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HERMAN H. PITTS.

to-day from the way pursued twenty-five years ago! How different the modes of travel! We have the telegraph and the telephone, and the modern post-office. And they are improvements on the old methods.

Now, the church must keep apace with all this progress, if she would hold her own, and do her work. We must have new appliances, new conveniences, and we must adopt new methods of work, corresponding in some measure with the progressiveness of the age. The church gets into ruts, stereotyped methods of work, and utterly wrong ways of doing things; and then she needs a reformation, something like that which the day of Pentecost inaugurated, and the reformation of religion in the sixteenth century effected.

I have the feeling that in our day there is need of a wide deep reformation in the church, before she can do the work needing to be in society, and throughout the world. But I question whether it is in the line of advanced modern thought and modern philosophy. I rather think it will be a going back to more scriptural methods, to the grand simplicity of apostolic times. We have been drifting away too much in the direction of the world and its ways, and we want to get back to the simplicity of the gospel.

We may thus find that one reason, why we are not enjoying the years of the Lord's right hand, is because the church is not more in line with modern progress, and is not in fuller sympathy with the Spirit of the Lord as manifested in these modern times. We need reforming and reviving. We need to be educated up to our duties and responsibilities. Let us not be afraid of the unrest, the sharp criticisms and acrimonious discussions, and the loud cries of heresy, that are to-day disturbing the church; for out of this chaos and confusion will arise a new earth and new heavens, a better state of things, that will do more for the world. The right hand of the Lord is in all this, and it will be manifested. Oh, as a church and people, let us be alive to our opportunities! The Lord has blessed us in the past, but He can bless us still more. But it is only as we ourselves are faithful and earnest He can do, or will do, by his right hand, anything for us.

Asking a Blessing.

There is nothing which it is right for us to do, but it is also right to ask that God would bless it; and, indeed, there is nothing so little but the frown of God can comfort it into the most sad calamity, or his smile exalt it into a most memorable mercy; and there is nothing we can do but its complexion for weal or woe depends entirely on what the Lord will make it.

It is said of Matthew Henry that no journey was undertaken, or any subject or course of sermons entered upon, no book committed to the press, nor any trouble apprehended or felt, without a particular application to the mercy-seat for direction, assistance and success. It is recorded of Cornelius Winter that he seldom opened a book, even on general subjects, without a moment's prayer. The late Bishop Heber, on each new incident of his history, or on the eve of any undertaking, used to compose a brief prayer imploring special help and guidance. A late physician of great celebrity used to ascribe much of his success to three maxims of his father's, the last and best of which was, "Always pray for your patients."

Suggestions for Young Men.

Nothing begets confidence in a young man sooner than a habit of punctuality sobriety and accuracy.

Money possesses a magnetic power; it stirs the world from its centre to its circumference: it shapes the destinies of nations as well as those of individuals.

Those who generally succeed make themselves merchants or business men by their unceasing application and toil; whatsoever their hands find to do they do it with all their might.

Establish a reputation for uprightness, promptness and fair dealing; and you are on the road to success; let all your transactions be based on integrity; make your word as good as your bond.

Success is an object most universally desired, and can only be obtained by the exercise of good judgment, well directed energy, combined with good habits, industry, economy and perseverance.

God gives us always strength enough and sense enough for what he wants us to do; if we either tire ourselves or puzzle ourselves, it is our own fault. And we may always be sure, whatever we are doing, that we cannot be pleasing him if we are not happy ourselves.—*Ruskin.*

Christians find God's service to be perfect freedom, his yoke easy and his burden light such a burden as a pair of wings to a bird; they would be awkward and troublesome and useless to be tied on; but as living parts of his body they are graceful and pleasing, and the instruments of flight toward heaven.—*Lay.*

No evil is insupportable but that which is accompanied with consciousness of wrong.

The Sabbath-School.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON.

Second Quarter-Lesson VII.- May 17.

SIN THE CAUSE OF SORROW.—Hos. 10 : 1-15.

GOLDEN TEXT.—*Your iniquities have separated between you and your God.*—Isa. 59 : 2.

THE TIMES IN WHICH HOSEA PROPHESIED. In the first part of Hosea's life, Jeroboam II. was reigning. The nation was honeycombed with the spirit of idolatry and sin. Outwardly, Jehovah-worship still continued to predominate; but inwardly, the worship of idols was almost supreme. Every commandment of God was broken habitually. All was falsehood, adultery, bloodshedding. Those who were first in rank were first in excess. Corruption had spread throughout the whole land.

HOSEA'S EFFORTS FOR THE SALVATION OF THE NATION.—By a Vivid Symbolism (chaps. 13). Commentators are divided as to whether chaps. 1 and 2 are a record of Hosea's own life and experience, or are merely an allegory.

By denouncing Sin. This Hosea does all through his prophecy, with the earnestness of a prophet who had lived near to God, and had felt the power of his preaching in his own soul.

By Love and Hope. Hosea's denunciations are all the fruit of love to the nation. God longs for their return to his covenant. More than once the prophet bursts out with hope and promise. "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily."

By Invitation and Example. Near the close of Hosea's mission Hezekiah came to the throne of Judah, and inaugurated a reformation. He sent letters of invitation throughout Israel for the people to join again with Judah in the worship of Jehovah. The crusade against idols and high places extended into the territory of Israel.

A PORTRAIT OF A SINFUL NATION.—Vers. 1-5. *Israel is an empty vine.* Literally, one which poureth out, poureth itself out into leaves, emptying itself in them, and empty of fruit. *He bringeth forth fruit unto himself.* It had a rich show of leaves, a show also of fruit, but not for the Lord of the vineyard, since they came to no size or ripeness. Yet to the superficial glance it was prosperous, healthy, abundant in all things, as was the outward state of Israel under Jehoash and Jeroboam II. *According to the multitude,* etc. The material wealth of the country served to strengthen and extend the idolatrous system of worship. They are evil, not only in despite of God's goodness, but because he is good.

God's People like a Vine. Planted by God. Deriving life and power from God. Cultured, enriched by God. Protected by God. All this with the expectation of abundant fruit, love to God, love to men, all good actions, labors for the spread of God's kingdom. To bear fruit for itself, and not in spiritual life and works, is to be doomed to destruction. God first prunes and cultures to make it bring forth fruit. If these fail then it must be cut down. *Their heart is divided* between God and their idols; they would not wholly part with either. God rejected such half-service. *They shall be found faulty.* Shall be convicted of guilt, and shall bear it. *Shall break down their altars.* The land will be destroyed, idols, altars, and all. *We have no king.* The kingdom shall be destroyed, referring to the times when king after king was dethroned, or to the final destruction. Their hearts acknowledged that this was because they *feared not the Lord.* And so long as this was true, *what then should a king do to us?* A king, if they had one, could not help them, so long as they feared not the Lord. *They have spoken words.* With no truth or sincerity in them. *Swearing falsely to make a covenant.* Better, they swear falsely, they make covenants. *Thus judgment.* The divine judgments of the people. *Springeth up as* (a) *hemlock.* An umbelliferous plant, bitter and abundant. The divine judgment shall spring up in great abundance, bitter and deadly. *Shall fear because of the calves.* Jeroboam's golden calves. *Of Beth-aven.* "House of vanity," the degraded name of Bethel "the House of God." *The glory thereof.* Of the golden calf, its wealth, its temple, its gorgeous ceremonial. *It* (the idol god, in whom they trusted) *shall be also carried unto Assyria.* With the people who worshipped it. *A present to king Jareb.* A nickname for the king of Assyria. *Ephraim* (a name for Israel, as the leading spirit in it) *shall receive shame;* that is, the Assyrian king becomes the conqueror of the ten tribes. *Shall be ashamed of his own counsel;* shall find out what a mistake it was to set up a helpless idol as the protector of the nation. *As for Samaria, her king is cut off* i. e., the monarchy itself. *As the foam upon the water.* A bubble, or one of those little shreds which float on the surface of the water. So easily was Hoshea, their last king, swept away by the flood which broke in on Ephraim from Assyria. *Aven* For Beth-aven. *The sin of Israel.* Where Israel sinned, and by which the king led the people into sin. *The thorn,* etc. This expresses the desolation of the place. *And they shall say* (in the terrors and sufferings of that time) *to the mountains, Cover us.* The doom of the people would be so terrible that they should choose death rather than life. *Thou hast sinned from* (or more than in) *the days of Gibeah.* Gibeah is emblematic of gross and cruel sensuality, in allusion to Judg. 19 : 20 30, just as Sodom is used for unnatural vice. *There they stood,* &c. Israel remained in that sin. Just as the Benjamites offered a stubborn resistance to the onset of the rest of Israel at Gibeah, so the Israelites now persist in their old iniquities, and defy Jehovah. *It is in my desire.* When I think it best, the chastisement, long delayed, will come. God does "not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." *The people.* Hostile nations. *Shall be gathered against them.* God's instruments for their punishment. *When they shall bind,* etc. (Rev. Ver., When they are bound to their two transgressions). The two golden calves at Bethel and Dan. *Ephraim is as a heifer that is taught.* Trained carefully, by gentle treatment. *And loveth to tread out the corn.* This work was pleasant and easy. The heifer could eat freely as it walked round the threshing-floor. Such was Israel's prosperity, easy work, plenty to eat, and a pleasant life. *I passed over* (spared; i. e., I did not put any yoke upon her) *her fair neck.* The meaning is that Jehovah has hitherto preserved his people from the yoke of captivity. *I will make Ephraim to ride* (Rev. Ver., I will set a rider upon Ephraim). Ephraim should be reduced to hard, slavish work, and plough the hard clods. *Judah* also should join in the punishment, as she had in the sin. *Sow to yourselves in righteousness.* Sow righteous deeds, love to God, and just deeds to men. The only way to reap is first to sow *Reap in mercy* (Rev. Ver., according to mercy). You will reap what you have sown, and according to what you have sown. *Break up your fallow ground* that has lain so long uncultivated, bearing thorns and weeds. Change your whole conduct. *For it is time,* etc. There is still time to seek Jehovah. *Rain righteousness.* Send his gracious influences from above. *Ye have ploughed wickedness.* You have cultivated wickedness. And necessarily you *reaped iniquity* for the harvest. The iniquity was in their own characters and lives. *Ye have eaten the fruit of lies.* They had been faithless and false to God and therefore had to eat the fruit thereof, in God's turning away from them. Others were faithless and false to them. Their treason to God produced treason to themselves. *Thou didst trust in thy way.* In your own way, and not in God's; in armies, and not in righteousness and obedience. *Therefore shall a tumult arise.* A confused noise, on account of the approach of invaders. *As Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel.* Probably on the west of the Sea of Galilee, near Tiberias, or near Pella east of the Jordan. *So shall Bethel do unto you.* The results of your sin will be such a terrible slaughter by your enemies. *In a morning,* etc. All has happened as quickly as time seems to have passed when we awake in the morning.

PRACTICAL HINTS.

God sends his great prophets in the worst of times when they are most needed.

Bad morals are the fruit of bad religion.

We must take every possible means to impress religious truths and duties upon the hearts and consciences of men.

Denunciations of sin should be with tears and tender love.

The marriage relation expresses the relation of God to his people,—a free choice of each other, supreme love, reciprocal love, faithfulness, constancy, union of spirit and purpose.

Intentional wrong-doing, carelessness, thoughtlessness and ignorance can be more or less guarded against and corrected, and it's every one's duty to grow out of such habits.