

House of the Lord.

This is where the passover was to be observed. From the time of the setting up of the images at Dan and Bethel after the division of the kingdom, but few of the house of Israel had visited Jerusalem to worship.

Keep the Passover.

This great religious festival had not been observed with any regularity for a very long time by the Hebrew nation, on account of the division of the kingdom and the unhappy results which followed that division. It was the earnest desire of Hezekiah to see this great national festival re-established. The leaders of his own kingdom having heartily approved of his proposal, the necessary steps were taken to secure its observance with becoming solemnity by the nation as a whole.

2. Second month.

The appointed time for the observance of the feast was the 14th day of the first month. It being judged impossible that the temple, the priests and people could be all duly sanctified in time for that date, instead of postponing the feast for a whole year it was resolved to take advantage of a provision in the law of observance, Num. 9: 6-13; whereby individuals who were not able to observe the feast at the right time could observe it on the fourteenth day of the second month.

5. Established a Decree.

The proclamation for the observance of the festival, would have authority throughout Hezekiah's own kingdom, but the permission of the king of Israel would require to be secured before notices could be circulated in that kingdom. While Hoshea was not religiously inclined, he was more favorable to religious liberty than any of his predecessors, and from what followed it is evident that his permission was secured.

6. Posts went.

Runners or royal messengers, well mounted, each covering a certain district, when the messages would be taken on by others.

Turn again.

The proclamation of the king was accompanied by a most earnest personal message from the king calling the people to repentance. In this message he not only urges the people to attend to the worship and service of God as a religious duty, but sets forth the great advantage which would follow a return, in a true

spirit of penitence, to the faithful observance of all that pertains to the worship of Jehovah.

Remnant.

This term manifests the fact that Assyrian invaders had been making expeditions against Israel and had carried many of the people into foreign exile.

7. To desolation.

In chapter 29-8 we have revealed the sad consequences of the neglect and decay of religion in their midst. To this is to be traced all their calamities. God in his displeasure had given them over to trouble, to the sword, to captivity.

Stiffnecked as your fathers.—Their fathers had been a provoking people, ever since they came out of Egypt. At Horeb they made a calf and worshipped it. Their apostasy and idolatry was their ruin. He pleads with them that they will not let their corrupt minds and stubborn wills continue in rebellion against the will of God.

Yield yourselves unto the Lord.—If we are to enter into communion with God, it is necessary that we enter into covenant with him. "Yield to him," to be at his command, at his disposal, to do or suffer his will.

If ye return.—Return to God in the way of duty and worship, will result in a visitation of God in mercy and compassion. Those who seek to worship and serve God will find him merciful, gracious, and full of compassion.

Laughed them to scorn.—It is not surprising, that, after the long-continued neglect of the worship and service of God, an attempt to revive the passover festival would in many cases be treated with ridicule and the call to observe it treated with indifference.

Divers came to Jerusalem.—Many from the very districts where the messengers were insulted and ill-used, accepted gladly the invitation. In the kingdom of Judah the feeling was unanimous and enthusiastic, and the delight very marked in view of the festival. In Israel, while not so marked in their readiness to fall in with this service, yet there was a willingness to comply. The religious division between the two kingdoms had been greatly modified by the removal of the golden calves, the one at Dan by Tiglath-Pileser, and the one at Bethel by Shalmanezar.

As a consequence of this modification, many from the kingdom of Israel had resumed their