

Prophets 19

Now, No. 2 is, What part is historical and what part is predictive? That is a question which is sometimes very easy and sometimes rather difficult to answer--what part is historical and what part is predictive? Dr. Robert Dick Wilson told me once of some very fine gentlemen he knew who organized a club for study of the Bible and they wanted to learn something about it in the original. None of them were theologically trained. They had not known any Hebrew, but they learned a little bit of Hebrew in order to start learning something about it, and to their surprise they found that a great many of the prophecies of the Old Testament were in the perfect tense, so they said, "Here we've utterly misunderstood. These aren't predictions at all. These are simply an account of things which have actually occurred in the past." Well, Pope said, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing," and a little Hebrew may be a dangerous thing, too, because they had a little idea of it without knowing enough about it to know the nature of the Hebrew perfect tense, that it does not express past time but it expresses completed action, whether completed in the past, present or future, and a great many prophecies of the predictions are considered as so definite in God's sight that they are given in the perfect tense, even though describing that which is going to happen in the distant future. But it is a problem which is often easy but sometimes difficult to know whether a particular statement is historical or predictive. To present perhaps the most difficult instance of the problem, and one which I will not answer for you at the moment--I expect to study it more in succeeding times, some time I expect to take a whole month on the study of the last ten chapters of the book of Hosea and I am quite confident I will find the interpretation within the month, I may find it the first or second day. I don't know, but I think a month should certainly suffice to find it, but as yet I do not know the organizing principle of the last ten chapters of the book of Hosea, and until I understand the organizing principle I do not expect to be able to speak dogmatically about particular verses, but as you read Hosea 11:1-4, you read, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and