

of reformation like those of v. 3. The Greek version translates "the fruit of our lips". The meaning is the same as in our version.

V. 3. *Asshur* (Assyria) *shall not save us*. Hosea had blamed Israel for losing her head, running, like a silly dove (ch. 7 : 11), now to Assyria, now to Egypt. Israel is now to turn away from such feverish politics, to turn to the Rock of her salvation ; that Rock is steadfast. *We will not ride upon horses* ; apparently a reference to political intrigue with Egypt, the land of horses (see ch. 7 : 11 ; Isa. 30 : 16). *The work of our hands* ; idolatrous images of their own making. *Ye are our gods*. Israel's religious devotion had been as feverish and unsteady as her politics, ch. 13 : 2. *In thee the fatherless findeth mercy* ; or a father's love : this is the real hope of the penitent, the ultimate test of a God who can meet the needs of mankind.

II. A Proclamation of Pardon, 4-6.

V. 4. *I will heal their backsliding* ; their forsaking of the Lord, here pictured as a disease that needs cure. The abruptness with which God is here introduced without being named, suggests how swiftly and joyfully the heavenly Father hastens to meet His wandering children. We have to assume that the people have turned to God in penitence, and we read in vs. 5-9 God's gracious answer and promise of rich blessing. *I will love them freely* ; "love them not because they deserve it, but because it is My very nature to love". As soon as the barriers raised by Israel's sin are removed, God's love rushes out. *Mine anger is turned away*. No longer does Jehovah turn to His people a front of wrath, but of love.

Vs. 5, 6. *As the dew*. See Light from the East. As the heavy "dew", in Palestine, counteracts the dry heat and keeps vegetation alive, so the influences that make our lives fruitful come from hours of meditation and communion with God. *As the hly* ; an emblem of the beauty in which God's people will grow. *Roots as Lebanon* ; the long ridges of foot-hills leading up to Mount Hermon, the outstanding peak of the Anti-Lebanon range which runs parallel to that of Lebanon. The people of God will be like that deep-rooted and steadfast mountain. *His branches shall spread*. The pardoned

child of God will be like one of the wide-spreading cedars of Lebanon, with their beauty and fragrance. *Olive tree* ; with its silver-gray foliage, fresh in summer and winter alike, often used as an emblem of Israel's unfailing prosperity (see Ps. 52 : 8 ; Jer. 11 : 16). *His smell as Lebanon* ; with its ancient cedars.

III. Israel Restored, 7-9.

V. 7. *They that dwell under his shadow shall return*. Probably a better translation is : "They shall return and dwell under My shadow", that is, Jehovah's. *Revive... blossom* (Rev. Ver.). Israel shall enter upon a new era of vigor and fruitfulness. *As the vine* ; a reference to the grapes of Lebanon, which are sometimes as large as plums, while its *wine* has been called the best in the East, or even in the world.

V. 8. *Ephraim* ; a name for the whole of Israel, from its chief tribe. *What have I to do, etc.?* Israel forsakes all the idols formerly worshiped. *I* ; that is, God. *Will regard him* (Rev. Ver.) ; look after him, care for him. *I am like a green fir tree* ; a picture, still reflecting the Lebanon scenery, of God as the Protection and Shelter of His people. *From me...thy fruit*. Israel's fruit grows on the divine tree (compare allegory of John, ch. 15).

V. 9 reminds one of Proverbs. It expresses the wish that the teaching of the book may be taken to heart.

Light from the East

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DEW—In spring, and late in the autumn, dew is formed in Palestine, as it is in our own countries, on cloudless nights, by the air, heated during the day and loaded with moisture, coming in contact with the cool earth, and the moisture in it being condensed. But the dew on which so much depends in the Holy Land, and which is used in the Bible as a figure of precious blessings, is a different thing. From the first week in May to the middle of October no rain falls, the sun shines all day with great power, all vegetation is parched and would utterly perish but for the scriptural dew, which is really a night mist. During this season the winds are from the west and come laden with