



EPHRAIM feedeth on wind, and followeth after the east wind: he daily increaseth lies and desolation; and they do make a covenant with the Assyrians, and oil is carried into Egypt. ²The LORD hath also a controversy with Judah, and will punish Jacob according to his ways; according to his doings will he recompense him. ³He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God: ⁴Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; ⁵Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial. ⁶Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually. ⁷He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress. ⁸And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin. ⁹And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast. ¹⁰I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets. ¹¹Is there iniquity in Gilead? surely they are vanity: they sacrifice bullocks in Gilgal; yea, their altars are as heaps in the furrows of the fields. ¹²And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. ¹³And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved. ¹⁴Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him. (Hosea 12:1-14)

Is there a spiritual or physical profit from living a life of decadence and immorality? We all know the answer to that; however, in our day, as in those of Ephraim, we feed upon unwholesome foods and soul-killing perversions. The East Wind in Israel sweeps from across the hot sands of Arabia (the Simoon) and brings no benefit but rather famine and hurt. The East Wind is desolate and represents the socially demoralized conditions which are heirs of lawlessness and licentious living. Rights without responsibility is nihilism. Even our common social language is filled with that East Wind – *Should a wise man utter vain knowledge, and fill his belly with the east*

wind? Should he reason with unprofitable talk? or with speeches wherewith he can do no good?
(Job 15:2-3)

Our multitude of foreign alliances has placed America in the web of the globalist spider. In surrendering our destinies to compacts of mutually assured destruction, we lose the rudder of our national vessel. Ephraim had made such alliances with the ungodly Assyrians that will lead to bondage as much as that of Egypt, and so will our entangling alliances abroad (as prophesied by President George Washington).

The Finger of God, in judgment, points not only to Ephraim and Israel, but also to Judah . . . and ultimately to every nation whose behavior demonstrates an abandonment of faith and truth. Jacob becomes a symbol of treachery, but even that treachery has drawn him in tears to the Lord's side. Though Esau was the first-born of Isaac, not by much. Jacob struggle within the womb against Esau and grabbed his heel as He was withdrawn first from his mother's womb. Later, he deceived his father in giving him the blessing that belonged to Esau. But God favored the lesser son of stature to that of the greater. Why? Because Jacob constantly strived for the better blessings of God while Esau would lightly trade those blessings for a bowl of porridge. The life of a Christian is a life of struggle – always seeking a better city. *Yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed: he wept, and made supplication unto him: he found him in Bethel, and there he spake with us; A man who will wrestle even with God for His blessing is the kind of heart God seeks in us.* At Bethel (bayith +el) House of God, Jacob glimpsed the Ladder leading up to Heaven and thereby glimpsed a future redemption.

The history and traditions of America have been punctuated by men of valor who have also struggled for the preeminent blessings of God. They were willing to sacrifice the comforts of easy living and the comfort of the hearth to march forth ill-clad and unshod through winter snows to confront the despot in the days of our War of Independence. Even renowned men from abroad lent a hand to that struggle such as Marquis de Lafayette, Friedrich von Steuben and Tadeusz Kościuszko.

Because of his struggle with the Angel of Bethel for the better blessings of God, God became Jacob's memorial, and what a memorial that is to have one's name written – no, etched as with the nails of Calvary – upon the Lamb's Book of Life. *Even the LORD God of hosts; the LORD is his memorial.*

Are you descended from Jacob as a Christian? By all means, you are – more so than those who are simple accounted blood relatives. It is not unlike the doctrine of Apostolic Succession to which we in the biblical traditions of Reformed Anglicanism adhere. Such recognition of the Succession comes through careful examination of character and testimony and, finally, by the laying on of hands of those of like mind and calling in Christ. However, it is not the mere laying on of hands that distinguishes true Apostolic succession, but rather the adherence in total of those Doctrines that were transmitted to us through the apostles themselves. If the Succession is not Doctrinal, it is not Apostolic.

The same is true of those who claim to be Jews but are not. They may even have some trace of Judah's blood flowing through their veins, but if they do not reflect that same faith of Father Abraham, they are not true Jews (or Israel). To the Church at Smyrna, our Lord says: *I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Revelation.* (Revelation 2:9b) and to the Church at Philadelphia: *Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will*

make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee. (Revelation 3:9) These were the only two churches with which the Lord found no condemnation. This He speaks to us as well as them: *Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment, and wait on thy God continually.* Waiting on the Lord requires faith and a blind obedience – the same expected of every other soldier in the field against a mortal enemy.

The Lord has a quarrel with that nation whose balances are deceitful, whose laws are turned to the advantage of any special class of people. The Lord says that *He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand: he loveth to oppress.* Oppression with an unjust and prideful nation is not something merely sought for material gain, but for prideful advantage and prestige. So Ephraim's sons answer: *And Ephraim said, Yet I am become rich, I have found me out substance: in all my labours they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.* (Hosea 12:7-8) All the labors of man is sin. It is in doing the work of the Lord in which there is no sin, and that out of an humble and honest heart. *An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.* (Proverbs 21:4) There is no material sin in plowing. The charge goes to the condition of the heart in all that we do. If Christ abides therein, His work is manifested through His vessels.

God answers Ephraim's proud boast with a peace-offering: *And I that am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt will yet make thee to dwell in tabernacles, as in the days of the solemn feast. I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.* God is saying, in essence, I am unchanging. I am the same Lord with whom you made covenant in the Wilderness. I will not relent, but pass you through hard pilgrimages if necessary to bring you to myself. Our nation faces the same predicament.

The Spirit of God strove with old Israel as Jacob strove for Leah, but Leah was less than Jacob desired. So, He strove again for Rachel, the love of his life. *And Jacob fled into the country of Syria, and Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep. And by a prophet the LORD brought Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved.* God sustained Jacob (Israel) through many hard struggles and even episodes of apostasy by means of the constant heralds of the prophets. If we hear not the prophets, we will not believe though one comes back from the dead. *And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.* (Luke 16:31) We have the voice of the prophets with us today to warn and guide the way. Do we listen? Is not the voice of the prophets written in a Book for us? Are we as the two men on the road to Emmaus who heed not the voice of the prophets?

Those things in which a prodigal people pride themselves shall be the very things by which the Lord will bring our fall. *Ephraim provoked him to anger most bitterly: therefore shall he leave his blood upon him, and his reproach shall his Lord return unto him.* America has provoked the most Holy God to anger. We have bitten the hand that has caressed our weary heads through many wars and over many far-flung battle lines. Yet, we claim the victories now as our own, and deny the solace and blessing of Heaven. He will bring us to national ruin, if necessary, in order to bring our souls to a state of grace. He never ceases in His purpose to bring His elect to Himself.