

enforcing themselves universally whether in heaven or on earth; Hosea starts from a religious relation of Yahweh and people, historically formed, the mutual, mystical intimacies of which engross his thoughts. Amos speaks of the goodness of Yahweh, Hosea first calls it 'love.' Amos inculcates compassion, 'humanity,' Hosea first finds the right word for this, (רַחֲמִים)<sup>1</sup>

This will suffice to show where these interpreters place the main emphasis in Hosea's teaching. It will appear by looking over the references cited in support of this view, that in most cases they are taken either from these introductory chapters and the Messianic allusions they contain, or from other Messianic passages. Let us now turn, therefore, from these chapters (which have been shown to present so many difficulties in the way of ascribing them to Hosea), and from the Messianic sections in general (which are at least questionable), to the parts of chs. iv.-xiv. which are manifestly reflections of Hosea's prophetic ministry as it was actually exercised. This is the only source to which we can look with confidence for the main elements of his teaching. What appears here to be the burden of his message? How far do these chapters confirm the view just indicated?

Hosea's prophecies do not appear to contain any doctrine of a believing remnant in the land, such as we have in Isaiah. Apparently he saw in the condition of the people no germ or promise of a future amendment; and the impending judgment, which he constantly threatens and describes, is not a "sifting process in which the wicked perish and the righteous remain," but the complete wreck of the nation which has wholly turned aside from its God. The people thought by copious sacrifices they could ensure the help of their God against all calamity; yet while they crowd to their high places and multiply their sacrifices, the nation is on the very brink of internal dissolution. There is "no faithfulness, nor kindness, nor knowledge of God in the land. There is nought but swearing, and breaking faith, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; they break out and bloodshed toucheth bloodshed" (iv. 1f.). The root of all this

<sup>1</sup>Davidson, HDB.