He had destroyed the Amorites before them, and had purposed to find delight in them as His people, being willing to reveal His word to the prophets, and longing to behold the separated lives of the Nazarites. Instead of this, there was persecution of the righteous and the needy, whilst immorality and idolatry were prevalent. Amos warned them of coming judgment, and told them how sad would be their plight in that day.

The judgments, as pronounced by Amos, have had their fulfilment. But the nations shall again be judged, and of all those mentioned here by name Edom is singled out for very severe punishment. The Son of Man will personally execute this judgment. Edom shall be a desolate wilderness (Joel 3. 19). Concerning Edom, Ezekiel 35. 14 reads: " When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate. "

Why should such a curse be put upon the land of Edom in that fair millennial day ? Surely it must be for some very outstanding sin ! Who are the Edomites ? Can we trace them to-day ? Would not the present-day Arabs answer to the description which Ezekiel **35.** and **36.** gives of Edom ? " Because thou hast had a perpetual enmity, and hast given over the children of Israel to the power of the sword . . . " (chapter **35.** 5). Surely the hatred of Esau towards Jacob **is** in evidence to-day. " These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it " (verse 10). Are not the Arabs claiming possession of Israel and Judah to-day ? " The ancient high places are ours in possession " (chapter **36.** 2). Do we not see the Arab in possession of such places now, and have they not built a Moslem shrine upon the site of the ancient temple ? Joel **3.** 19 says that Egypt and Edom shall meet with similar punishment for the violence done to the children of Judah. Are not these two nations linked together to-day both politically and by common religious ties ? Both are Moslem in their religion.

We know that there are those who have taught that the Arab is descended from Ishmael. But can this be proved from Scripture ? The only recorded instance of persecution of Isaac by Ishmael **is** given in Genesis 21., where Ishmael mocked when Isaac was weaned. Paul extracts teaching for us to show that as then, so now, he that is born after the flesh persecutes him that **is** born after the Spirit (Galatians 4. 29). [I am doubtful of this view which excludes many of the descendants of ancient races from those that are to-day called Arabs, and making the Arabs Edomites exclusively. **Such** a view, I think, cannot be maintained. An Arab literally **is** a native of Arabia, but Arabs have no doubt migrated from Arabia. Indeed, Arab **is** a description of all nomadic peoples of the near east. The subject of the origin of Arab races **is**, I have no doubt, as difficult as the origin of many other races of the earth. —**J. M. J.** No subsequent history of Ishmael **as** a persecuting nation towards Israel can be traced. **With** Esau, a hatred burned in his breast which made him say, " **I will kill my brother.** " There was one blessing, but two claimants, and he **who** at the first seemed unlikely to obtain **it**, was given it by God because **He** had before spoken after this manner saying, " Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated "; and again, " The elder shall serve the younger. " The same position obtains to-day; there **is** one land but two claimants for it. " I the LORD have spoken i t . . . they shall be secure in their land " (Ezekiel 34. 24, 27). This will be the final outcome of Jewish and Arab strife. Israel shall possess **the** land.

*James Bowman.*

**From Barrhead and Paisley.** It **is** interesting to note the contrasts between the prophets Amos and Isaiah, the one **a** humble herdman, and the other the son **of** a king [?], yet both used by God to foretell his judgments. Amos received his vision two years before the earthquake which we find only once mentioned elsewhere, and that **is** in Zechariah 14. 5.

We see that Amos pronounces judgment on the nations first, and then on Judah and Israel; we think there must be some significance attached to this, but we would like some help on the point. [Whilst in 1 Peter 4. 17 the apostle Peter speaks of judgment beginning at the house of God, which house of God **is** " us " of the same verse, it may be that God in passing sentence (perhaps not in executing it) upon those Gentile nations first finds cause in what these nations had been guilty of. **With** the exception of Moab, they had all been guilty of attacking the people of Israel. When we remember that God's people arc to **Him** as the apple

of His eye (Zechariah 2. 8), we can well see how He would be moved in judgment towards those who had afflicted them. This may be a reason for His sentencing these nations before He judges His own people. This may however not be the chief reason. —J. M. J].

Verse 2 sums up the whole prophecy: the Lord in Zion, the place of worship, and the Lord in Jerusalem, the centre of the nations, has been angered by sins against Himself, **His** house, and **His** people. He speaks to the nations and to His people, telling them of judgment, and what effect it would have on them.

The expression three or four is idiomatic and conveys to us the impression that the sins of the nations were numerous. God would punish those who would in anyway harm the Jew, in keeping with His promise to Abraham. Each nation had outstanding incidents in their history of cruelty and aggression towards Judah and Israel, and God makes it clear why they are being punished by stating a particular sin in each case. But in all cases the sin is cruelty and aggression, and in all cases the punishment is the same; the rulers are to be removed and the palaces destroyed by fire.

When God gave the law, He made the first four commandments Godward, and the remaining six manward; so that repeatedly, as a nation, they broke the whole law. Judah's punishment was similar to that of the nations, fire being sent to devour the palaces, while Israel's punishment is more complete. The people of Judah are more or less left alone, but few in Israel were to escape, not even the strong nor the fleet of foot. God's judgment was to have a crushing effect, as indeed history has proved, because there was no return for them from the Assyrian captivity. As a nation the ten tribes ceased to exist.

The other nations, and also Judah, would probably receive their punishment at the same time, because those nations used by God to over-run the land and capture the ten tribes would of necessity over-run the lands enumerated in chapter 1., as these lands surround the regions of Israel and Judah. As a result these places would suffer some damage and devastation in the execution of God's will, before they became satellites to the conquering nations.

\* God wanted Israel to be (verse 11 of chapter 2. ) a separated and holy people (Numbers 6. ), able to teach and expound the law of God; but the people resisted such desires, and we have some of their sins enumerated in chapter 2., including greed in verse 6, lust in verse 7 and much oppression.

The same principle of judgment and restoration to follow applies to nations other than Israel, because undoubtedly some of the nations then existing, and at present without political power, will in a future day have another era, even if only to have the complete fulfilment of God's prophetic judgments meted out to them. Although the judgments of these chapters have probably been carried out and are now history, yet in this portion we can see the shadows of future events, because we know that the nations will be judged in the future on a common charge, and their judgment or reward will depend on their treatment of the Jews.

## EXTRACTS.

From **Kilmarnock**. —While considering this subject our mind was led to Genesis 15., where God was making known to Abram in a vision what His purpose was concerning his seed. "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs... and they shall afflict them 400 years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, *will I judge*" We know from Exodus 11. and 12. how Pharaoh experienced that judgment, and how Egypt's power was broken. It was some 700 years after this when God raised up the prophet Amos in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, to foretell God's judgment about to fall on the various nations that had come in contact with God's chosen nation of Israel. Although these nations did not fear or worship the God of Israel, yet we see how He was taking notice of their actions, over-ruling them for His own purpose. From 2 Kings 16. 5 we find that the king of Syria, whose capital was Damascus, came up to fight against Judah at Jerusalem, but God caused him to be defeated and slain, and the people of Damascus were carried captive to Kir, in accordance with the prophecy of Amos some 27 years previously. Gaza was one of the chief cities of the Philistines. They had always been Israel's enemies, but God was now about to deal with them in judgment. From 2 Chronicles 2. we find that Hiram, king of Tyre, had been friendly with king David and had covenanted with king Solomon to help in the building of the Temple. Succeeding generations had evidently forgotten the brotherly covenant, and God was about to punish them for their violation of friendship.

It is noteworthy that the indictment against the six nations mentioned is their unmerciful treatment of God's chosen nation, and while God permitted them to carry out their evil designs in order to chastise His people for their transgressions, He now warns them, through His prophet Amos, of impending judgment. His word to Moses in Deuteronomy 32. 35 was, "Vengeance is mine, and recompence . . . for the day of their calamity is at hand."

A. G. S.

From Atherton. —As we consider the subject before us, we have brought to our notice God's wisdom in calling Amos to such a notable work, considering his utterance of chapter 7. 14, 15. Then answered Amos to Amaziah, "I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was an herdman, and a dresser of sycamore trees: and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto My people Israel." This shows how God, as on many other occasion, brings a man forth from the most unlikely place. Amos was apparently obscure, yet God called him.

The portion before us reveals the truth that God dealt with nations as such and will bring them to account for the sin that they committed: well-doing will be approved and evil doing will be finished. God's judgment upon the nations for their oppression of Israel fell after the prophecy of Amos. It is evident that the nations oppressed Israel beyond divine commandment.

It was noted that in verses 4, 7, and 14 of Amos 1., we have mentioned God's sending of fire in judgment upon the house of Hazael, the wall of Gaza and the wall of Rabbah. It was asked whether this implied fullest punishment, indicating prolonged heavy judgment (see Jeremiah 49. 23-27, and 17. 27).

Some reference was made to the house of Eden. The query was raised as to whether this was the name of a person or a place. It was suggested that this is the name of a man; if this was not the case we would not have a verse of this nature (see 2 Kings 19. 12). [Note R. V. Marg. This would indicate a place. Other translators translate similarly. Beth is of course the Hebrew word for house. —J. M. J.]

Some discussion centred around Amos 2. 11: "I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites." Some thought that we could speak of a school of prophets, but not so with the Nazarites. It would seem that in the consecration of the Nazarite it would be a voluntary action on the part of the individual, although God would have him marked out as such. Others thought that the two went together, and that in the prophets we would see the Nazarite principle. [Prophets and Nazarites are quite different in the Old Testament. Most of the prophets were not Nazarites. —J. M. J. This would not necessarily mean that all the prophets had taken upon themselves the vow of the Nazarite; nevertheless we have some outstanding cases in the scripture where they did so, *e. g.*, John the Baptist, Samuel [?], etc. How sad to see that the nation was guilty of seeking to wean, by deliberate sin, the prophets and Nazarites, from their sacred charge before their God: "But ye gave the Nazarites wine<sup>to</sup> to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, prophesy not" (verse 12)

*G. Sankey, J. Bullock.*

From Glasgow. —In Ecclesiastes 8. 11 we read that "because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Nevertheless God's day of reckoning comes, for there is a purpose and a time of judgment for all things which are done under the sun, whether they be good or evil. In considering the first and second chapters of the book of Amos, the judgments of God are fully pronounced upon Gentile nations and also on God's people in Judah and Israel. "Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions... yea for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." It seemed as if God had taken into account some particular sins committed by those nations. He could not overlook it, so ultimately they were condemned in **His** sight. How true is the word that "Sin is a reproach to any people!" Although in the case of each of these nations there was a different type of sin which condemned them, yet we see a similar type of judgment pronounced upon them. For God says, "I will send a fire," implying the destruction of everything with which it comes in contact. It is also outstanding to note that the heads of those nations are affected first by the fire of judgment.

Sad enough it is that the divine hand of judgment should come upon the nations who reject God and never take Him into their account, but how heart-rending it must be for the LORD to be forced to lay His hand upon His own people! It is very evident that the condition of both Judah and Israel was very bad, and things were obviously developing for a great crisis in the history of this divided nation. Something of the condition of Judah and Israel in the time of Uzziah and Jeroboam may be traced in the prophecies of Isaiah, Hosea and Amos. Perhaps the solemn words of Isaiah 1. gives us the sad picture of Judah's state, whilst the corruption of Israel is graphically unfolded in Hosea. It is a serious consideration that in spite of the fact that such mighty men as Isaiah, Hosea and Amos were raised up at this time, the people of God should do so wickedly. Amos was a humble man, but his message was nevertheless powerful.

It is evident that Judah had rejected the law of the LORD, and had not kept **His** statutes, and in lying caused themselves to err and to walk as their fathers did walk. When God gave **His** people the law it was to guide them and instruct them in the way of righteousness; it should have been bound as a sign upon their hand and as frontlets between their eyes. In their rejection of God's word, nothing but spiritual darkness could result, and a falling away from the God of their salvation, and latterly the judgment of God descending upon them. *Fred Harvey.*

# BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now **these** were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received **the** word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

OCTOBER, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Ephraim's fall . . . . .	77
The Prophet Amos . . . . .	77
Divine Judgement on the N a t i o n s . . . . .	79
The Appeals to Judah and Israel .. . . .	80

### EPHRAIM'S FALL.

David in days long before those of Hosea, in the Song of the Bow, that delightful epic in 2 Samuel 1., says, " How are the mighty fallen ! " The tidings of the fall of Saul and Jonathan caused the inspired words of this song to flow in the soul of the greatest of all Hebrew poets. It was a sad day for David, and a sadder one for Jehovah the God of Israel, but it was but the sequel to a disastrous life-story. Departure from God can have but one end, unless there is repentance and returning to God. Saul never turned to God. Jealousy, fierce and cruel as Sheol, burned in his bosom against his son-in-law, the king whom Jehovah had chosen in his stead, and forbade his returning to the LORD as long as he allowed it to dominate his actions. But in Saul's crash many were the valiant men of Israel that fell with him on dark Gilboa, upon whose slopes David wishes neither rain nor dew to fall henceforth. Midst gloom and desolation this place was to be a perpetual monument to the lives of brave men that were sacrificed. For what ? To maintain a backsliding man in power, a man whom God had rejected. (See 1 Corinthians 9. 16, 27).

Have we not an echo of this story of Saul in Hosea 13. 1 ? " When Ephraim spake there was trembling; he exalted himself in Israel: but when he offended in Baal, he died. " When Ephraim went on with God then his word had power. Men trembled at the words of Ephraim. May it not be so still with men who are going on with God ? May not men yet have the power of God in their ministry ? It may also happen with men of God, as with Ephraim ? Ephraim turned back from God.

" The children of Ephraim, being armed and carrying bows,  
Turned back in the day of battle " (Psalm 78. 9).

They turned back from God. To what ? Alas, to Baal. Here is written his epitaph—" He died. " And through death he lost his inheritance. J.M.

### THE PROPHET AMOS.

Probably a few years before the prophet Hosea began to witness against the apostasy of the house of Israel, and announced impending judgment, there appeared in Bethel, the seat of idolatry, a peasant by the name of Amos. He was not a citizen of the northern kingdom, but belonged to Tekoa, a small town in the south of Judah. We learn from the book that he was a herdman and a gatherer of the fruit of the sycamore trees. He was just a humble peasant, and while engaged in his calling, not being a prophet nor the son of a prophet, the LORD called him and said unto him, " Go, prophesy unto My people Israel "

(chapter 7. 14, 15). Amos means "bearer" or "burden." In obedience to this command, he appeared in Bethel to discharge his prophetic duty **and** deliver the messages of Jehovah to the people. It was a strange occurrence **that** a prophet should come out of Judah to prophesy to Israel, and it probably **attracted** wide attention for such a thing had never happened before or after. [**Has** our friend overlooked the "**man** of God out of Judah" in 1. Kings 13. 1?—G. P. ]. It greatly aroused Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, who reported the **case** to Jeroboam king of Israel. "Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel: the land is not able to bear all his words. For thus saith Amos, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land" (7. 10, 11). The priest tried to intimidate the prophet **and** drive him away, but Amos was a man of courage; he boldly resisted, **and announced** the fate of the priest and his family.

There is little difficulty in connection with the period in which Amos prophesied. This is stated in the opening verse of the book: "In the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake." Jeroboam II became king in the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah king of Judah. Jeroboam reigned forty-one years. **As** Amaziah reigned over Judah twenty-nine years, and was followed by Uzziah, Jeroboam's kingship was contemporary with Amaziah for fourteen years **and** with Uzziah for twenty-one years. The activity of Amos was during the period when Uzziah was king in Judah, in the later part of Jeroboam's reign. The earthquake which occurred two years before Amos began his work cannot be placed chronologically. It is also mentioned in Zechariah 14. 5.

We therefore judge that the approximate time of the prophecy of Amos **was** between 810 and 782 B. C. As was suggested in an earlier article on the prophet Joel, Amos knew of Joel's prophecy because Joel probably preceded him by at least half a century. [See page 54 of July issue]. Amos started his work somewhat earlier than Hosea, and part of his ministry was contemporary with Hosea.

Under the reign of Jeroboam II the northern kingdom of Israel flourished considerably. There was external prosperity and victory **in** warfare. Therefore we find that the prophet mentions the rich with their great wealth **and** luxury, their arrogant pride and self-security, and the oppression of the poor. Underneath it all was an awful moral corruption, the fruit of false worship. In this state of prosperity, and in their immorality and false worship, they did not dream of any coming calamity. Such were the days in which the herdman of Tekoa appeared upon the scene to give an inspired testimony against the nation.

Attention has been called to the fact that the prophet's style **and** composition reflect his former occupation as herdman in the use of certain words, **and** in many figures and similes drawn from nature and rural life. **He** also shows a very close acquaintance with the Mosaic law and the history of the people **to** whom he belonged.

Dr. Pusey remarks **in** this connection: "Amos expressed his thoughts in words taken from the great picture book of nature, which was also written by the hand of God. Scarcely any prophet is more glowing **in** style, or combines more wonderfully the natural and the moral world, the omnipotence and omniscience of God."

In the book of Amos we have a splendid example of inspiration. The LORD called him, gave him the message, and filled the simple herdman with wisdom from above so that he burst out in these eloquent utterances. **At** the **same** time, the LORD in using Amos as **His** mouthpiece did not set aside his personality, for he used his shepherd idiom, and the truth of God is expressed through him in terms of nature, with which he, as a child of nature, was so familiar.

The message concerns chiefly the northern kingdom of Israel, their spiritual and moral condition. Yet Judah is also noticed by him, as well **as** the different nations surrounding Israel, their Gentile enemies. The book consists of the prophecies he uttered **in** Bethel, which follow the two introductory chapters. The people are reproved and their sins uncovered; judgment for them **and** the nation is announced. The end of the book brings in the promise of deliverance and restoration. The great prophecy in chapter 9. 11, 12, was quoted by James in the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15. 16).

The book of Amos consists of three parts. The first part comprises the two opening chapters, which form the introduction of the book. In them we find announced the judgment in store for the nations surrounding Israel, but Judah and Israel are also included.

From chapter 3. to the end of chapter 6. is the second part. Here are recorded four prophecies given by the LORD through Amos. Three of them begin with "Hear the word" and the last one in chapter 6. begins with "Woe."

The third part, chapters 7. to 9., describes five visions which Amos saw. The first two visions of judgment were not carried out on account of the intercession of the prophet. The third vision is that of the plumbline, and the fourth the vision of the basket with ripe fruit. In the last vision he beheld the LORD standing alongside the altar, ready to smite. In the conclusion of the ninth chapter is a prophecy concerning the restoration of Israel, and the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David, and the blessings of the kingdom.

*W. R. Wallace.*

### DIVINE JUDGMENTS ON THE NATIONS.

From London. —Amos of Tekoa (a small town in the south of Judah) spoke words of prophecy to Israel and the Gentile nations in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, two years before the earthquake, the time being approximately 810-782 B. C. It is rather striking that Amos, though of Judah, exercised his ministry in the northern kingdom of Israel. It may be that Israel needed a prophet to warn her (see Amos 7. 10-14).

As the prophecy starts with "the words of Amos" some have doubted that his words bear the authority of God to a prophet. There can be no doubt, however, as to his genuine standing as a prophet of God, the first words of verse 1 being qualified by the words "which he saw"; the revelation of God to Amos was by vision. Furthermore, in chapter 7. 15 Amos states that he received command from the LORD. "Go, prophesy unto My people Israel."

This prophecy brings before us the judgment of the nations. Amos means <sup>44</sup> bearer "or" burden. "How truly he was named, for he bears the burden of God's message of judgment to Israel, Judah and the nations. There is also the terror of the voice of the LORD, that causes mourning in the habitations of the shepherds, and withering of the pastures for which Carmel was noted. "The LORD shall roar from Zion." His voice will be heard in judgment from the very place where His name was set in Israel, and they that hear first will be those that received His law and kept it not.

Chapter 1. 3-15 and 2. 1-3 deal with the judgment of the nations, the six neighbours of Israel and Judah (Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab). These nations were used by the evil one to frustrate God's purposes in Israel. They sinned against Israel and therefore against God, so punishment was necessary. In each case the words, "For three transgressions, yea, for four," point out the extent of transgression to be such that judgment is complete against them, entirely enveloping each nation, and leaving no escape. Truly, "the wages of sin is death"! Similarly, fire is used to destroy the work which man's hands set in the place of God, and further to cleanse and purge away the evil.

Edom is worth particular notice. The descendants of Esau were always at enmity with Israel, although racially akin, bearing the fruit of Esau's wickedness in selling his birthright. Edom always coveted the blessing and inheritance of Jacob, who is Israel. Yet Israel shall utterly possess the remnant of Edom (Amos 9. 12; Obadiah verse 19). There is a continuity in Edom's enmity.

Herod, who condemned the Lord Jesus, was by descent an Edomite. With Pilate he condemned to death the rightful king of Israel. To-day also the children of Seir possess the land. "[I doubt that the Arab and Arab races are exclusively Edomites. —J. M. J. There is manifested bitterness and hatred between them and the Jew. God in His own time will alter this.

*G. A. Reeve.*

From **Sydney, Australia.** —It is important to notice the theme of the two chapters: "Thus saith the LORD." Here is an exclamation from God who is passing judgment.

Amos 7. 14. Amos called—indeed a meek person (compare 1 Corinthians 1. 23-29). Edom, Numbers 20. 14-22, gives us a picture of how Israel was treated when in great need. It was suggested that Edom, Moab and Ammon will be revived, and that the fulfilment of final judgment on them is still future. In Ezekiel 25. 11-14 swift retribution is again the paramount theme. In connection with the backsliding of God's people, **Psalm** 106. 34-36 was referred to. It is of great importance to notice the order of events, (a) mingling with the nations, (b) learning their works, (c) serving their idols. The result was disobedience to the LORD; indeed a signpost to us in our day.

Amos 1. 2: "The LORD shall roar." Jeremiah 25. 30: This was linked with Isaiah 42. 13, and was thought to refer to God's final dealing with the nations.

*Thomas Kirkpatrick (Jun.).*

### THE APPEALS TO JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

From Ilford. —The appeals to Judah and Israel found in Amos chapters 3. and 4. are of the same nature as those found earlier in the minor prophets. Most of the portion is an account of the punishments which were to come to the Jews **if** they did not return to God; the appeal being finally made in chapter 4. 12: "Prepare to meet thy God."

Having shewn the need for **His** people's return to Him, God shewed (beginning at chapter 3. 9) what would happen **if** they continued to be disobedient. The adversary of verse 11 seems to correspond closely to the king of Assyria in 2 Kings 17. —certainly the offence of the children of Israel was the same in both cases: "Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but... believed not in the LORD their God" (2 Kings 17. 14).

The rulers of the people were particularly to blame for leading Judah and Israel astray. When the common people went to worship at Dan and Bethel, they probably thought they were doing God's will, although in fact they were becoming increasingly unfit for service. Yet even the most guilty of the people, viz., the rulers in Samaria (where were Bethel and Gilgal), could be saved from judgment **if** they repented and learned "how they should fear the LORD" (2 Kings 17. 28). The message they received from Amos was very similar to Jonah's message —judgment was coming, but there was still time to repent. *Eric Morgan.*

From Atherton. —Our study for this month presents to us yet again the abounding grace of God to **His** people, a God who appeals. Amos 3. and 4. reveal to us a sad state of things regarding Judah and Israel, and we find the people occupying an unhappy position in God's sight. We note in passing that this portion of the prophecy takes in the whole family brought up out of the land of Egypt (chapter 3. 1), and not the ten tribes alone. The luxurious contentment the people enjoyed, amidst the couches and silken cushions in Samaria, caused them to turn a deaf ear to the appeals spoken to them. Hearts filled with ungodly things seemed to have given them hearts of stone, so far as God was concerned. Hence the words of Amos 3. 1: "Hear this word"; verse 13: "Hear ye"; chapter 4. 1: "Hear this word." From early days God had cause to appeal to them, that they might retrace their steps and seek the old paths (see Psalm 78. 38).

We suggest there are at least three ways in which God appealed to Judah and Israel: (1) words of persuasiveness, in which love, mercy, and grace are prominent; (2) words of warning of impending judgment; (3) actual judgment falling upon them.

Amos 3. 9-12, and 4. 4, 5, seem to suggest that God appeals to the people to come out to the scene of their hypocrisies and abominations to Samaria, Bethel, and Gilgal. This appealing by God came from the depth of **His** being to a people who were precious in **His** sight.

We had a lengthy discussion around the question God asks in chapter 3. 3, "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" Here primarily at least it is not the thought of the people walking together, but rather the word "two" represents God and the nation. [The question is a general one, but I agree with our friends' application to the particular matter of God walking with **His** people.

based as it is upon the Sinaitic covenant. —J. M. J. The nation had failed to keep that covenant which God had made with His people. The fault was certainly not with God. His desire was that He should walk in them and be their God and they His people, which reminds us of God's purpose concerning His people to-day: "Even as God said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord" (2 Corinthians 6. 16-17). We thought also of individuals such as Enoch who walked closely with God.

G. A. Jones, G. Sankey.

#### EXTRACTS.

From Kilmarnock. —Amos 3. opens with a call to the people of Israel to "hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you." It would appear that Judah is included as well as Israel, for it is "against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt." It was because the LORD loved them and had a purpose in them that He had separated them from the other nations, but now, because of their iniquities, He was about to punish them.

We note two of the seven questions asked in verses 3 to 6 which might all be answered in the negative. "Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?" (or made an appointment). The LORD had made a covenant with them, but they had broken that covenant, and were no longer subject to His will. Then, "Shall evil befall a city, and the LORD hath not done it?" (As Newberry's margin shows, this word "evil" is in the sense of "calamity," and not of sin). There were calamities about to fall upon them from the LORD, but it was in order that they might repent and return to Him. The ten tribes had prospered under Jeroboam the son of Joash (see 2 Kings 14. 26-28), and were living in luxury and pleasure, but the LORD was about to send an adversary in the person of the king of Assyria (see 2 Kings 17. 5, 6). This prophecy was fulfilled about 65 years later. Although as a nation they were so far away in heart from God, yet they were carrying out the outward forms in sacrifices and offerings and bringing them to the altars at Bethel and Gilgal. They loved to do this (chapter 4. 5), and although these places had known God's blessings in days gone by, yet now God was about to bring judgment on these altars. It is not enough to be in the right place or position, there must be the right condition of heart for God to bless. [I would judge that Bethel and Gilgal were mentioned as centres of Israel's apostate worship, c. f. 1 Kings 12. 32 and Hosea 9. 15. —G. P. J.]

From verse 6 onwards various calamities are mentioned. "Want of bread," "rain withholden," "blasting and mildew," "pestilence," "young men slain with the sword"; these are all given as warnings in order that they might give heed. Nevertheless the Lord's message was: "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, and this was repeated five times. A. G. S.

From Glasgow. —The message of Amos was the word of the LORD spoken against Judah and Israel. This should be studied in the light of 2 Kings 14. 23, 24, for Amos prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II, who followed the example of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. In the opening verses of chapter 3., he reminds them of the past, how that the LORD had brought them out of Egypt, and of the position into which they had been brought. "You only have I known" as special subjects of care and favour. Privilege and responsibility always go side by side. They who receive at God's hand peculiar favours will be punished with peculiar severity if they prove unfaithful to Him (compare Deuteronomy 28.).

We have a series of questions in Amos 3. 3-6, to which there could be only one answer. Unless the people will return to God and walk with Him, they must remain separated from Him. Their calamities ought to lead them to see that the LORD is angry with them, but He reveals His secret to His prophets, that the people may have space for repentance and return unto Him. (cf. 2 Kings 17. 18-23).

It has been suggested that Amos 4. 1 refers to the leaders of the people. Five times in verses 6 to 11 we have the expression: "Ye have not returned unto Me." The prophet enumerates God's judgments in past years. God is merciful and will not destroy any until He has tried the efficacy of judgments often repeated; but if this fails, then we have His word in verse 12: "Thus will I do unto Thee, O Israel."

Chapter 4. 13 gives them to know with whom they have to deal, the LORD, the God of hosts, and in view of this they are warned: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

*Robert Mack.*

**From Cowdenbeath.** —Judah's name is not mentioned in the portion, but the message being addressed to "the whole family which I brought up out of Egypt," would therefore mean the twelve tribes.

The generation of the children of Israel unto whom Amos prophesied were like unto their fathers before them, "who forgat God their Saviour" (Psalm 106. 21). It is against those whom He redeemed out of Egypt, and who had known His deliverance as no others had known it (Deuteronomy 4. 34), that God speaks. Not only was He their Saviour, but He was also their God, who had entered into covenant with them and who had chosen to dwell in their midst that they might worship Him. Their responsibility, therefore, was great because of their high privilege. But they sinned against Him and reached such a state of departure that God could no longer go on together with them. The parting of the ways was reached. Not only does sin and departure sever communion, but the erring ones expose themselves to divine vengeance on their doings. For Israel, that day of judgment was drawing near. The lion had roared. The lion would seem to speak of the king of Assyria who would carry them captive. Nebuchadnezzar is also likened unto a lion (Jeremiah 4. 7). They would be caught as a bird in a snare. The trumpet would be blown giving warning of the enemy's approach; Israel would fear, and are assured that this would be no chance happening, but the visitation of God's wrath upon them. God always gives warning of judgment. Amos, as God's prophet unto whom His secret had been revealed, must therefore speak. Thus to Israel was the twofold witness given; the roaring of the lion and the prediction by God's prophet that they would fall a prey to him.

"Happy is the people, whose God is the LORD" (Psalm 144. 15). Such should have been the state of Israel because the LORD had wrought so wondrously for them. His hand had been heavy upon their enemies, and none experienced this more than the Egyptians and the Philistines. They knew the mighty power of the God of Israel to deliver His people. Unto these two nations the invitation is given\* to come to Samaria and behold the ingratitude of this people toward their God. The scene is one of disorder and oppression. What departure and what ingratitude! The poor and needy were being mercilessly oppressed whilst the oppressors were living in great luxury, drinking wine and dwelling in massive houses wherein they enjoyed their indolence and ease. How far estranged this was from what God required of them! Departure from God had brought about this state. Instead of worshipping Him in Jerusalem they were worshipping the calf at Bethel and therefore not only would they themselves be punished, but in that day the altars where they sacrificed and the houses wherein they dwelt would be destroyed.

The guilt of oppressing the poor was as much the responsibility of the women as the men. They are addressed as the "kine of Bashan" and they joined with their lords in drinking wine. The LORD swore that for this they would be punished.

In spite of their departure God had wrought patiently for their return. He chastened them sorely but their hearts were not exercised to discern the purpose of His dealings. Five times He chastened them that His voice might be heard, but all to no avail. He gave them want of bread, shortage of water, blasting and mildew upon their fruit trees; and then in a more severe way He dealt with them, causing many of their young men to die through pestilence. This was followed by a fifth chastisement which is likened unto the judgment which befell Sodom and Gomorrah, and in which many of them were overthrown.

*James Bowman.*

# BIBLE STUDIES.

"Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so" (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

NOVEMBER, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
S e r v a n t s . . . . .	83
The Appeals to Judah and Israel . . . . .	86
Proclamation to Judah and I s r a e l . . . . .	87
Notice . . . . .	90

## SERVANTS.

### A Word Study.

Servants may be viewed with regard to their various relationships. For example, when viewed in relation to their owners or proprietors, the Greek word *doulos* is used; in relation to their immediate superior, *huperetes* is used; in relation to their work, *diakonos* is used; in relation to some public or representative service, *leiturgos* is used; and when service is the outcome of love and not of constraint the Greek word *therapon* is used. When the small sphere of a household is visualised, the word *oiketes* is used.

*Doulos* is the most common word used for servant in the New Testament. It is possibly derived from *deo*, "to bind," and suggests a slave or one in bondage. It envisages the lowest type of servitude, and the submerging of one's will completely to another's (in a good or even a bad sense). We have the idea clearly shown in 1 Corinthians 7. 23—"Ye were bought with a price, become not bond-servants of men," and in Romans 6. 17, 20 ". . . servants of sin." It is opposed, in its meaning, to "free" in the phrase "bond or free" in 1 Corinthians 12. 13 and Revelation 13. 16, and to *Kurios*="Lord" in Luke 12. 46, and to *despotes*="Master" in Titus 2. 9. [Meyhew, in the 1901 edition of Trench, p. 370, says, "The etymology of *doulos* is unknown."—S. B.]

A *doulos* is one whose will is completely over-ruled by the will of his proprietor, and he is in a continual state of servitude. However, as *doulos* is the most frequently used word for "servant," in many cases only subjection, apart from any idea of bondage, is its true meaning. The following examples show its use under various conditions:—

1. Natural—Matthew 8. 9, Ephesians 6. 5, and 1 Timothy 6. 1.
2. Of God—Acts 16. 17, Titus 1. 1, 1 Peter 2. 16, and Philippians 2. 17 (of the Lord Jesus Himself).
3. Of Christ Jesus—Romans 1. 1, Galatians 1. 10, Philippians 1. 1, etc.
4. Of sin—John 8. 34, Romans 6. 17, 20.
5. Of corruption—2 Peter 2. 19.

The feminine form *doule* is translated "hand-maid" in Luke 1. 38, **48**, and Acts 2. 18.

*Huperetes* is translated "attendant," "minister," "officer," and "servant." It is a military or a nautical term, and is derived from *hupo* = "under," *eretes* = "a rower." Originally it meant "a rower on a war-galley," obtaining, in turn, the meanings "a performer of any strong and hard labour," then "a subordinate official, who is prepared to do the bequest of his superior," then "an orderly who attends a commander in war" and also "a herald who carries solemn messages."

In Luke 4. 20 the word describes the attendant in the synagogue.

As one who carried out certain defined duties for Paul and Barnabas it is used of John Mark in Acts 13. 5. It is used by the Lord, of Paul in Acts 26. 16, when He commissioned Paul as His minister and witness, and, again, it is used by Paul of himself and others, as Apollos and Cephas as ministers of Christ in 1 Corinthians 4. 1.

Such "servants" seem to be directly responsible to some given master to carry out some defined duty. Both *doulos* and *huperetes* are used in John 18. **18**—"the servants and the officers," indicating a difference in the meaning of the words. It was one of the *huperetes*, *i. e.*, "the officers," a man of higher status than a slave, who struck the Lord with his hand.

The verb-form of the word *huperetes* is used in Acts 13. **36** of David serving the counsel of God, where both the lowly and yet the personal aspects of his service to God may be visualised; of Paul's own hands "ministered" to his own necessities (Acts 20. 34); and of the permitted "ministry" of Paul's friends to himself (Acts 24. 23).

In these cases it would seem some specific service is meant.

*Diakonos*, translated "deacon," "minister," "servant," is probably derived from *dioko* "to hasten after or to pursue," and suggests "a runner." In *diakonos* the servant is viewed mainly in regard to his work, whether servile or free. We see it in the following uses in the New Testament:—

1. Of domestic servants—John 2. 5, 9.
2. Of civil rulers—**Romans** 13. 4.
3. Of Christ—Romans 15. 8.
4. Of the followers of the Lord in relation to **Himself**—Ephesians 6. 21, Colossians 1. 7, Colossians 4. 7.  
In relation to each other—Mark 9. **35**, 10. 43.  
In relation to teaching and preaching—1 Corinthians **3. 5**, 2 Corinthians **3. 6**, Ephesians **3. 7**, etc.

It is also used of a female (Phoebe) in her service to the Church at Cenchreae (Romans 16. 1).

In a bad sense it is used of "ministers of Satan" in 2 Corinthians 11. **15**.

The verb-form (*diakoneo*) is used with the general significance of service, and of waiting on tables and ministering to guests, and of preparing food, and of relieving one's necessities, and of carrying gifts and assistance to the needy, etc.

In addition, it is used in a definite spiritual sense in 1 Timothy 3. 10-13. Although the word is not used in Acts 6. specifically of the seven men of good report, " full of the Spirit and of wisdom, " yet theirs was deacon service. And it would appear from Philippians 1. 1 that the deacons in any Church of God were a known body of men.

A significant difference of the plurals *douloi* and *diakonoi* (both translated "servants" in the R. V. ) is seen in Matthew 22. 2-14. The inviters to and the bringers-in of the guests (vv. 3, 4, 6, 8, 10) are *douloi*. They were men entrusted with the invitation message, but the servants who bind the guest without a wedding-garment, and cast him into outer darkness, are *diakonoi*, that is, angels, who are the executors of His will in these final judgments.

*Leitourgos*, translated " minister, " primarily meant " one who performs public service at his own expenses, " then, later, " a public servant. " It has the meaning of one who fulfils an office or discharges a function, something of a representative character. In Hebrews 8. 2, the Lord Jesus is described as " a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle "; in Hebrews 1. 7, it is used of angels, and in Romans 10. 16, of Paul as one " ministering in sacrifice " (R. V. M. ) the gospel of God to the Gentiles. Also it is used of Epaphroditus, who " ministered " to Paul's need (Philippians 2. 25) as the representative on behalf of the Church of God in Philippi.

In the verb-form of the word *leitourgeo*, the prophets and teachers at Antioch " ministered to the Lord, " Acts 13. 1-2; and it was incumbent on the Gentile churches " to minister " unto the poor Jewish brethren, " in carnal things " (Romans 15. 27). It is also used of the official service of priests under the law, who minister day by day (Hebrews 10. 11).

There is a synonymous word *latreuo*, which is translated in some places " to worship. " [See "Paul on Worship, " by C M. Luxmoore, N. T. P. O. ]

*Oiketcs*, a household-servant, derived from *oikeo*=" to dwell" and *oikos*= " a house. "

" No household servant can serve two masters " (Luke 16. 13, R. V. M. ).

The text and R. V. M, show other occurrences in Romans 14. 4, 1 Peter 2. 18, and Acts 10. 7.

The meaning is very akin to that of *doulos*, but the servile nature of the service is not emphasised so much as in *doulos*. The *oiketes* is one of the household and almost one of the family, hence the severity of the *doulos* meaning is mitigated.

*Therapon* is one who offers service willingly, and out of love, and with dignity. It is but once used in the New Testament (in Hebrews 3. 5).

Moses is the honoured servant of God of whom it is used as one faithful in all God's House. In the Septuagint (*i. e.*, the Greek translation of the Old Testament Scriptures) the same Greek word is used of Moses in the following tender Old Testament scriptures: —Numbers 12. 7, Exodus 4. 10, Deuteronomy 3. 24, and Joshua 1. 2. And yet we also have in Revelation 15. 3 " and they sang the song of Moses the servant (*doulos*) of God and the song of the Lamb. " The same meek man, Moses, faithfully fulfils both the highest and the lowest types of service. Therein lay much of his greatness.

The *therapon* is actuated by love, and his service is higher, nobler, and freer than that of the *doulos*. Oh to aspire to this characteristic !

" Faithful in all His House as a servant. "

*Jas. Martin.*

### THE APPEALS TO JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

**From Sydney.** —Of Israel God said, " You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities. " It is a blessed thing to be near to the LORD, but such nearness brings added responsibility. The nearer we are to Him, the swifter and more severe will be the judgment for sin. " For the time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God " (1 Peter 4. 17).

It was impossible for God to walk with Israel while they continued in sin. This reminds us of 1 John 1. 6. We cannot have fellowship with God whilst walking in darkness. It is a far-reaching principle that agreement is necessary if two are to walk together. In the marriage sphere how disastrous this lack of agreement has oftentimes proved !

Several illustrations are used to shew that there is no effect without a cause. The thought is that of the herdman, one used to the life of the field. God had sent many warnings to His people through His prophets. These had been unheeded, but now severe judgment is predicted. In these judgments God will not be unmindful of the altars of Bethel, set up in rebellion against His will. We were reminded of the time when God will deal with the many altars of Babylon, utterly destroying the harlot and all her works.

We gathered that there had been much oppression in Israel, the rich oppressing the poor, and the strong the weak. The kine of Bashan were particularly powerful, and the pastures of Samaria especially good. These well-fed kine are used by the herdman to illustrate the oppressors. For their sin God had brought famine upon them by withholding the rain; He had discriminated between city and city; had sent blasting and mildew upon vine, fig and olive trees. He had sent pestilence upon Israel, yet for all this they had not returned to Him. Now the call comes, " Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. " For the LORD will judge His people.

*Thomas Kirkpatrick (Jun. ).*

**From Barrhead and Paisley.** —The appeals made to Judah and Israel are based on sound reasoning. God first tells them that they are the only family in all the earth that He knew, or that knew Him. He had looked to them so much, and had taught them in the ways He wanted His people to go, but they had failed. The prophet shows that there is a reason for God's anger by asking, " Will a lion roar in the forest when he hath no prey ? . . . shall the trumpet be blown in a

city and the people not be afraid ? " and similar questions which must all have the same answer: "No!" Therefore he reasons as to whether the LORD would punish His people for sins about which He had not warned them through His prophets. Would He not inform them that their **sin, if** continued, would bring disaster ?

God speaks forcibly when He says that He will cut off the horns of the altar and visit their transgressions upon them, shewing that the means of acquiring His mercy was removed. The person who had become guilty in a past day could, by catching hold of the horns of the altar, save himself from punishment.

Divine judgment seemed to be mainly on the palaces and rich houses, and indeed God seemed to see in their prosperity the reason why they had turned from Him. He would therefore humble the people again to make them realise that at one time they had lived **in** booths, and that **in** those days He had been their God and delivered them.

In chapter 4. the LORD reviews His past judgments on His people. There had been times of famine, periods of drought, of poor crops, of plagues and pestilences, battles which had ended in defeat, and other judgments. He now warns them that worse judgment is about to fall, for He says: "Prepare to meet thy God, C) Israel !"

God reminds them of His great power, and the majesty of His great works in creation, of how His mighty influence is felt everywhere, even in the thoughts of men, and declares that such a One is the LORD of hosts. What a majestic declaration, that this great Being, of such power, wisdom and glory, is the One with whom they now have to deal!

*J. McK. Gault.*

#### PROCLAMATION TO JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

**From Melbourne.** — Darkness was settling down upon Judah and Israel. Jehovah had loved them, but now in return they were rendering but lip service. Appeals by the prophets had met with little response. Judah had followed Israel's example in idolatry.

Israel was fast drawing near to that day when they would be removed out of His sight. The general condition was rapidly developing of which Isaiah spake: "This people draw nigh unto Me, and with their mouth and with their lips do honour Me, but have removed their heart far from Me" (Isaiah 29. 13). Judah had been privileged in certain of her kings, including Uzziah, of whom it was recorded, "He did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD." Yet, through Amos, Jehovah reveals the value He places upon their feasts, sacrifices, and offerings. How active they were outwardly **in** the service of Jehovah ! But the commandment of the LORD (Deuteronomy 15. 7-18) concerning the poor of His people had been disregarded. The reprovcr in the gate who sought to point out their sin was hated: those who spake uprightly were abhorred. The feasts of the LORD, the sacrifice and offerings, were of divine appointment, but these were of little value when lacking "a broken and a contrite heart" (Psalm 51. 17), or the condition described by Isaiah 66. 2: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and that trembleth at My word." Every godly Israelite knew the need of sacrifice, but if sacrifice and offering were not the outward expression of inward experience, it meant nothing either to God or to the offerer. In God's nostrils there was no sweet savour of the great coming sacrifice at Calvary.

" At ease in Zion and secure in the mountain of Samaria. " Though far removed from practical righteousness, the word of the LORD had failed to convict them of departure from Him. How true in **all** ages: " Having a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof " ! At another stage of Judah's history we hear the boast: " The temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, are these. " In the Gospels we find that " the feasts of the LORD " had degenerated into " feasts of the Jews, " and the house of God became " your house. " Continuance of Israel's blessings was dependant upon faith and obedience; they had no monopoly of divine favour, irrespective of their spiritual condition.

The things written aforetime were written for our learning: " Whose house are we, if **we** hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end " (Hebrews 3. 6).  
*T. W. Fullerton.*

**From Kilmarnock.** —In the opening words of Amos **5**, the prophet makes known the sad condition of Israel **as** the LORD sees it. " The virgin of Israel is fallen;... there **is** none to raise her up. " Had they remained faithful to the covenant made with the LORD they would have been head of the nations, but they had forsaken Him, and the prophet had warned them of coming judgment. The only way to avert that judgment was, **as** verse 4 says, " **Seek** ye Me, **and** ye **shall** live. " The golden calves had been set up at Bethel, and they had sought unto them, but they could not deliver them in their need. Again they are exhorted to " Seek the LORD "; **He** was the Creator and Upholder of the heavens above, and Ruler over the earth and the seas, and although **He** knew how great and manifold were their sins and transgressions, " It **may** be that **He** will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph " (verse 15).

However, the prophet warns them that there will be wailing " in the broad ways, " " in the streets " and " in the vineyards, " because the LORD was about to pass through them in judgment. Some were desiring the day of the LORD, thinking that perhaps they would escape; but he warns them that it would be a more terrible time, and although they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings **He** would not accept them, **unless** they sought unto **Him** and dealt righteously and justly.

**He** reminds them how the LORD had received the sacrifices and offerings from their forefathers in the wilderness, but they had worshipped gods of their own hands, which the LORD had forbidden, and **He** would cause them to go into captivity.

In chapter **6**, the prophet pronounces woe unto them that are living at **ease** and in luxury, and although they may have instruments of music like David's, they are quite unconcerned about their condition before God. They had evidently turned a deaf ear to the prophet's exhortations and warnings, and the LORD, **the** God of hosts, was about to raise up a nation against them that would afflict them. This was fulfilled when the Assyrians carried them captive into Assyria (see 2 Kings 17. 6).  
*A. G. S.*

### EXTRACTS.

From Glasgow. —**We** find that this proclamation to Israel is of a twofold character. In Amos **5**, we read: " Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation over you, **O** house of Israel. " Such words describe to **us** the deep longing in the heart of God for His people, so that they might return to Him in repentance, which would mean their salvation by God for the preservation of their nation, even **as** the words in verse **4** denote: " Seek ye Me, and ye shall live. " There are two things very noticeable in this portion of Amos: (1) God's warning of coming judgment; (2) God's mercy and invitation to forgiveness. In verses **2** and **3** we read that the virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise; she is

forsaken upon her land; there is none to raise her up. The city that went forth a thousand shall have an hundred left, and that which went forth an hundred shall have ten left. Here we see portrayed Israel in all her former glory, and later on in the chapter we see her in her fallen state, this declension being due to her idolatry and sin; thus again are we reminded of the scripture which says, " Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. " Israel had sown the wind, and was now to reap the whirlwind.

From verses 7 to 11 we see the knowledge of God put aside and His righteousness perverted, thus bringing upon themselves the judgment of God. When we think of the neglect of the word of God by that people, we are forcibly reminded of the same evil that characterised the nation when the Lord Jesus was among them.

Israel's desolation was certainly to be revealed, and the judgment of God was going to be meted out upon them, yet in His mercy God twice says unto them: " Seek ye Me, and ye shall live. " He also says, " Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you. "

With verses 12 to 14 of chapter 6. we would connect Isaiah 10. 1-6, and Jeremiah 5. 15, where we read of the nation God had appointed as the nation to punish His people Israel. Surely we can see from the earlier part of Amos 6. that instead of righteousness exalting a nation, their sin was bringing reproach upon them, and much more, the forsaking of God their Saviour who had delivered their forefathers from the land of Egypt. The goodness of God should have led them to repentance, but this was not the case. Israel still continued in her iniquity. Therefore God said: " The Lord GOD hath sworn by Himself, saith the LORD, the God of hosts: I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces: therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein. "

Declension is verily possible to-day among God's gathered together people, and it behoves us to be very careful, and above all very humble before God.

*Henry M. McCubbin.*

From Cowdenbeath. —Not only did God give unto Israel His law as contained in the ten commandments (Exodus 20. ), but in the following chapter He gave His judgments so that, if matters of wrong arose between, man and man, these would be put right. It was essential that, if as His people they should live in fellowship with Him, they should also be in fellowship one with the other, with no outstanding matters of difference left unjudged. Those who were appointed and entrusted to deal with such matters were solemnly charged to judge righteously (Deuteronomy 1. 16, 17). After Israel entered the land such men sat at the gate and there gave their judgment.

In the days of Amos this was one of the things which was lacking. According to chapter 5. 10, there were some at least among the elders who sat in the gate to discharge their responsibility in the fear of the LORD by reproving the wrong-doers and giving righteous judgment, but for this they were hated and abhorred. From verse 12 we learn that there were others who were accepting bribes and showing respect of persons. Thus the rich were being encouraged in their pathway of oppression and self-seeking, whilst the cause of the just and poor and needy was being turned aside. It was they who experienced the judgment being turned into wormwood. They tasted of the bitterness of unjust verdicts.

Although He laments over Israel and speaks of them as being fallen to rise no more, yet still He offers them the opportunity to return. If they would return and seek the LORD, then it must begin in this way—" establish judgment in the gate ": let matters be put right between individuals by righteous and equitable judgment; then great advancement will have been made towards the collective people being right before God.

In spite of their sad failure in regard to these things they yet continued in temple worship. The smoke of offerings was still to be seen ascending from **the** altar, and the noise of their songs and the melody of their viols could yet **be** heard emanating from the temple. In these God had no pleasure. He could say in strong words " I hate, I despise your feasts. " But let judgment roll down **as** waters and righteousness as an overflowing (R. V. M. ) stream. This was what God desired.

The Assyrian kings, having the lust for power, were in the days of Amos beginning to assert themselves. In 2 Kings 15: 10 **we** read of **an** Assyrian invasion against Israel in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, during whose reign Amos prophesied. Probably it was because the Assyrians had already manifested their might against Syria and the land of the Philistines that God asks the leaders of His people to go first to Calmeh in Assyria, then to Hamath, which **is in** Syria, and also to Gath. Such things which were happening apparently had no voice for the **chief** men in Israel, who were living in complete apathy regarding God's warnings of judgment overtaking them.

The men who were chiefly responsible for the condition of things in Israel had not tarried to consider what the outcome of their misrule and departure would be. They were happy in the thought that they had assumed authority unto themselves, little realising that the day was near when they would be stripped of their power by an invading nation which would also carry them away captive.

*James Bowman.*

**From Atherton.** —It **is** not without significance in this portion that God proclaims **Himself as the** God of hosts. It **seems** to be the key-word in contrast to the gods of the nations which the nation of Israel were now serving. They had failed to realize the great value of this wondrous title, " God of hosts " or " God of armies. " What **a** difference **it** would have made to the spiritual condition of the nation had they realised the value of the words used by the sons of Korah: " The LORD of hosts **is** with us; the God of Jacob **is** our Refuge " (Psalm 46. 7) **I**

He **is** also **a** God of righteousness and judgment, and He proclaims Himself to **His** people and indicates their sad departure from maintaining righteousness and judgment in their midst. **Of** them He says, " Ye who turn judgement to worm-wood, and cast down righteousness to the earth. " Three times reference **is** made to the gate of judgment (verses 10, 12, 15). It **is** an easy path indeed to follow in the way of those who depart from judgment, but **if** God's people would know **His** blessing, then righteousness and judgment must have their proper place. Oh to value the truth of chapter 5. 24 ! " But let judgement roll down **as** waters, and righteousness as a perennial stream " (Newberry).

'the words of chapter 5. 25 and 26, were quoted by Stephen (Acts 7. 42, 43) Stephen emphasizes the imperative need of **a** true heart condition. It was wanting then **as** in the days of Amos the prophet. God claims the heart, and nothing less will do for Him. Mere outward worship **is** valueless, and this Stephen was seeking to impress upon his hearers.

#### NOTICE.

Please note that papers for 1948 should be sent to Mr. J. Martin, 36, Whitley Crescent, Wigan, and not to Mr Prasher.

# BIBLE STUDIES.

" Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so " (Acts 17. 11).

VOLUME 15.

DECEMBER, 1947.

## CONTENTS.

	<i>Page</i>
Proclamation to I s r a e l . . . . .	91
Symbolical Visions: R e s t o r a t i o n . . . . .	92

### PROCLAMATION TO ISRAEL.

**From Barrhead and Paisley.** —In this portion God lays before the people the facts and the reasons why there **is** no longer any hope of judgment being deferred. He reminds them that they are still unrighteous, swift to destroy, and will not listen to reproof and correction. They are intent only on their own pleasures.

God **is** always content with a tenth part, but here, although they are exhorted to seek the LORD, there is not even a tenth exercised.

The place of the name, Bethel, was about to be removed, and the privileges which the people enjoyed there would no longer be available. [Bethel was not at that time the place of the Name. The reference in ch. 5. 5 is to the idolatry at Bethel. —G. P. ] God would have removed Himself far from them. They would require to get a fresh revelation of God. They would require to see Him as the great Creator who upholds all things by the word of **His** power, yet who can destroy **as** quickly as He can create.

The fruits of their prosperity, spacious houses and extensive vineyards, were to be lost to them because the LORD emphasises that it **is** their prosperity and ease to which He has taken exception. They lived in a world of feasts and solemn assemblies, of music, melody and extreme extravagance.

It would appear from verse 18 of chapter 5. that there were a few who seemed to desire the day of the LORD, not knowing what that involved. The day of the LORD for Israel is a dark day, the darkest in their history, when those who are to be saved will pass through terrifying experiences and many will suffer death.

There is mention of the affliction of Joseph. The people did not grieve for such, and cared not for the fact that it was Joseph's brethren who were the cause of his affliction. They themselves were given to oppression, and failed to **see** that the punishment for oppression was severe as was the case with Joseph's brethren.

In verse 8, however, God swears that He will destroy the city, and not even for ten men would He withhold judgment. It would seem here that He was more lenient with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah in an earlier day. The great house was to be smitten with breaches and the little house with clefts. These two houses would perhaps speak of the House of Israel and the House of Judah respectively.

Man by nature remains unchanged, and what was typical of the Israelite is typical of **man** to-day in general. But even among the children of God we find to-day a lack of interest and zeal, similar to that which existed in the days of Amos. Earthly prosperity is too apt to detract our attention from the things of the LORD, and to reduce the possibility of the development of the strength of spiritual character which marked out men like Amos. *J. McK. Gault.*

**From Brantford.** —Once again we hear one lamenting the condition of Israel, **as** he considers the words he must proclaim from the LORD, in contrast to a past day when God had pleasure in calling them His people. There was a time when their rejoicing and singing was unto the LORD, a happy people whose God was the LORD.

But this is not the scene which Amos looks upon. No, he views Israel as the LORD speaks of them. " I hate, I despise your feasts. " They had turned aside to worship in a more convenient place, and as the LORD had warned them in Leviticus 26., " I will not smell the savour of your sweet odours, " all their sacrifices and offerings became unsavoury to God. God does not want outward show, but looks to him who walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh truth in his heart (Psalm 15.). An obedient heart to God's will comes first, before God can delight in service.

No wonder that Amos declares she shall rise no more, there is none to raise her up; if God is against her who can help? But still there is a faint hope for them; the proclamation from the LORD calls upon them to seek Him that they might live. Long enough have they sought out their own way, transgressing in Bethel and Gilgal.

Instead of this they were foolishly desiring the day of the LORD, a day of darkness and thunderings, a day when the fierce anger of the LORD is turned against the wickedness of man. Who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? Surely not a people of whom He says, " I know how manifold are your transgressions and how mighty are your sins " (chapter 5. 12). The LORD Himself would witness against them and they would be in a worse condition. Now, at least, they could turn and seek the LORD. " Let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. " " Righteousness and judgment are the foundation of Thy throne. " Such characteristics He longed to see reflected in **His** people. Such rolling down like a mighty stream would wash away all the wicked ways of the people; justice would be done, the needy would be given their right, and the will of the LORD done from the heart. *J. McL., O. B.*

### SYMBOLICAL VISIONS: RESTORATION.

**From London.** —In the 7th chapter of Amos, three visions are seen by the prophet, and he is opposed by the false priest Amaziah.

#### 1. *The vision of the locusts* (chapter 7. 1-3).

Amos, in his first vision, saw locusts formed by the LORD in the latter growth after the king's mowings. The custom in Judaea for feeding cattle was by common pastures. The king's cattle and war horses being the most important were obviously given first feeding; hence the name " king's mowing, " which took place in March. Then the people fed their cattle on the grass of the latter or second growth, which sprang up in April. Thus the vision represents God's judgment on the people in sending the locusts to destroy the growth on which the sustenance of Israel's flocks and herds depended. Amos, on behalf of Israel, intervenes. "O LORD God, forgive, I beseech Thee; how shall Jacob stand? for he is small. " The LORD repented concerning this and said, " It shall not be, "

2. *The vision of the fire (chapter 7. 4-6).*

The second vision which Amos beholds is of a great fire consuming the deep and the land. This judgment **is** more serious than the first, but the prophet again intercedes on Israel's behalf, and the LORD again repents saying, "This also shall not be."

3. *The vision of the plumbline (chapter 7. 7-9).*

Amos sees the LORD standing beside a wall, holding a plumbline to see **if** the wall is straight. The test by God's word and holy law finds that all are guilty and must be condemned, and so the LORD says: "I will not again pass by them any more." "And the high places of Isaac shall be desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste" (verse 9). Thus the false worship and monarchy will be swept away by judgment.

*The opposition against Amos (chapter 7. 10-17).* Amaziah, the false prophet, accuses Amos of conspiring against Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel; he also accuses Amos of stirring up trouble among the people. Similar accusations were made against Jeremiah, against the Lord Jesus, and against the Apostle Paul.

Amaziah tells Amos to go and prophesy in Judah, trying to intimidate him. Amos resists the priest and proves the charges against him to be false. He announces Amaziah's doom, and the leading away of Israel into captivity by the Assyrians.

4. *Vision of the basket of summer fruit (chapter 8. 1-3).*

This basket of fruit shown to Amos shows Israel as being ripe for judgment. The LORD'S message to Amos concerning this **is**: "The end **is** come upon My people Israel... their songs shall be changed to howling, and there shall be many slain."

*Chapter 8. 4-10.*—The sinful actions of the wealthy section of Israel are exposed by the prophet. The rich oppressed the poor; they gave smaller measure and increased the prices, and they also used false balances. The judgment **is** sworn against these people in verse 7. The LORD said, "Surely I will never forget any of their works."

These verses regarding Israel may be compared with James 5. 1-6, which predict the same conditions prevailing in so-called Christendom before the Lord's coming. [Surely such a condition as James described existed in his day. —J. M.]

*Verse 9.*—"In that day... I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." This verse applies to that time of Israel's sin and judgment, when the glory of Israel ended like the sun going down at noon. Another day when the earth was darkened was at the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus; but the final meaning of the verse **is** in the day of the Lord's coming, which **is** mentioned in Matthew 24. 29-30.

*Verses 11-14.*—*The coming days of famine.*—"Behold, the days come... that I will send a famine... of the hearing of the words of the LORD." This famine happened in Israel when Shalmaneser carried them off to Assyria. Then God's word and light were completely withdrawn from them because of their sin (2 Kings 17. 23).

Another famine of this kind **is** approaching, as men reject the Lord's word and seek after false teachings. Then the day will come when the Church will be taken away, leaving a famine of the word among those ripe for judgment; many will run to and fro in vain search for the word of the LORD.

5. *The passing of a kingdom (chapter 9. 1-10).*

In this vision Amos sees the LORD standing by the altar with the people assembled before **Him**. He utters **His** word, and smites the lintel of the door, causing everything to tremble, and the building falls on the people's heads, and none escape. Judgment **is** complete, and verses 2 to 4 show that wheresoever they flee there shall be no escape. If they dig into hell **His** hand shall take them, and though they climb up to heaven He will bring them down.

God shows in verse 7 to 9 that the children of Israel had degraded themselves, and were **as** the heathen or Ethiopians in His sight, and that **as** a nation they would be destroyed off the face of the earth, apart from the House of Jacob who would be spared. Then in **His** own time **He** will lead the outcasts of Israel and Judah to their land. Meanwhile they are scattered among the nations; this **is** shown by the numbers of Jews in many countries in the world to-day.

*The Restoration (verses 11-15).*—While the ten-tribe kingdom did not return, the LORD "in that day" will bring back Israel and Judah, with the nations of the earth.

This kingdom was promised to David and is announced by the prophet: "I will raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old."

This prophecy **is** quoted by James in Acts 15. 16, when at the gathering of the council in Jerusalem, the Holy Spirit unfolds the purpose of God in the Gentiles. These verses in Acts show that the Gentiles are visited to gather from them a people for **His** name. After this **is** fulfilled, the Lord Jesus will return, Satan will be bound; as a result the tabernacle of David will be restored, and the Kingdom of heaven will be in manifestation when the Lord is enthroned as King. The permanency of the glory and blessing which the redeemed people of God shall enter into **is** displayed in the words: "I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them."

A. Reeve.

**From Birkenhead.**—The last three chapters of Amos describe the five visions which he **saw** concerning Israel. Although he spoke of himself as not being a prophet, neither a prophet's son, yet he was the right type of man whom God could raise up from the humble occupation of herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees to deliver **His** message to the people. **His** fear of the LORD and his affection for the people moved him to plead on their behalf, when the LORD **in** the visions of the locusts **and** the consuming fire threatened coming chastisements: "O Lord GOD, forgive, I beseech Thee; how shall Jacob stand? for he **is** small." But in the third vision Amos **sees** the justice of the LORD'S judgment as the plumbline **is** applied to the very crooked moral and spiritual ways of the house of Israel, and accepts the LORD'S words as final.

Proof that their iniquity was now full comes quickly, when Amaziah the priest of Bethel refuses to hear further the message of the prophet, and warns him to **flee** to Judah and prophesy there. In this he **is** typical of the nation, imitating others before him such as Ahab, and concerning which Isaiah spoke of them as "children that will not hear the law of the LORD: which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits: get you out of the way" (Isaiah 30. 9-11). The servant of God, in our day of closed ears, **is** called upon to preach the word faithfully and with all longsuffering (2 Timothy 4. 2).

In the basket of summer fruit we **see** the delight and satisfaction on the face of the husbandman as he displays with pride the result of the season's labour. But it spoke of the end of God's striving with His people, and its pleasant beauty was in deep contrast to the corrupt fruit God had found in the evil ways of the House of Israel. "The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works" (Amos 8. 7).

In the last vision, the LORD **is** seen standing beside the altar, the place of judgment, announcing His determination to pursue the ungodly to destruction, however much they may hide themselves. But **He** will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, but will sift the house of Israel among all the nations. **As** a kingdom, a sinful kingdom, they would come to an end, but the prophecy closes with the promise of the raising up of the tabernacle of David which **is** fallen down, and therewith the blessing of the Gentiles. This blessing has partly come to pass through the work of Christ in this day of grace according to the words of James in Acts 15., but will have its complete fulfilment when the LORD shall again plant the people of Israel, no more to be uprooted from the land which **He** gave them.

N. A.

## EXTRACTS.

From Barrhead **and** Paisley. —There seems to be a sense of finality in these last three chapters of Amos which we do not see in the other chapters.

In our studies we have seen promises of restoration follow threats of judgment one after another; now the final ones are given. This would give the impression that the career of the nation of Israel was under review, and that its end was seen from its beginning.

The captivity was ever a dark cloud overhanging the path of the people, always looming ahead. God was about to punish many times, but withheld His hand until it was no longer possible.

The narrative in chapter 7. is clear, and the plumbline tells a sad story of the departure from God's standard. The only way to make a wall comply with the plumbline is to knock it down and build it over again. The further it is from being straight, the greater amount will be knocked down; the greater the sin the greater the punishment. Israel was about to be broken down, only to be rebuilt at God's own pleasure. Many of them were about to leave their own land to die in exile in an unclean land, which to them was a distasteful and dishonourable happening.

We seem to have a direct reference to the crucifixion in chapter 8. verses 9 and 10. These verses are remarkable because they seem to apply more closely to this than to the great tribulation. The sun went down while it was yet day, and the feast was turned into mourning, mourning as for an only son and the end thereof is a bitter day. (Compare the bitterness of one who mourneth for a firstborn son in Zechariah 12. 10). [Many scriptures have a double fulfilment. Whilst the day of the judgment of the cross may be involved, I would think that the primary reference is to the time when the sun will be turned into darkness (Joel 2. 31). Note also when Zechariah 12. 10 is fulfilled—"In that day" (verse 11).—J. M.]

The long process of chastisement will be grievous, but God promises that He will raise again the tabernacle of David (chapter 9. 11). It would have been difficult to say when this would take place, had not the Holy Spirit recorded that James quoted this verse in Acts 15., telling us exactly when this will happen. It will be after God has taken out of the Gentiles a people for His name, and has completed the work relating to that people, that He will return to His ancient people, Israel.

He will restore to them the law, and renew the covenants. Their feasts and offerings as of old, and their morning and evening sacrifices will return. [It is remarkable that though we read in Ezekiel 46. 13-15 of the morning sacrifice, we do not read of the evening sacrifice. Will the evening sacrifice be offered again?—J. M. ] He will recompense them for their losses and give them the assurance that never again will such befall them. Prosperity will follow for the land, and harvests will be rich.

The sense of security which **is** given in the final verse **is** noticeable, because surely this could point to no other time but to the last great restoration which will follow the great tribulation. *J. McK. Gault.*

From Kilmarnock. —We are inclined to think that what **is** mentioned in verses 1 to 4 of chapter 7. did not actually happen, but they were threats of punishment because of the condition of the nation. However, owing to the intercession of the prophet the LORD said, "This shall not be."

While God's hand of judgment was stayed for the time, it was only because of **His** long-suffering and mercy. In the vision of the plumbline shown to Amos, the LORD said, "I will not again pass by them any more" (verse 8).

The " high places " and " sanctuaries " were to be laid waste, and the house of Jeroboam is specially mentioned for judgment. Evidently Amos had made known this prophecy to the people, as Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sends the message to king Jeroboam and adds, " The land is not able to bear all his words. " We are not told what effect, if any, the message had on the king, but Amaziah tried to induce Amos to leave Bethel and go to the land of Judah and prophesy there. In this we see Satan's wiles to make the prophet disobey the call of God. In the reply of Amos we see his humble mind and his purpose of heart to obey the call of God. He was not ashamed of his humble occupation as " herdsman " and " dresser of sycamore fruit, " but he had received a call from the LORD: " Go, prophesy unto My people Israel. "

Amaziah found it was a serious matter to interfere with the prophet of God, for the LORD'S message to him was of judgment on himself and all that belonged to him (see verse 17).

Israel had turned a deaf ear to the LORD'S message through the prophet, and verse 11 tells of a day when the Lord would send a famine, " not of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD. " In that day they would desire to hear a message from the LORD, but it would be too late; they had missed the opportunity. How important it is for those who are in the House of God that they give heed to the LORD'S message through His servants! Hebrews 3. 15 tells us: " To-day if ye shall hear His voice, harden not your hearts. "

Chapter 9. gives the vision of "the LORD standing beside the altar. " We take it that this refers to the altar in Bethel, and the message of judgment is against it and the priests who minister there. We wondered if this would refer to the earthquake that is mentioned in chapter 1. " The LORD, the GOD of hosts, is He that toucheth the land and it melteth. " The " sinful Kingdom " was to be destroyed, but He would preserve a remnant from among the house of Israel that were scattered among the nations. This we judge would refer to the great tribulation, and the closing verses of the chapter would point forward to the millennial reign of Christ their Messiah, when Israel will be planted again in their own land given by the LORD.

A. G. S.

From Cowdenbeath. —Although the five visions which Amos received are all recorded together, they were probably not given immediately following upon one another, but would cover a considerable period of time.

In the first two, God reveals His purpose to descend in judgment upon the land, but Amos stands in the breach and successfully pleads for Jacob. Few have been the men who could stand before God to plead and turn away His wrath. There have been occasions when God could have been pleaded with, but there was no interceding voice (Ezekiel 22. 30); but there are also times when pleading is in vain, when even the entreaties of men like Moses and Samuel would prove unavailing (Jeremiah 15. 1).

Upon seeing the third vision Amos did not plead. The plumbline revealed how far short Israel fell of God's standard. His purpose, because of His people's sin, was to destroy the places of idol worship and the house of king Jeroboam.

Amos not only received three visions and wrote them that they might be preserved to find their place in the sacred writings, but he also spoke them unto Israel at that time. As a faithful prophet he acted in keeping with what is written, " He that hath My word, let him speak My word faithfully " (Jeremiah 23. 28). For this he was evil spoken of, and accused of conspiracy against the king. " Blessed are ye when men shall... say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice... for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you " (Matthew 5. 11, 12). Amos is an outstanding example of a man who, -when he was called, responded and left all, and who acknowledged to a remarkable degree the LORD'S directing of him in His service. He recognized that it was his duty to speak God's message even although it was distasteful unto those to whom he addressed himself. From his lips the idolatrous priest heard the message of his own doom.

The basket of summer fruits which the prophet saw in the fourth vision, telling of the end of summer, was indicative of the end which was to come upon Israel. In the accomplishing of this a great transformation would take place. Their songs would be changed into howlings, and their feasts into mourning, and God's judgment would ensure that the guilty would be punished for their sins.

In the fifth and final vision, in which alone he saw the LORD, the word goes forth for the descent of the actual judgment. "Smite the chapters." For the sinners of His people there would be no escape. Although they might think to do so by going with the captives into Assyria, yet because of God's word which cannot fail of its fulfilment, the sword would slay them.

They failed to realise the greatness of the One who was speaking concerning judgment. His might could be seen in the works of creation and He had before revealed Himself as a God of judgment when He flooded the earth with waters. He had also shown His power to be able to transport a nation from one country to another as it pleased Him. Their own history proved this. He had brought up Israel from the land of Egypt; the Philistines from Caphtor (cp. Deuteronomy 2. 23); and the Syrians from Kir. As to the possibility of God being able to carry them to Assyria the evidence was before their eyes. As to the certainty of this being done the word of God had been spoken by His prophets. Israel would be scattered among the nations yet not utterly destroyed, for unto this same people, because of His early promise unto Abraham, God shall extend blessing.

*James Bowman.*

From Hamilton, Ontario. — Amos spoke truly of Israel when he said, "Ye put far away the evil day." As it was in the days of Noah, God's "Spirit shall not always strive with man," so in this portion, God's pleadings, which had been disregarded, have ceased and the time of judgment has come. Amos knew the dread reality of what these visions symbolized and he sought to cast the people on the mercy of God, as David had once said, "Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great." Hence we hear Amos beseeching God on behalf of Jacob merely because "He is small." Amos is an outstanding example of the possession of the great essential, whether one be trained in the school of the prophets, or be called from the farm, store, or work bench, that is, of being filled with the Spirit of God. In judgment they will be tested by the plumbline. God had given them instruction by His word how they were to build as a nation. When He chose them for His peculiar people, He desired that they might come up to His expectation, "as a wall built by the plumbline," but in this they had failed and theirs was a broken wall, with no separation from the other nations. God in like manner has a plan for us. Paul could say, "I laid a foundation; and another buildeth thereon. But let each man take heed how he buildeth thereon." It must have been difficult for God to utter the words in chapter 8. 2, "The end is come upon My people Israel." The summer and harvest were past, the fruit had been picked; the gloom of winter and desolation lay ahead, perhaps God's thoughts went back to the time of the first passover in Egypt, and the many times since, that He had passed by them in judgment, but now the end is come.

However, we are reminded of the words of the psalmist in Psalm 103. 8-9, "Jehovah is full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide," etc., and so we read in chapter 9. 8-9, "I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob." The day of restoration is fast approaching when Israel as a nation will enjoy abundant life, and God calls them "My people Israel," "I will bring again My people and will plant them." This is the work of the LORD. We find Israel at work too. "They shall build and inhabit, they shall plant and drink, they shall make gardens and eat," from which we learn that blessing and fruit come as we labour for Him.

As we look back to Solomon's day we see a people enjoying for a season a time of blessing from Jehovah in a reign of peace, but as we look to the future we see all this and more, for we see One of whom the words are true, "a greater than Solomon is here."

*A. Todd, P. Thomas.*

**From Atherton.**—It has been truly said that history repeats itself, and with deep solemnity and tragic sadness we read of the failure of God's people in successive dispensations—failure in the identical course and manner of their predecessors, who, having known the mighty hand of God in deliverance, in separation, in the establishment of divine worship and service, yet with deliberate purpose and utter defiance, they eventually backslide to such **an** extent that God's messengers are mocked, His words are despised, and His prophets scoffed at, until the wrath of the LORD arose against His people until there was no remedy (2 Chronicles 36. 16). In chapters 7. to 9. of Amos we reach this stage in the history of the ten tribes. Utter destruction and desolation must fall upon a people who had turned from God to idols, upon whom the word of the LORD through **His** prophets had not the slightest effect, whose hearts were far removed from their great Deliverer.

Four symbols are used to indicate the process and development of God's righteous displeasure. Concerning a basket of summer fruits, several suggestive thoughts were expressed:—

(a) The summer fruit like the plumbline **is** as a standard set against Israel. Her days of fruitfulness had passed. In earlier days God looked for fruit and found it to **His** great joy. "The firstfruits of **His** increase" (Jeremiah 2. 3). She was *only* the bearer of "early" fruit (Young), and at this later date bore no fruit to God.

(b) A symbol of the end of the harvest in Israel's experience at which time there is no fruit for God. See also Micah 7. 1.

(c) Summer fruit **is** suggestive of ripeness, and Israel was now ripe for the judgment of God.

(d) God presents in the basket a picture of **His** blessings which He fain would have desired to continue, but instead judgment **is** determined.

Even in such a scene of degradation and unbelief, we marvel at the partial stemming of the tide of divine judgment by the prayer of the faithful prophet—"the supplication of a righteous man *availeth much* in its working," and who can tell in our day and time, whether God will keep back **His** fierce judgment for the sake of those who continually "pray for the peace of Jerusalem"? Chapter 9. indicates the terrible judgments and searching devastation, as God, the God of love and deliverance, rises to do "**His** work, **His** strange work, and to bring to pass **His** act, **His** strange act" (Isaiah 28. 21, Hebrews 12. 29).

God's people may fail, but God's purpose and promise will never fail, for He will raise up the ruins and build again that which is fallen, and Judah and Israel shall know famine and pestilence, peril or sword, no more, but enjoy to the full the super-abundance of that glorious day in their own land, when "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose—they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God" (Isaiah 35. 1 and 2).

The query was raised regarding Amos 8. 11 to 13, as to what period it refers.<sup>1</sup> It was thought that primarily it refers to the condition of things in the great tribulation, i. e., the latter half of Daniel's seventieth week, when God's servants will not be able openly to give testimony from the word of the LORD. Also, the scripture may bear reference to the cessation of **His** dealings with them just prior to their being taken into final captivity to Assyria. **His** prophets would be removed and thus there would be a dearth or famine for the word of the LORD. Verse 14 seems to link it up with that period. Some thought exactly the opposite to this, while others did not think it had any application to the tribulation period at all.

E. Birchall, G. Sankey. •