

that the goodness of God should lead them to repentance; and, during the time of oppression, they sought help by taking the heathen into alliance instead of trusting in the living God. That this picture is not overdrawn is evident from contemporary history. In connection with the study of this book should be read the prophecies of Amos and Micah, also some parts of Isaiah. Light will be derived from the history of the times as delineated in the books of Kings and Chronicles. Sometimes indeed these histories are not very full, but what can be read between the lines is often as emphatic as what is openly expressed.

Such then was the nation to which the prophet was sent. He was raised up among his own people, to set before them their sins, to point out the inevitable downfall if there was not repentance, and to plead with them for the sake of the love of God to turn from their sins that they might live. For the delivery of such a message, the prophet was admirably fitted. He was in complete harmony with the Spirit that inspired him. If sin was to be denounced, he denounced it with the conviction that it was the worse thing in the world. If the consequences of sin were to be pictured out, he used no aimless language, but with a spirit tremblingly alive to the welfare of those who were his kinsmen, he pointed to the cloud surcharged with the elements of destruction and cried to his deluded countrymen to flee for refuge ere the bolt fell. If the love of God, the tender hearted yearning of the love of God, was to be held up as the grand constrain'g motive to turn the people from rebellion to obedience, his face was suffused with tears, and with warm passionate appeals which might well melt even hearts of stone, he beseeched the nation to turn from the error of its ways and to touch the sceptre of mercy which was stretched out still. Never did God raise up a prophet who, speaking after the manner of men, was more in unison with his message than Hosea the son of Beeri. In him were combined the spirit of the prophet Elijah and the spirit of the apostle John. At one time his words were like thunderbolts, and at another they distilled like dew, or fell like rain upon the new mown grass. This variety of emotion which was a necessary outcome of the character of his message has left its impress very markedly upon his style. Hosea has been called the Jeremiah of the northern kingdom. They are alike, and yet they are