

The Sabbath School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

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THE PROMISE OF REVIVAL.

JUNE 10th.—Hosea 14: 1-9.

Golden Text: Hosea 13: 9.

The Time.—Hosea's prophetic career extended over at least 59 years. He was contemporary at one time or another of his life with Jonah, Amos, Joel, Isaiah, and Nahum. He describes the frightful social and political state of Israel after the death of Jeroboam II; predicts the destruction of Samaria; and may have lived to witness the captivity of Israel, 2 Kings, xvii. The last chapter is very different in tone from the others. Every word is full of mercy, hope, and promise.

1. *The Entreaty.*—"Israel" the name of acceptance given by God to their forefather; not Jacob, nor Ephraim, nor Samaria. "Thy God," though they had cast Him off, Ro. 11, 2. "Fallen," and from no other cause than "thine iniquity."

2. *How shall we come to God?*—Not with sacrifices, not with silver and gold, not with merit; but with "words," worthless in themselves, precious as expressing the desires of the heart; with "words" and "turning to God."

The form of words given teaches, (1) what is between God and us; (2) that He alone can take it away; (3) that *all* must be taken away before He can receive us; (4) that not till it is taken away can we offer the sacrifices of thanksgiving, Ps. 51, 12-15: 69, 30.

3. *Renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil.*—Asshur was the chief of the princes of this world, Ps. 146, 3. The horse was the symbol of warlike strength, Ps. 20, 7; Prov. 21, 31; Deut. 17, 16. As they renounce false help they see Him—the Father—in whom is mercy and true help.

4-7. *God's gracious promises.*—Fickleness is the characteristic of man, Ps. 78. In healing this, He heals our root weakness, Matt. 16, 18, John 13, 1.

We love the love-worthy. He loves "freely," impelled by no motive. God is love.

Various figures to express the manifold grace of God, and the fruits of grace in the soul—the dew, silently distilled, renewed day by day, refreshing and fructifying; the lily, emblem of purity and beauty; Lebanon of stability; a wide-spreading tree, of en-

largement, Matt. 13, 32; the olive, of fruitfulness and perpetual green, Ps. 52, 8; the aromatic plants and flowers at the base of Lebanon, of the sweet odours of prayers and good deeds, 2 Cor. 2, 14; Phil. 4, 18; Rev. 5, 8.

8. *Dialogue between returned Ephraim and his reconciled God.*—Ephraim renounces idols forever. God hears and accepts his profession. Ephraim exults in his fresh and vigorous beauty. God reminds him of the source of all his fruit, John 15, 5.

9. *The lessons to be learned by us.*—Same as in Ps. 107, 43; Dan. 12, 10. "Prudent" and "wise;" or wise in action as well as in thought. We advance in grace only as we practise what we know. Christ is *the way*; and He is a stone of stumbling to the transgressors. Ps. 69, 22. 1 Peter 2, 7, 8.

HOME STUDIES.

M.	Hos.	6:	1-11— <i>Repentance Enjoyed.</i>
T.	2 Kings	15:	8-22— <i>Zachariah—Menahem.</i>
W.	2 Kings	15:	23-30— <i>Pekahiah—Hoshea.</i>
Th.	Hos.	8:	1-14— <i>Destruction Denounced.</i>
F.	Hos.	11:	1-12— <i>Israel's Ingratitude.</i>
S.	Hos.	13:	1-12— <i>Israel's Self-destruction.</i>
S.	Hos.	14:	1-9— <i>Promise of Blessing.</i>

THE CAPTIVITY OF ISRAEL.

JUNE 17th.—2 Kings 17, 6-18.

Golden Text: 2 Kings 18, 12.

I. *The Captivity.*—The Eastern and Northern tribes had already been carried off (15, 29); but the "pride and stoutness" of Samaria had not been humbled, Isa. 9, 9. Now, Samaria itself and the kingdom of Israel is utterly and forever destroyed. The Assyrians according to their uniform policy carried off the flower of the inhabitants to people other parts of their empire, and replaced them with heathen colonists, v. 24.

II. *The causes of the Captivity.*—Not their weakness nor the strength of the enemy, nor any of the secondary causes that men make much of; but (1) the rebellion of Israel against Jehovah their covenant God, the God which delivered their fathers from Egypt. The obligation which this imposed on them is set forth in the preface to the ten commandments, Exo. 20, 2. (2) Their secret sins and open idolatry. They covered the whole land—from the little towers in the wilderness and country built for the protection of the flocks and fruits to the strongest and greatest cities—with their altars and idols, v. 8-12. (3) Their disregard of the prophets who sought to recal them from their backsliding, v. 13-15. God not only gave them the law once for all, but raised up inspired preachers of it in every generation. (4) Their national apostacy, in the worship of the two calves, from the days of Jeroboam. Dynasty succeeded dynasty,