

GRACIOUS INVITATIONS

Lesson I.

Hosea 14 : 1-9—Memory Verses 4-7

July 2, 1899

O Is'rael, return unto the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

2 Takewith you words, and turn to the LORD ; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive *us* graciously : so will we render the calves of our lips.

3 Assh'ur shall not save us ; we will not ride upon horses : neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, *Ye are* our gods : for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy.

4 I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely : for mine anger is turned away from him.

5 I will be as the dew unto Is'rael : he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Leb'anon.

6 His branches shall spread and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Leb'anon.

7 They that dwell under his shadow shall return ; they shall revive *as* the corn, and grow as the vine ; the scent thereof *shall be* as the wine of Leb'anon.

8 Eph'raim *shall say*, What have I to do any more with idols ? I have heard *him*, and observed him : I *am* like a green fir tree. From me is thy fruit found.

9 Who *is* wise, and he shall understand these *things* ? prudent, and he shall know them ? for the ways of the Lord *are* right, and the just shall walk in them : but the transgressors shall fall therein.

THE LESSON RETOLD

The lessons this Quarter are taken from the first part of the Bible.

They tell of how God took care of His people long before Jesus came to the world.



A HEATHEN IDOL

The story of these people was written by a great many different men. The name of one

writer was Hosea, who was a prophet.

Hosea lived at a time when the Jews were well off. Their they forgot God and made themselves horrid idols, and worshipped them as they saw the heathen people doing. Hosea felt terribly sorry, for he knew that, if they kept on as they were doing, some day their enemies would come and destroy them altogether.

God had sent Hosea to tell the people that He still loved them as a father and to invite them to change their ways and be forgiven.

This is what he said :—

“O Israel, come back to the Lord your God. Be sorry for your sins, and ask the Lord to forgive you. Tell Him that you mean to do better and that you know heathen idols can never help you.”

God spoke to them of their fine fruit and flowers and how they grew. The sun shines so brightly in that country that all plants would soon be burnt up if, every night, the dew did not come to water them. God said, “You yourselves need my help just as these flowers need dew. I am able to make you sweet and strong and useful like beautiful lilies and olive trees and grape-vines in your gardens, and the grain in your fields.”

God might have sent a terrible punishment to destroy these people, but He wanted