

chariots and horses in preference to Jehovah who was their God from the land of Egypt (xii. 9, xiii. 4), but it was exceedingly sinful. It was an adulterous policy. It was the desertion of her Divine Bridegroom for false lovers; and he refers to it in these words, "Ephraim hath hired lovers" (viii. 9). Her conduct towards Jehovah in this also is that of Gomer to the prophet—of "an adulteress so wanton as to purchase with her husband's money the affection and the embraces of a stranger."

Hosea saw that God's love to Israel was such as to demand her undivided affection and perfect confidence. She should make no agreement with Assyria nor Egypt nor any other nation, no matter how sorely pressed; no matter how dark the outlook, she must simply trust in him who hath said "Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed; neither be thou confounded; for thou shalt not be put to shame. For thy Maker is thy husband; the Lord of Hosts is His name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall he be called (Is. liv. 4, 5).

Again, his conception of God's love to Israel leads him to deplore the schism which had rent the two kingdoms asunder and enables him to see that the separate existence of the Northern Kingdom is a sin out of which other sins have grown. At the time, it was sanctioned as a protest against tyranny and despotism, but it should have had no permanent existence. The moment it became possible to unite with Judah they should have done so. Israel as a separate kingdom cannot live, more than anything which has no good reason for existence. God is one, there can therefore be no rivalry between Judah and Ephraim. Hosea yearns for the healing of the breach under a Davidic King and speaks in his earlier prophecies as if Providence were leading in that direction. We have such predictions as these: "Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together and appoint themselves one head, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel." (i. 11). "Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God and David their King; and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." (iii. 5). Here we see that in the fulness of time, by the power of Divine grace, enmity between Judah and Ephraim shall