

general sense is the same—namely, that earnest confession, sincere prayer, and thanksgiving must be substituted for animal sacrifice, just as in our day “endless song of constant praise for never-ceasing mercies” must be the chief sacrifice of every forgiven heart. Paying the necessary expenses of the church, and contributing to the various benevolent societies, all necessary and important, cannot take the place of the above-mentioned heart service.

3. Asshur. Israel had sought alliance with idolatrous Asshur—that is, Assyria (see chap. 5, 13; 7, 11, and 8, 9)—against the power of Egypt. **We will not ride upon horses.** The reference is without doubt to Egypt, famous for its war-horses and chariots. (See Exod. 9, 3, and 14, 9.) Solomon, contrary to law, imported horses from that country (1 Kings 10, 28). **The work of our hands.** The idols and the images made as the natural result of associating with heathen nations. No good man can associate with a bad man, unless it be to do him good, without more or less detriment to his soul. **The fatherless findeth mercy.** God is the father of man. Whoever does not believe and trust in God is truly an orphan.

4. I will heal their backsliding. Israel's apostasy is compared to a disease. Sin always weakens the powers of the soul. Unless the disease is cured, the result is spiritual death. **I will love them freely.** Spontaneously, because the state of their hearts was such as to attract the divine love. It does not mean that God loves them without any sacrifice or expense on their part.

5. As the dew. Contrast this phrase with the language of chap. 13, 15. The dew played a very important part in Palestine, where the rain is less abundant than with us. The very life of vegetation depended largely upon the heavy dews. As the dew causes the plant to grow, so the love of God makes glad the heart of man. **As the lily.** Lilies of various kinds were very common and prolific in Palestine, some roots producing no less than fifty bulbs. **His roots as Lebanon.** Not the mountain itself, compared to a gigantic tree, but rather the trees growing on the mountain ranges of that name. Lebanon is often used figuratively for the cedars growing upon it. (See Isa. 10, 34.)

6. His branches. Rather, saplings or suckers growing from the roots of trees cut down. Israel, though cut down, shall spring up again. **His beauty . . . as the olive tree.** An evergreen, much valued, not simply for its unchanging colors, but also for its precious and delicious fruit. The olive tree was a symbol of power and prosperity as well as of beauty (Psa. 52, 8, and

128, 3). **His smell as Lebanon.** The slopes of Lebanon are covered with odoriferous vegetation, aromatic trees, shrubs, and flowers.

7. His shadow. Israel restored to God's favor is like a magnificent tree, affording shelter and protection. **Revive as the corn.** Better, shall grow or produce corn, shall have abundant crops. **Blossom as the vine.** Israel shall be as beautiful and prolific as the vine. (Psa. 128, 3). **The scent.** Better, as in the margin, “his memorial”—that is, his name or renown. (Comp. Eccles. 7, 1, where we read, “A good name is better than precious ointment.”) **Wine of Lebanon.** Lebanon grapes have always been celebrated; so also the wine made from them.

8. Ephraim shall say. Notice that “shall say” is not in the Hebrew. Ephraim is used here for the entire ten tribes, as often by the prophets. (See Isa. 7, 2, and often in this book.) **What have I, etc.** The “I” refers to God. The idea, then, is, Why should you worship me under the form of idols? **I have answered, etc.** I, Jehovah. **Will regard him.** I shall be propitious to, shall care about, Ephraim. **I am like a green fir tree.** God compares himself to a shade tree, “evergreen and ever fresh.” **From me is thy fruit found.** Affording abundant supply for every want. The blessings of God are often described under the emblem of the tree, “I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.” (Sol. Song 2, 3.)

9. These things. The warnings, promises, and prophecies of Hosea. **The ways of the Lord are right.** Or rather, straight—that is, his dealings with men and the course prescribed by him for his followers. **The just shall walk in them.** Not stand, but walk, and so progress in the pathway of righteousness. **Transgressors shall fall therein.** Transgressors are those who do not keep in the way, who deviate from the truth, who stumble at God's commands, who are not willing to keep the law of Jehovah as revealed in his word and in their conscience; those who doubt, disbelieve, and disobey, who refuse to walk in the light. The ways of God are straight and level to the good, but hard and thorny to the wicked. Christ is the way; blessed is the man who walks in him. Reader, there are only two ways,—one leads to God and happiness, the other to Satan and eternal perdition. On which way are you?

Thoughts for Young People.

Hosea's Good Advice to Us.

1. Repent. Change your life's aims. Face what you had your back toward; turn your back toward what you faced. Love (so far as love is