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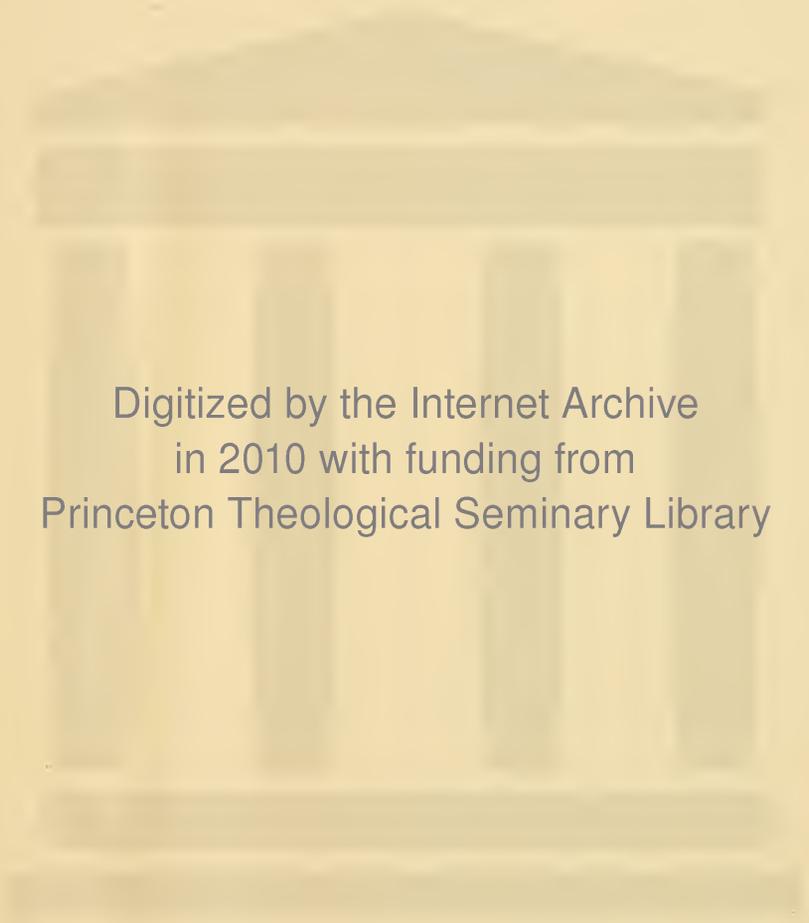
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A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

HOLY SCRIPTURES:

CRITICAL, DOCTRINAL, AND HOMILETICAL.

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MINISTERS AND STUDENTS

BY

JOHN PETER LANGE, D. D.,

ORDINARY PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BONN,

IN CONNECTION WITH A NUMBER OF EMINENT EUROPEAN DIVINES

TRANSLATED, ENLARGED, AND EDITED

BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D.,

PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY IN THE UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY. NEW YORK,

IN CONNECTION WITH AMERICAN SCHOLARS OF VARIOUS EVANGELICAL DENOMINATIONS.

VOLUME XIV. OF THE OLD TESTAMENT: CONTAINING THE MINOR PROPHETS

NEW YORK:

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS,

1899



THE

MINOR PROPHETS.

EXEGETICALLY, THEOLOGICALLY. AND HOMILETICALLY

EXPOUNDED

BY

PAUL KLEINERT, OTTO SCHMOLLER,
GEORGE R. BLISS, TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, CHARLES ELLICOTT,
JOHN FORSYTH, J. FREDERICK McCURDY, AND
JOSEPH PACKARD.

EDITED BY

PHILIP SCHAFF, D. D.

NEW YORK:
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PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

THE volume on the MINOR PROPHETS is partly in advance of the German original, which has not yet reached the three post-exilian Prophets. The commentaries on the nine earlier Prophets by Professors KLEINERT and SCHMOLLER appeared in separate numbers some time ago¹; but for Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, Dr. Lange has not, to this date, been able to secure a suitable co-laborer.² With his cordial approval I deem it better to complete the volume by original commentaries than indefinitely to postpone the publication. They were prepared by sound and able scholars, in conformity with the plan of the whole work.

The volume accordingly contains the following parts, each one being paged separately:—

1. A GENERAL INTRODUCTION to the PROPHETS, especially the MINOR PROPHETS, by Rev. CHARLES ELLIOTT, D. D., Professor of Biblical Exegesis in Chicago, Illinois. The general introductions of Kleinert and Schmoller are too brief and incomplete for our purpose, and therefore I requested Dr. ELLIOTT to prepare an independent essay on the subject.

2. HOSEA. By Rev. Dr. OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated from the German and enlarged by JAMES FREDERICK McCURDY, M. A., of Princeton, N. J.

3. JOEL. By OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated and enlarged by Rev. JOHN FORSYTH, D. D., LL. D., Chaplain and Professor of Ethics and Law in the United States Military Academy, West Point, N. Y.

4. AMOS. By OTTO SCHMOLLER. Translated and enlarged by Rev. TALBOT W CHAMBERS, D. D., Pastor of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Church, New York.

5. OBADIAH. By Rev. PAUL KLEINERT, Professor of Old Testament Theology in the University of Berlin. Translated and enlarged by Rev. GEORGE R. BLISS, D. D., Professor in the University of Lewisburg, Pennsylvania.

6. JONAH. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of the University of Berlin. Translated and enlarged by Rev. CHARLES ELLIOTT, Professor of Biblical Exegesis in Chicago.³

7. MICAH. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of Berlin, and Prof. GEORGE R. BLISS, of Lewisburg.

8. NAHUM. By Prof. PAUL KLEINERT, of Berlin, and Prof. CHARLES ELLIOTT, of Chicago.

9. HABAKKUK. By Professors KLEINERT and ELLIOTT.

¹ Obadjah, Jonah, Micha, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephanjah. *Wissenschaftlich und für den Gebrauch der Kirche ausgelegt von PAUL KLEINERT, Pfarrer zu St. Gertraud und a. Professor an der Universität zu Berlin.* Bielefeld u. Leipzig, 1868. — *Die Propheten Hosea, Joel und Amos. Theologisch-homiletisch bearbeitet von OTTO SCHMOLLER, Licent. der Theologie, Diaconus in Urach.* Bielef. und Leipzig, 1872.

² The commentary of Rev. W. PRESSEL on these three Prophets (*Die nachexilischen Propheten*, Gotha, 1870) was originally prepared for Lange's *Bible-work*, but was rejected by Dr. Lange mainly on account of Pressel's views on the genuineness and integrity of Zechariah. It was, however, independently published, and was made use of, like other commentaries, by the authors of the respective sections in this volume.

³ Dr. Elliott desires to render his acknowledgments to the Rev. Reuben Dederick, of Chicago, and the Rev. Jacob Lotke, of Faribault, Minnesota, for valuable assistance in translating some difficult passages in Kleinert's Commentaries on Jonah, Nahum, and Habakkuk.

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10. ZEPHANIAH. By Professors KLEINERT and ELLIOTT.
11. HAGGAI. By JAMES FREDERICK MCCURDY, M. A., Princeton, N. J.
12. ZECHARIAH By Rev. TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D., New York. (See special preface.)
13. MALACHI. By Rev. JOSEPH PACKARD, D. D., Professor of Biblical Literature in the Theological Seminary at Alexandria, Virginia.

The contributors to this volume were directed carefully to consult the entire ancient and modern literature on the Minor Prophets and to enrich it with the latest results of German and Anglo-American scholarship.

The remaining parts of the Old Testament are all under way, and will be published as fast as the nature of the work will permit.

PHILIP SCHAFF.

THE



BOOK OF AMOS.

EXPOUNDED

BY

OTTO SCHMOLLER, P. D.

URACH, WÜRTEMBERG.

TRANSLATED AND ENLARGED

BY

TALBOT W. CHAMBERS, D. D.,

ONE OF THE PASTORS OF THE COLLEGIATE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, NEW YORK

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THE PROPHET AMOS.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. *The Personal Relations of Amos.*

OF these we know more than we do in the case of Hosea and of Joel, and that, not merely from the superscription, the originality of which needs yet to be established, but also from the prophet's own words (chap. vii. 10-15). First of all occurs the name, עָמוֹס. It may be mentioned in passing that the fathers, ignorant of Hebrew, confounded this name with אֲמוֹץ, that of the father of Isaiah, and supposed the two persons to be one and the same; but Jerome denied the assertion. The meaning of the name is uncertain, perhaps = *Bearer, or Heavy*. His home was certainly, according to ch. vii. 10 ff., in the kingdom of Judah. He labored indeed in Ephraim, but this was considered strange by Amaziah, who reproved it as an insolent undertaking and bade him escape to Judah, so that manifestly, he did not reside in Bethel nor anywhere in Israel. The superscription puts his residence in Tekoa, a town in the tribe of Judah, often mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament (2 Sam. xiv. 2; 2 Chron. xi. 6, xx. 20; Jer. vi. 1; also 1 Mac. ix. 33), and said by Jerome to be some miles south of Bethlehem, where its ruins are still preserved in the modern name of Tekoa.

Here, according to ch. vii. 14, Amos was a בּוֹקֵר, which naturally, according to its derivation, means *herdman*. But the 15th verse states that Jehovah took him from following גֵּזְזֵי הַצֹּהַב, and this word signifies sheep and goats in distinction from neat-cattle, so that the term *herdman* must be considered as used in a wide sense and including a shepherd's office. This is confirmed by the account of Tekoa given by Jerome, who knew the holy land from personal observation, and whose statements in his preface to our prophet, are therefore not to be regarded as mere inferences from this passage. He says that the country was sandy and barren, and therefore full of shepherds who made amends for its failure to yield crops by the number of their flocks. That there were many shepherds in the place is indicated by the title, in its saying that Amos was "among the בּוֹקְרֵי of Tekoa" (בּוֹקְרֵי meaning, perhaps, those who had gone out from Tekoa to more distant pastures). The term בּוֹקֵר occurs besides this place only in 2 Kings iii. 4, where it is applied to the Moabitish king, Meshah, who in this capacity paid to the king of Israel a yearly tribute of 100,000 lambs, and as many rams. Accordingly it signifies a sheep-master. We may therefore regard Amos as an owner of flocks, but by no means as a wealthy sheep-owner. This is determined by what he says of himself (ch. vii. 14, 16), according to which he was a shepherd, and took care of the sheep, even if they were his own. But this phrase "among the shepherds of Tekoa," may refer merely to his residence, and so indicate his employment while he was living among these persons. He further calls himself בּוֹלֵם שֵׁתֵּימִים, one who cultivated sycamores for his support. This tree by its sweet fruit (Pliny, *N. H.*, xiii. 14, calls it *prædulcis*) which it bears abundantly, afforded to a shepherd living in the open country a nutriment both ample and easily provided. So that Amos had a competent support, although he was not rich. Accordingly, in ch. vii. 12, etc., he rejects the summons to go to Judah and eat his bread there, on the ground that he did not prophesy for bread but had a competency of his own, implying also perhaps that as a shepherd he was satisfied with simple fare.

Here now as he abode among his flocks the call of the Lord reached him to prophesy concerning Israel. For he says expressly that he was neither a prophet nor a prophet's son, i. e., a pupil of the prophets, which excludes any thought of a school¹ in which he had pre-

pared himself for the work, or even that he had assumed it as a calling. In obedience to the summons he repaired to Bethel, the chief seat of the idol worship, in order to announce to the careless people the divine judgment. There the priest Amaziah sought to drive him away, as a seditious person. But he boldly resisted, and made his threatening still more severe. It is not stated whether he then went away or whether he continued his prophetic function. All that we further know of him is that his discourses were reduced to writing. Later traditions of his martyrdom have no historical value.

§ 2. *The Age of the Prophet.*

This in substance is well settled. For the book itself names Jeroboam (II.) as the king under whom Amos prophesied in Bethel. This king ascended the throne in the fifteenth of the twenty-nine years' reign of Amaziah, king of Judah; and reigned forty-one years. He was therefore fourteen years contemporary with Amaziah, and twenty-seven years with his successor Uzziah. { The title puts Amos in the last two thirds of Jeroboam's reign, since it represents him as prophesying in the days of Jeroboam and Uzziah, *i. e.*, while they were contemporary; and this is confirmed by the statement in ch. ix. 12 that "the remnant of Edom should be possessed," indicating that the Edomite capital, Selah, had already been conquered, which took place under Uzziah's father Amaziah (2 Kings xiv. 7). } The time of the prophet's activity cannot be more closely defined within these twenty-seven years; only it is certain that it did not extend over the whole period, but was confined to a certain occasion. The title indicates this by the note — "two years before the earthquake." This would give us the precise date, if only we knew the time of the earthquake; but this not being the case, we gain nothing by the statement. It only confirms the view that Amos prophesied in the reign of Uzziah, for we have every reason to believe that this earthquake was the same with the one mentioned in Zechariah xiv. 5, which is there said to have occurred under Uzziah. } (As to the object of this note, see below, ch. i. 1.)

Amos was somewhat earlier than Hosea, but still the latter was his contemporary, and carried on his work (undoubtedly using his materials, see below) of announcing judgment upon Ephraim, in a still more threatening manner and with a clearer indication that Assyria was to be the instrument of this judgment. On the other hand, Amos was younger than Joel, whose writings were known to him when he composed his own, since he expressly refers to them, adopting Joel's words in his commencement (ch. i. 2), and leaning upon them in the promise with which he concludes (ch. ix. 13).

The period of Amos's ministry was one of great external prosperity for the kingdom of Israel. Under Jeroboam II. it stood at the zenith of its power. Compare the picture of the rich who seek only the increase of their wealth and luxury, and feel so entirely secure. Certainly, as this picture directly shows, there was under this outward pomp and prosperity a deep moral decay which stood in close connection with the apostasy from pure religion. In Judah the case was different, but even there matters had become worse since the time of Joel. For Amos openly complains of a contempt of God's law and an inclination to idolatry, of which we find no trace in Joel. Israel, however, had sunk deep in corruption, yet no one either perceived or was willing to learn of any danger, all were in careless security. No political signs indicated any danger from a foreign foe. The Assyrians, indeed, attracted attention, but there was no probability that they would endanger the kingdom. It was too strong for that. And as to the danger resulting from inward moral decay, that was not apprehended, because men either disbelieved in a retributive, sin-avenging righteousness, or else excluded the thought of it from their minds. At this time the simple shepherd of Tekoa was sent into the kingdom of Israel to announce to it, and especially to the house of Jeroboam, God's judgment and their own downfall, as he says, ch. vii. 15. Any one who had a living faith in God and therefore in a divine retribution, might well conclude from a glance at the defection from a true faith and worship and the prevailing moral corruption, that such a people and kingdom were on the downward road and would fare ill. But it was a long step from this to the public announcement of a certain overthrow by a foreign conqueror. Just this is found in Amos; he does not indeed name the foe, but no one can mistake who is meant. Thus he showed himself possessed of a special revelation from God, as he expressly said in ch. vii. 15. Although no one thought particularly of Assyria, for which reason he does not name it, still he already saw in that kingdom the instrument of God's vengeance and so declared.

§ 3. *The Book of the Prophet.*

Under the name of this prophet we have a prophetic writing in nine chapters, containing chiefly threatenings against the kingdom of Israel, to which, on account of its prevailing grievous sins, it announces a grievous infliction, even overthrow by a hostile nation. Still the book is not limited to threatenings against Israel, but at least begins with threats upon the surrounding heathen, and then, like a genuine prophetic book, concludes with the promise of a new deliverance for Israel and a splendid prosperity under the house of David.

Entering more into detail, we are to consider —

1. The first and second chapters as a sort of introduction to the particular subject.

The second verse of chap. i. repeats a menace contained in Joel iv. 16, and then the nations around Israel are taken up in order, first the heathen, Damascus (i. 3-5), Philistia (6-8), Tyre (9-10), Edom (11, 12), Ammon (13-15), Moab (ii. 1-3), and then Judah (4-5), against each of which the divine wrath is announced in short, similar sentences, even "for three transgressions and for four," and is executed by "kindling a fire" in their capitals. Then the threatening turns to Israel, at first in the same phrase as before, but soon at greater length. There is a fuller detail of the prevailing sins, oppression of the poor, and lascivious luxury, together with a gross contempt for God's favors toward them as his people (6-12); and a fuller announcement of punishment, namely, complete subjugation under an invading foe (13-16). It is thus evident that the previous denunciations were intended only to pave the way for this one, and that Israel was especially aimed at, for which reason the prophet dwells on their case. Still the threatening is here only introduced, and the judgment is declared merely in general terms; the form of its fulfillment can only be conjectured.

2. The special charges and threats follow in chaps. iii.-vi. This division contains four discourses, — the first three of which begin with a "Hear this word" — in which the kingdom of Israel, especially the great men, on account of the prevailing sins, are threatened with a divine judgment in the shape of the destruction of palaces and sanctuaries, the overthrow of the kingdom, and the carrying away of the people, unless by seeking the Lord they seize the only hope of deliverance.

(a.) In chap. iii. the chief thought is manifestly that there should be no doubt about the coming of the judgment, since the prophet who bore Jehovah's commission could not speak in vain.

(b.) Chap. iv. bases the assurance of punishment on the fact that all previous visitations of God had been to no purpose, since repentance had not ensued. The judgment therefore *must* come.

(c.) In chap. v. we hear the outcry at approaching calamity, intermingled with calls to seek the Lord and love the good, as the only means of escape. It concludes with a woe pronounced upon those who desire the day of the Lord, which yet for them must be a day of terror, since all idolatry is an abomination to him. Then is added in —

(d.) Chap. vi., a woe upon those who on the contrary fancy the day of the Lord to be far off and therefore persevere in their frivolity until the judgment overtakes them by means of a people whom the Lord will raise up.

After these discourses about punishment comes a new division, —

3. Chaps. vii.-ix., in which the prophet recounts certain *visions* in which he has seen the fate of Israel, interspersed with historical details and threats of punishment, but at last passing into the promise of a new deliverance and prosperity for Israel.

(a.) Chap. vii. First, the prophet has two visions of punishment by Locusts and by Fire, which, however, are averted at his intercession. So much the more does the third vision, of the Plumb-line, show the downfall of the kingdom, and especially of the house of Jeroboam to be irreversible (1-9). The result of this announcement is that the priest Amaziah complains of Amos to the king and proposes his banishment. But Amos boldly meets him, affirms the divine call under which he was acting, and utters a still sharper threat, aimed especially at the priest.

(b.) Chap. viii. A fourth vision represents the ripeness of the people for judgment: under the image of a basket of ripe fruit. Then the prophet commences with "Hear this" (as in chaps. iii., iv., v.), a denunciation of the sins of the higher classes, who are threatened with the sore grief of a famine of hearing the word of the Lord.

(c.) In a fifth vision the prophet sees under the image of an overthrow of the temple (at Bethel) which buries all in its ruins, the utter ruin of the kingdom by a divine judgment which none can escape; since God is almighty and Israel is not a whit better than the heathen (i. 7). Yet God will not destroy it entirely, but sift it by destroying all the sinners at ease, and then raise again David's fallen tent to a new glory. Thus the book concludes with the promise of a new deliverance under the house of David, when Israel will be richly blessed, and made as great and powerful as ever before, and never again be driven out of the land.

That the book whose contents are thus outlined forms one complete whole, can scarcely be disputed. But to press the inquiry closer, it is at once evident that chaps. i. and ii. are intimately connected, and in like manner chaps. iii.-vi. belong together. But that the latter division concurs with the former to make one whole is equally clear. A menace of judgment upon Israel could not possibly be satisfied with what is said in ii. 13-16, for in that case there would be no definiteness and certainty as to what Israel was to expect. The further statements in the following discourses are a matter of necessity. Moreover, a comparison of ii. 6-8 with iii. 9, 10, v. 7, 11, vi. 4, shows a striking similarity between the sins censured in both cases. The unity of the first six chapters is then established. As to chaps. vii.-ix., no argument is needed to show their mutual coherence. But the question arises, whether they did not originally form an independent whole which a subsequent editor appended to the foregoing, or conversely made the foregoing a preface to it. There is much to favor its independent character. It differs from what precedes, both in matter as containing visions, and in form, as the prophet speaks in the first person. Notwithstanding, its close connection—at least in the state in which we now have it—with chaps. i.-vi., is unquestionable. The chief evidence of this seems to me to lie in chap. viii. 4 *seq.*; which bears an unmistakable relation to what is already found in chaps. iii.-vi. The reproof is the same in both. Compare the introductory words "Hear ye;" the censure of sins in viii. 4, etc., with ch. ii. 6, etc., and ch. v. 11, 12; and also, the announcement of judgment in viii. 10 with ch. v. 15. So close is the correspondence that one might be tempted to think that the latter passages were a subsequent insertion, which of course would destroy the argument for the original coherence of the whole. But we can hardly assume this theory of insertion by an editor, simply because the words, viii. 4, etc., are somewhat abrupt and do not seem to be exactly in their place. If an alteration were made, we should suppose they would have been taken away from their present place and joined to the foregoing passages, to which they seem more suited. Here applies the critical canon that the more difficult reading is to be preferred. But then it is to be observed that the conclusion, (ix. 11, etc.,) undeniably reëchoes the conclusion of Joel, and still more does ch. i. 2 connect itself with Joel. This fact shows beyond mistake that our book in its present state originated from one hand, and farther, since its beginning and its end are original, integral elements proceeding from the author himself, that we must consider the book as a complete whole, as certainly so prepared by its author.

If this be so, it follows that the prophet Amos, who in chap. vii. speaks of himself in the first person, is necessarily the composer not merely of the account of these visions, but also of the whole book. If at first we understood from the superscription that the substance of these utterances proceeded from Amos, much more must we suppose that they were reduced to writing and united with the foregoing books by him; and we must consider the superscription as prefixed to this, as it undoubtedly will, and of right ought to be, considered.

That he who in ch. vii. says "I" is no other than Amos, is plain from verse 10, etc., where he is so called, but that he is here spoken of in the third person is no evidence that he is not the author. Of the portions marked with the "I," both preceding and following, he is certainly such, but we need not for that reason consider the intervening passage vii. 10-17 as inserted by another; for Hosea, in the beginning of his prophecy, in the portion (chap. i. 2) which undoubtedly is his own, also speaks of himself in the third person. Besides, the transition to the third person here is altogether simple and natural, since he was repeating what Amaziah charged against him. And having thus spoken, he continues in the same manner in the 12th and 13th verses. Moreover, since the subject relates to the personal experiences of the prophet, there is the less reason for considering it another's interpolation in a writing the rest of which was composed by Amos. No, it is Amos alone who relates what befell him in his prophesying, and then speaks of his origin and his mission, and afterwards utters a new menace against Amaziah. And this is not added as a mere matter of

history, but the account of the occurrence with Amaziah bears so directly upon this speech to him that it is perfectly plain that the author of the one is the author of the other, *i. e.*, that the prophet himself, and no one else, has produced the whole. In favor of Amos's authorship is the style, in which are manifold reminiscences of a pastoral life. (See below.) In the first instance, this proves only that the separate discourses came from Amos, but not that he composed the whole. But since after what has been said the theory of its compilation by a third person is inadmissible, the argument for Amos as the author is greatly strengthened by these peculiarities of language. Besides, we could not properly speak of "Discourses of Amos" which another person has collected together, but the book in its present form is to be considered as an original composition of its author, based upon the "discourses" he had delivered orally.

This leads to the question concerning the precise origin of the book, — which is not answered by determining that it is a consistent whole and was the work of Amos. For here, more than in the other prophets, do we need to understand the relation of the book to the public, oral activity of the prophet.

A public and therefore oral announcement of prophecies against Israel is expressly ascribed to Amos. Just for this purpose he who was originally a herdsman came forth as a prophet. The question is, What were those oral prophecies, and how were they related to our book? Ewald and Baur assume that chaps. vii.—ix. 10, contain what was originally said at Bethel, and that the first part, chaps. i.—vi. and the Messianic conclusion, are only a written statement, devised by Amos after his return from Bethel to Judah, in order to make his utterances effective for a wider circle. This view is quite plausible: for thus is most easily explained the difference in form between the first part and the second, and also, the singular interruption of the prophecies by a historical narration, ch. vii. 10, etc. One is inclined, besides, to think that the herdsman of Tekoah first received in the form of visions the divine revelation and the command, "Go, prophesy to my people Israel" (vii. 15); and that the longer discourses are an afterthought belonging to the written statement. But even if, as we shall see, there is some weight in the latter consideration, still we cannot accept the entire view as correct. The report of the three visions in chap. vii., of which two contained the prophet's intercession and a consequent respite of judgment, and only the third was a pure menace, could not possibly have provoked the interference of Amaziah against the prophet. He speaks of "all his words" which the land is not able to bear, and gives a summary of them in the 11th verse. But manifestly he here states only the point to which the words of Amos in verse 9 seemed to him to tend, and which in his view proved that he was aiming at a conspiracy. But the language of the priest presupposes that the prophet had spoken much more than the single menace contained in the third vision. Or may we assume that, even if these visions contain all that was then said in Bethel, he had yet formerly declared there the other visions recorded in chaps. viii. and ix., before Amaziah came forward against him? His coming forward would then be accounted for. But — as Baur himself rightly emphasizes, though to prove the opposite — it is not consistent to regard as supposititious the passage which now contains the historical narrative (verse 10 ff.), because it is not conceivable that it should have been interpolated here, where at first it seems to make confusion, unless it had originally belonged just to this place. This being so, "all the words which the land was not able to bear" must be found in the preceding chapters. And there is the less objection to this, since among the discourses certainly made in Bethel, there is one (ch. viii. 4 ff.) which, as was before said, is closely related to the discourses in the first part.

As there are no external grounds for limiting the discourses at Bethel to chap. vii., so there are no internal reasons. For there is here merely a threatening of punishment, but no mention of sin as the cause of the judgment, except ch. viii. 4-6, and still less any call to repentance, founded either upon God's mercies to Israel, especially the divine call of the nation, or upon earlier warnings and visitations. Yet without this we cannot conceive of a prophetic menace of punishment. Even had the prophet begun with pure threatening, yet this must afterwards at least have been accompanied with explanations and reasons; but, as has been said, these are almost entirely wanting in ch. vii. ff. But they occur in the first part, and therefore the threatening visions in the second part certainly presuppose the existence of the former. Moreover, I think the traces of oral speech in the discourses of the first part can hardly be mistaken; *e. g.*, in ch. iv. the mention of former visitations and their inefficacy — "yet have ye not returned unto me;" or in ch. v., the warnings: "Seek the

Lord;" or the reproach of empty formal worship, ver. 21, etc. The references to Joel also, *z. g.*, ch. v. 18, may well have belonged to the oral utterances. On the other hand, we naturally do not find in our book, Amos's oral addresses either in substance or form as they were originally delivered. It was only the essential portion which he reduced to writing, and the form manifestly belongs to the prophecy only as written. It is vain therefore to attempt now to distinguish the particular portions that were spoken. They are merged in a new composition prepared in a free independent manner. But while they furnish the principal points treated, manifestly it is to the written statement that we owe the introduction in chaps. i. and ii., so far at least as foreign nations are concerned, therefore as far as ii. 5, and in like manner the concluding promise of a new deliverance in ix. 11.

The threatenings in ch. i. against other nations pave the way to the chief theme, the announcements of wrath against Israel. And then again these announcements to Israel pave the way to the promise of a new gracious visitation by which God will show that Israel is still his people.

This leads us to consider the *aim* and *motive* of the preparation of our book. Its fundamental thought, the appearance of Amos at Bethel with his testimony against Israel, does not explain why it was written. It furnished indeed the chief materials, but had the writing intended only to preserve these from being lost, it would have simply reproduced them in a somewhat free form; but it had also another aim of its own, and to reach this availed itself of the oral utterances without confining itself to them. The appearance of Amos as a prophet of wrath to Israel is sufficiently explained by the commission, "Go, prophecy to my people, Israel," but not his appearance as the author of our book. To understand this we must fix our eyes upon the portions not belonging to his personal ministry, — the introduction and conclusion, and especially the references to Joel's writings. Since Amos begins his book with the menace announced by Joel in iv. 16, and concludes it with a promise like that of Joel in iv. 18, his whole prophecy, as it were, falls between these two verses and is framed out of Joel's menace and Joel's promise. Joel, as we have before shown, knew only of a divine judgment upon the heathen in the Lord's day for the deliverance and exaltation of Judah, for when he afterwards saw the latter threatened with a judgment, he also saw it averted by repentance. This writing of Joel was widely diffused. But gradually its terms came to be perverted, and its promise of salvation was made a pretext for careless security (see ver. 18, where the day of the Lord is regarded as necessarily a day of salvation for Israel). Even among those who highly prized the prophets, the non-arrival of the threatened day of the Lord with its judgment upon the heathen, and consequently the non-arrival of the glorious salvation for Israel after that judgment, might awaken a mistrust of the prophetic declarations, and even indifference and unbelief (cf. Baur, pp. 61, 113). Therefore Amos now confirms Joel's prophecy and at the same time extends it in accordance with the altered circumstances. Both Joel's threatening and his promise remain true, but no longer so separated that the former applies only to the heathen, and the latter to Israel because of their repentance. The threatening remains true against Israel's foes, the heathen, nay, in chaps. i., ii. 5 is executed, cf. "I will not turn it away;" but certainly this is no longer the prominent feature. Judah itself has become guilty, is filled with idolatry, and is therefore threatened with a divine judgment. Especially in the kingdom of Israel, to which Joel does not allude, has sinful corruption reached so high a point that the herdsman of Tekoah is expressly commissioned to announce God's wrath to this large division of the covenant people. So little justification had Israel for their carnal confidence in their divine vocation upon the ground of Joel's prediction of a judgment upon their foes, so far was his threatening of the Lord's day of judgment from passing away, that it would certainly come to pass, only in a broader range and still more incisively, since the Lord would enter into judgment with his degenerate people, — which even Joel had, according to chaps. i. and ii., considered not improbable, and even had feared for Judah, although the degeneracy there was not so great as in Israel, but now thought that it was averted by serious repentance. But as Joel's threatening remains true, so also does his promise for Israel, especially for Judah, only it is brought about by a judgment upon Israel, so far as it had departed from God's ways, and therefore had become the sinful kingdom of Israel, — a judgment by which "a chastisement but at the same time a purification is introduced." The judgment is like a storm which overwhelms and desolates, but at the same time purifies, and therefore carries a blessing in its bosom by making room for the clearer light of the sun. Perhaps it is in reference to this that Amos begins with the words of Joel iv. 16, where the

Lord's coming forth to judge is represented under the figure of a tempest, a violent convulsion of nature.

Here may be quoted the manner in which Schlier (*Minor Prophets*, p. 70) strikingly presents the contents of our book from this point of view: "This little book is wonderfully arranged. With a single word Joel rouses Amos; it is as it were the text of his whole prophecy, the substance of all his utterances; and what he declared was the thundering voice of God's judgment upon his people. A frightful storm comes down on Israel; we see the lightnings flashing hither and thither from one people to another till at last the gloomy storm-clouds stand over Israel and discharge themselves upon their guilty heads. But finally after fearful bursts, the tempest passes away, and the pure blue heaven comes out over the people of God. This is the sun of our prophecy. We see a storm issuing from the Lord with all his terrors, but also with all his blessing, in which it at last terminates. What Amos as a herdsman had heard and seen in the open country with his herds, he as a prophet brings before our spiritual vision with marvelous fidelity."

We have sought to deduce the aim of the prophecy from the express references to Joel. But perhaps we have an indication of its outward motive in the note of time with which the title concludes — "two years before the earthquake." If these words came from Amos himself (see on ch. i. 1), they inform us at once of the time of the composition, namely, after the earthquake, and also of the time of the public delivery of the prophecies, namely, two years before that event; thus showing that they were distinct from each other. But the presumption is natural that these words indicate not only the period but the motive of the composition, namely, the occurrence of the violent earthquake. That event announced a sore judgment from God. And just as the plague of the locusts induced Joel to sound his call to repentance, since he regarded it as the beginning of the day of the Lord, so this earthquake led Amos — not, indeed, to his predictions of wrath, for these had occurred before — but to record them at length. For he had in his oral utterances announced a heaving of the earth as an expression of God's wrath; and now the earth did heave. What then was more natural than that he should see in this a confirmation of his threat, a token of its fulfillment; and regard the occasion as an appropriate one for addressing his contemporaries in writing, as he had before done orally, in a somewhat enlarged form, especially by the introduction and the conclusion, and with a reference to Joel for the reasons already mentioned? We may even find an external reason for the close connection with Joel iv. 16 in this earthquake, since it would appear to Amos as an outward confirmation of Joel's prophecy, and he could have said to his contemporaries: You hear the fulfillment of Joel's words, how God who dwells in Zion "roars and utters his voice" — for the earthquake must have been accompanied with a tempest. God himself having thus spoken on behalf of his prophet, so much the more should a second prophet deem it his duty and his right, to confirm in the enlarged and completed form before mentioned, his predecessor's prophecies already diffused among his contemporaries, but partly misapplied and partly discredited; and in order to this end, to record and publish his own discourses.

From what has been said, the *significance* of our prophet plainly appears. Of fundamental importance here is Joel's work, by its precise and sharp apportionment of punishment and deliverance — the former to Israel's foes, the latter to Israel as God's chosen people. The final result is imperishable salvation and glory for God's people, and overthrow and destruction for his foes, the world. But while this ultimate issue is held fast, it is endeavored to show to God's people God's seriousness, and to set clearly in the light the distinction between the true and the degenerate members of the people, especially to give a death-blow to the false and wicked boasting in the prerogatives of a divine vocation, while there was a total failure of the character belonging to that vocation, in short, to an arbitrary appropriation of the divine grace. This step in advance is taken by Amos when he turns the avenging sword of the Spirit against Israel itself, and declares that it, just so far as it resembles the Heathen in conduct, is in like manner exposed to the divine judgment. Still he holds high the banner of hope. The judgment is one of purification. As true as it is, on the one hand, that Israel will not be spared, so true is it, on the other, that Israel will not be destroyed — that Jehovah still has purposes of mercy for this nation, who are and will remain his people.

Thus we find in Amos the prophetic theme made more profound and incisive. It cuts Israel to the quick, and so strikes the note which succeeding prophets carry on, first, his younger contemporary, Hosea, who with all the weight of prophetic earnestness and with a

glance taking in at once the entire condition of the people, announces God's judgment on the kingdom—as upon an unfaithful adulterous wife. And as in Amos, and still more in Hosea, the judgment does not spare Judah, so Micah and Isaiah go farther and mention Judah as especially exposed to it. But so much the more fully do they set forth the salvation which God has prepared and devised for his people. He remains faithful, his love is unchangeable; and ever clearer and more certain stands before their eyes the form of the Messiah, in whom God's love and faithfulness find their concrete expression.

The influence of the book of Amos upon the course of prophecy is shown by the use made of him, especially by Hosea. Compare Hos. viii. 14 with Am. ii. 5 (i. 4, 7, 10, 12, 14, ii. 2); Hos. xii. 10 with Amos ii. 10; Hos. xii. 8 with Am. viii. 5; Hos. ix. 3 with Am. vii. 17. The later prophets, especially Jeremiah, show a considerable dependence upon Amos: compare Jer. xlix. 27 with Am. i. 4; xlix. 3 with i. 1, 15 (xlvi. 6 with ii. 14); xlviii. 24 with i. 12, ii. 2; xlix. 13, 20–22 with i. 12; farther, xxv. 30 with i. 2; xxxi. 35 with iv. 13, v. 8, xlv. 2 with ix. 4, 8. But particularly in his prophecies upon foreign lands does Amos appear the forerunner of the later prophets.

As to the *style* of our prophet, Jerome indeed calls him “rude in speech but not in knowledge,” not, however, as a reproach, but in allusion to 2 Cor. xi. 6, in order to show, as Baur says, that while as a herdsman he was not acquainted with the formal rules of rhetoric, the inward force of his mind made good the lack of outward dexterity. Compare Augustine (*De Doct. Chr.*, iv. 7), “For these things were not composed by human industry, but were poured forth by the divine mind both wisely and eloquently, wisdom not aiming at eloquence, but eloquence not departing from wisdom.” And Lowth (*De Sac. Poesi Heb.*) justly remarks upon the assertion that Amos is rude, ineloquent, and unadorned, “Far otherwise! Let any fair judge read his writings, thinking not who wrote them, but what he wrote, and he will deem our shepherd to be *in nowise behind the very chiefest* prophets; in the loftiness of his thoughts and the magnificence of his spirit almost equal to the highest, and in splendor of diction and elegance of composition scarcely inferior to any.” Yes, his style is such that although we emphasize the agency of the illuminating Spirit of God, still on the other hand we must allow to the prophet no small degree of natural culture, without, however, thinking of a learned education. It was rather a cultivation originated by converse with the Law and with the holy books, and fostered by religious instruction and a religious mind, such as would befit a man of the people to whom by all means applies the saying, It is the heart that makes eloquent. We do not refer here to the sharp, piercing seriousness of Amos, for his belongs more to the substance than the form of a prophet. On the other hand, we may point to the soaring elevation of the speech, *e. g.*, in the delineations of God, ch. iv. 13, v. 8, ix. 5, 6; to the peculiarly bold and vivid diction, stroke upon stroke, in describing the judgments, chaps. i. and ii., or in the complaints in ch. iv. on account of the failure to repent. But as Amos has an intuitive power of individualizing his conceptions which often imparts a poetical coloring to his speech, so his style hovers between prose and poetry, and forms a peculiar kind of prophetic utterance. See ii. 6–8, 13; iii. 3; v. 16, vi. 8, 4; ix. 2, 13. Herein the diction is little distinguished by depth of thought, but so much the more does it display a transparent clearness which in many cases is increased by the symmetry of the arrangement, as in the entire introduction, and again in the fourth chapter, and in the visions. Observe also the commencement of each of the three discourses, chaps. iii., iv., and v., with the phrase “Hear ye,” and the twofold “Woe,” in chaps. v. 18 and vi. 1, by which the larger divisions are denoted.

When in conclusion we emphasize the imagery of the book, this leads to a more general observation. In the view of what has been said, one might doubt the composition of this work by a mere shepherd, but on the other hand it is very noticeable how reminiscences of a shepherd-life everywhere appear. Justly has Ewald remarked (*Proph.*, i. 117): “The simple circle of country life has entirely filled his imagination; nowhere else among the prophets do we find rustic images given with such originality and vividness and inexhaustible abundance. Not merely do the numerous comparisons and particular images, but also the minutest lines of the conceptions and the expression exhibit the peculiar experience and intuition of this prophet.” Of detailed instances Baur in his Commentary gives the fullest collection; of these we cite only a portion. Amos refers almost all things to the sphere of a countryman. Chaps. iv. 6–9; v. 16; iii. 15; v. 11 (country-seats of the great); ii. 8; iv. 9; v. 11, 17; vi. 6, ix. 14 (vineyards). His images also are taken from the experiences of country life. Chaps. ix. 13; i. 2; iv. 13; v. 8, 18, viii. 9 (an eclipse of the sun is a shep-

herd a natural image) ; ii. 9, 13 ; iii. 4, 5, 8 ; v. 19 ; viii. 13 ; iii. 12 ; ix. 5 ; vi. 12. As a plain shepherd, Amos particularly dislikes the dissoluteness of luxurious cities (chaps. ii. 6 ; iii. 10 ; iv. 1 ; v. 10 ; vi. 4), especially when it is based upon usurious dealings in grain to oppress the poor (ch. viii. 8, comp. with vi. 7). Since the contemplation of the starry heavens belongs characteristically to a shepherd living in the open air, Amos prefers to represent God's majesty and power by his mighty workings in nature. Chaps. iv. 13 ; v. 8 ; viii. 9 ; ix. 5.

A peculiar mode of writing many words may be attributed to the fact that the author "came not from Jerusalem, the centre of the culture of the time" (Ewald, *e. g.*, מְצִיָּה for מְצִיָּה (ii. 13), מִרְעֵב for מִרְעֵב (vi. 8), בּוֹשֵׁשׁ for בּוֹשֵׁשׁ or בּוֹשֵׁשׁ (v. 11), מִסְרָף for מִסְרָף (vi. 10), יִצְחָק for יִצְחָק (vii. 16). [Pusey says, The like variations to these instances in Amos are also found in other words in the Bible. On the whole we may suspect the existence of a softer pronunciation in the south of Judæa, where Amos lived ; but the only safe inference is, the extreme care with which the words have been handed down to us, just as the Prophet wrote and spoke them.]

[The influence of the shepherd-life of Amos appears most in the sublimest part of his prophecy, his descriptions of the mighty workings of God. With those awful and sudden changes in nature, by which what to the idolaters was an object of worship was suddenly overcast and the day made dark with night, his shepherd-life had made him familiar. The starry heavens had often witnessed the silent intercourse of his soul with God. In the calf, the idolaters of Ephraim worshipped "nature." Amos then delights in exhibiting to them his God, whom they too believed that they worshipped as the creator of "nature," wielding and changing it at his will. All nature too should be obedient to its maker in the punishment of the ungodly, nor should anything hide from Him (viii. 8, ix. 2, 3, 5). The shepherd life would also make the prophet familiar with the perils from wild beasts which we know of as facts in David's youth. The images drawn from them were probably reminiscences of what he had seen or met with. . . . The religious life of Amos amid the scenes of nature, accustomed him as well as David, to express his thoughts in words taken from the great picture-book of nature, which as being also written by the hand of God, so wonderfully expresses the things of God. When his prophet's life brought him among other scenes of cultivated nature, his soul so practiced in reading the relations of the physical to the moral world, took the language of his parables alike from what he saw or what he remembered. He was what we call "a child of nature," endued with power and wisdom by his God. It is a mistake to attribute to him any inferiority even of outward style, in consequence of his shepherd life. Even a heathen has said, "words readily follow thought ;" much more when thoughts and words are poured into the soul together by God the Holy Ghost. On the contrary, scarcely any prophet is more glowing in his style, or combines more wonderfully the natural and moral world, the omnipotence and omniscience of God (iv. 13). What is more poetic than the summons to the heathen enemies of Israel to people the heights about Samaria and behold its sins (iii. 9) ? What more graphic than that picture of utter despair which dared not name the name of God (vi. 9, 10) ? What bolder than the summons to Israel to come, if they willed, at once to sin and to atone for their sin (iv. 4) ? What more striking in power than the sudden turn (iii. 2), "You only have I known ; therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities ;" or the sudden summons (iv. 12), "Because I will do this unto thee (the silence as to what the *this* is, is more thrilling than words), prepare to meet thy God, O Israel ?" Or what more pathetic than the close of the picture of the luxurious rich, when having said how they heaped luxuries one upon another, he ends with what they did *not* do ; "they are not grieved for the afflictions of Joseph ?" — Pusey.]

§ 5. Literature.

Besides the works referring to the Prophets in general, chiefly the Minor Prophets, El. Schadæi, *Comm. in Amos Prophetam*. Argent., 1588. Joa. Gerhardi, *Adnct. in Proph. Amos et Jonam*, etc., Jenæ, 1663 and 1676. *Amos Propheta expositus*, etc., cura Jo. Ch. Harenbergii. Ludg. Batav., 1763. *Amos, translated and explained*, by J. G. M. Dahl, Göttingen, 1795. *Amos, translated and explained*, by K. M. Justi, Leipzig, 1799. *Amos, translated and explained*, by J. Sam. Vater, Halle, 1810. *The Prophet Amos explained*, by Fr. G. Baur, Giessen, 1847. [Horsley, *Notes*, in *Bib. Crit.*, ii. 391.]

FOR PRACTICAL EXPOSITION. — Among earlier writers, *The Severe Preacher of Repentance and Prophet Amos, in Sermons of P. Laurentius*, Superint. in Dresden, Leipz., 1604. Among the later, J. Diedrich, *The Prophets (Daniel, Hosea, Joel) Amos, briefly explained*, etc., Leipzig, 1861.

* * The additions made by the translator are in some instances marked with the letter C., but for the most part are simply inclosed in square brackets. Justice to Dr. Schmoller requires that this statement should be made. — C.

AMOS.

CHAPTERS I., II.

The Superscription (ch. i. 1).

1 The words of Amos (who was among the shepherds of Tekoa), which he saw concerning Israel, in the days of Uzziah king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.

And he said : —

I. *The Divine Judgment is announced first against the Countries lying around Israel, then against the Kingdom of Judah, but at last remains standing over the Kingdom of Israel (chaps. i. 2–ii. 16).*

2 Jehovah roars out of Zion,
And out of Jerusalem he utters his voice
Then the pastures of the shepherds wither
And the head of Carmel is dried up.

(a) *Damascus (vers. 3–5).*

3 Thus saith Jehovah,
For three transgressions of Damascus
And for four — I will not reverse it —
Because they threshed Gilead with iron rollers,

4 I will send fire into the house of Hazael,
And it shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.

5 And I will shatter the bolt of Damascus,
And cut off the inhabitant from the vale of Aven,
And the sceptre-holder out of Beth-Eden ;
And the people of Syria shall go into captivity to Kir, saith Jehovah.

(b) *Gaza (vers. 6–8).*

6 Thus saith Jehovah,
For three transgressions of Gaza,
And for four — I will not reverse it —
Because they carried away captives¹ in full number²
To deliver them up to Edom,

7 I will send fire into the wall of Gaza,
And it shall devour their palaces.

- 8 And I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod
And the sceptre-holder from Ashkelon ;
And I will turn my hand against Ekron
And the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord, Jehovah.

(c) *Tyre* (vers. 9, 10).

- 9 Thus saith Jehovah,
For three transgressions of Tyre,
And for four — I will not reverse it —
Because they delivered prisoners in full number to **Edom**,
And remembered not the brotherly covenant,
- 10 I will send fire into the wall of Tyre
And it shall devour their palaces.

(d) *Edom* (vers. 11, 12).

- 11 Thus saith Jehovah,
For three transgressions of Edom,
And for four — I will not reverse it —
Because he pursues his brother with the **sword**,
And stifles his compassion,³
And his wrath continually tears in pieces,
And his anger endures forever,⁴
- 12 I will send fire into Teman
And it shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

(e) *Ammon* (vers. 13-15).

- 13 Thus saith Jehovah,
For three transgressions of the sons of Ammon,
And for four — I will not reverse it —
Because they ripped up the pregnant women of **Gilead**,
To enlarge their border,
- 14 I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah,
And it shall devour their palaces,
With a war-shout in the day of battle,
With a storm in the day of the whirlwind.
- 15 And their king⁵ shall go into captivity,
He and his princes together, saith Jehovah.

CHAPTER II.

(f) *Moab* (vers. 1-3).

- 1 Thus saith Jehovah,
For three transgressions of Moab
And for four — I will not reverse it —
Because it burned the bones of the king of Edom into **lime**,
- 2 I will send fire into Moao,
And it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth,
And Moab shall die in the tumult,
With a war-shout, with a trumpet-blast ;

- 3 And I will cut off the judge⁶ from the midst thereof,
And will slay all his princes with him, saith Jehovah.

(g) Judah (vers. 4, 5).

- 4 Thus saith Jehovah,
For three transgressions of Judah,
And for four — I will not reverse it —
Because they despised the law⁷ of Jehovah,
And kept not his commandments,⁷
And their lies misled them,
After which their fathers walked ;
- 5 I will send fire into Judah,
And it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

(h) Israel (vers. 6-16)

- 6 Thus saith Jehovah,
For three transgressions of Israel
And for four — I will not reverse it —
Because they sell the righteous for money,
And the needy for⁸ a pair of shoes ;
- 7 They who pant after the dust of the earth upon the afflicted,
And pervert the way of the sufferers ;
And a man and his father go in to the same girl
In order⁹ to profane my holy name :
- 8 And they stretch themselves upon pawned clothes by every altar,
And they drink the wine of the punished¹⁰ in the house of their God.¹¹
- 9 And yet¹² I destroyed the Amorite before them,
Him who was as high as the cedars
And as strong as the oaks ;
And I destroyed his fruit from above
And his roots from beneath.
- 10 And yet I brought you up from the land of Egypt,
And led you in the wilderness forty years,
To inherit the land of the Amorite ;
- 11 And I raised up of your sons prophets,
And of your young men dedicated ones.
Is it not so, ye sons of Israel? saith Jehovah.
- 12 But ye made the dedicated ones drink wine,
And commanded the prophets, saying, " Prophecy not."
- 13 Behold, I will press you down¹³
As the full¹⁴ cart presses the sheaves.
- 14 Then shall flight be lost¹⁵ to the swift,
And the strong shall not confirm his strength,
And the hero shall not save his life.
- 15 He that beareth the bow shall not stand,
And the swift-footed shall not save, —
And the rider of the horse shall not save his life,¹

16 And the courageous one among the heroes, —
Naked shall he flee away in that day, saith the Lord.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL

- 1 Chap. i. ver. 6. — גְלוֹת, lit., *exile*; but usually concrete, *exiles*.
- 2 Ver. 6. — שְׁלֵם, *complete*, therefore in full number = *all the prisoners*.
- 3 Ver. 11. — וְשָׁחַת depends upon עַל, which continues in force as a conjunction. — שָׁחַת *destroys = stifles his compassion = acts mercilessly*.
- 4 Ver. 11. — וְעַבְרָךְ may be rendered, *and his wrath lies in wait forever*, namely, to perpetrate cruelties. [So Ewald; but Keil justly objects that the verb, applied to wrath in Jer. iii. 5, means to keep, preserve, and that lying in wait is inapplicable to an emotion.] שָׁמְרָהּ for שְׁמֶרָהּ, the accent being drawn back because of the tone-syllable in the following word, נִצָּחָה. [Ewald and Green make עֲבָרְךָ a nominative absolute, and suppose an omitted *mappik* in the last letter of the verb, so as to translate, "and it keeps its wrath forever."]
- [5 Ver. 15. — מַלְכָּב. Some of the Greek versions, followed by the Syriac and Jerome, give the form Μαλχου, Metchom, as a proper name, but the common text is sustained by the LXX. and Chaldee, and required by the connection.]
- 6 Chap. ii. ver. 3. — שׁוֹפֵט analogous to נִשְׁבֵּט, in i. 5, 8, is simply a rhetorical variation for מְלִיכָה.
- [7 Ver. 4. — הַזֹּרֶת = God's law, his preceptive will in general. הַיְקוּם = the separate precepts, whether ceremonial or moral.]
- 8 Ver. 6. — בְּיַבְבֶּר is not synonymous with בָּ, *pretii*, but means on account of. Fürst, Keil, etc. [Pusey and Wordsworth adopt the former view.]
- 9 Ver. 7. — לַמִּצֵּן, not "so that," but, "in order that," indicating that the sin was practiced not from weakness or ignorance, but a studious contempt of the Holy God.
- 10 Ver. 8. — עֲנֹשֵׁיָם; *punished in money*, i. e., fined, as in the margin of the Auth. Version.
- 11 Ver. 8. — אֱלֹהֵיהֶם, not their gods, i. e., idols [as Henderson], but their God.
- [12 Ver. 9. — The repetition of the personal pronoun אֲנֹכִי, here and in ver. 10, is very emphatic, equivalent to our English phrase, "It was I who," etc.]
- 13 Ver. 13. — הָעֵיכָה, *to enclose, compress, crush*, תַּהַרְסֶנָּה, Keil renders "down upon you" = crush you. [So Winer, Gesenius, Ewald.] Fürst takes the word here and elsewhere as a substantive, meaning *place, position*, and renders, "I will compress your standing-place." The pressure is compared to that of a cart. According to the usual explanation, the cart is further defined as full of sheaves. But in that case it is strange that the pressure of a full cart should be used to represent the destructive crushing here intended. A more appropriate comparison is found in the pressure by which a threshing cart threshes the sheaves. It is better therefore to take עֲמִיר as the object, and to refer הַמְלֵאָה לַה עֲנָלָה = the full threshing cart, since such a cart is always conceived of as heavily laden. The explanation of Fürst is forced. He supplies גֶּרֶן, to which he refers the adjective, so as to render "upon the floor full of sheaves."
- 14 Ver. 13. — הַמְלֵאָה לָהּ, lit., "which is full in itself, has quite filled itself."
- [15 Ver. 14. — אֶבֶד מְנוּס. The same combination is found in Ps. cxlii. 4.]
- 16 Ver. 15. — נִשְׁשָׁן belongs to both members of the verse.
- 17 Ver. 16. — אִמְץ לִבּוֹ = "the strong in his heart," i. e., "the courageous."

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL

Ver. 1. *The Superscription.* The words of Amos. The expression is somewhat unusual. It is customary to state the contents of a prophecy as "the word of Jehovah" which came to this one or that one, as in the first verse of Hosea, Joel, Micah, etc. Jeremiah uses the same phrase as Amos, but adds expressly, "to whom the word of Jehovah came." Here also the divine inspiration of "the words of Amos" is put beyond doubt by the addition, which he saw, for הָיָה is the technical formula to denote the prophet's immediate intuition of divine truth. His "words" therefore originated in such an intuition, and were not the outflow and expression of his own thoughts. He "saw" first what he afterwards recorded, and this seeing rested upon a divine revelation. Upon the addition to the prophet's name, who was among, etc., see the Introduction, § 1.

Upon Israel. The peculiar aim of the prophet's utterances is the kingdom of Ephraim; but this

came into view only in so far as it was a kingdom of Israel, and contained a part — in extent a greater part — of the people of Israel. Besides, the threatenings extend to the kingdom of Judah, therefore to all Israel. Moreover, it must be considered that these threatenings terminate in the promise after their execution of a new glorious Israel, in which no account is taken of the existing division of the kingdom. As to the note of time in the days of Uzziah, etc., see the Introduction, § 2, where it is shown to be correct according to the contents of the book.

Two years before the earthquake. See also the Introduction. This date is not so much chronological as argumentative. It is inserted in reference to chap. viii. 8 (also ix. 5), since this earthquake occurring two years after the prophesying, was a declaration in act that God would make good the words of his servant. As to the genuineness of the entire superscription, no argument against it is to be found in the statement "who was among the herdmen," etc., and especially the expression "who was," or if indeed this statement is not original,

it might yet have been inserted in a superscription otherwise genuine. In favor of this view is the above-mentioned unusual character of the phrase "words of Amos which he saw." It is scarce conceivable that a later editor would use this expression rather than the customary one, "The word of the Lord which came," etc. If then the words "two years before the earthquake" are cited, as by Baur, as a proof of spuriousness, because if genuine the prophecy must have been written two years after Amos's appearance in Bethel, while its whole character shows that it was written soon after that event, we answer that this latter assertion is wholly unfounded. Nothing forbids the opinion that two years, which is no great space of time, elapsed before the record was made, and besides we have before shown that the book is by no means a mere record of the oral discourse. On the other hand, even Baur himself must admit that the precise date and the peculiar form of the superscription presuppose in any event its composition not long after the prophecies were delivered. Surely he who prefixed these words did it in reference, as above stated, to its bearing upon the subject of the prophecies following. And as there is nothing against the authorship of Amos, it is most natural to think that he who suggested the reference recorded it. Besides, we have already seen (Introduction, §3) that there is reason to believe that the earthquake induced Amos to write his prophecies; indeed, he perhaps refers to it in verse 2. Certainly then nothing is more natural than to assume that he himself contributed this note of time, and thus indicated the inducement which led him to write.

Chap. i. ver. 2. Jehovah roars out of Zion, etc. Comp. Joel iv. 16. Amos connects himself directly with Joel in describing the judgments upon the heathen as enemies of God's people. For even from ver. 3, he announces the divine wrath upon all the surrounding nations. But suddenly the denunciation turns to Judah, and then to Israel, where it remains standing, so that it is plain that he aimed especially at Israel, and that the threats against the heathen which seemed to be most important, served only for an introduction to what follows. This appears even in the verse before us, since he applies the phrase borrowed from Joel differently from that prophet, namely, against Israel, for since the drying up of Carmel is stated to be the result of God's wrath, "the pastures of the shepherds," which are said to wither, are to be referred to Israel. "Woods and pastures are mentioned by Amos in accordance with his peculiar mode of characterizing the country." Or, we are to assign the "meads of the shepherds" to the pasture grounds of the wilderness of Judah, which was the prophet's home in the south, and to this Carmel stands opposed on the north, so that Amos sees the whole land from south to north withered. The "withering" means generally destruction, not to be limited to mere drought as a natural occurrence, although this is not excluded, but extending to the devastation of a foreign foe, as the later statements require.

From ver. 3 begin the threatenings against the heathen—in the way of a preface. The storm of divine wrath rolls around the outlying kingdoms, until it comes to a stand on Israel. The heathen kingdoms mentioned in their order are six: Syria (Damascus), Gaza, or rather all Philistia (ver. 8), Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab. These manifestly constitute two groups, three in each. For the three first are more distant from Israel, the latter nearer, as allied in origin. The ground of their punishment

is stated to be their transgressions, especially against Israel; they come into view, therefore, as enemies of God's people, and as such are threatened with wrath. In the succession of the groups we see a climax of guilt, since naturally the ill-doing of a kindred people is worse than that of a foreign race. Upon this ground the question, why just these were selected, answers itself. It was these from whom Israel had severely suffered, and their guilt lay in the foreground. They are then representatives of a class; a threatening upon such grounds proclaims the guilt of a similar course of action generally—wherever it may be found.

See further, in respect to the bearing of menaces against the heathen upon menaces against Israel, in the Doctrinal and Practical Remarks.

2. *Damascus—Syria*, vers. 3-5. Thus saith Jehovah; for three transgressions, etc. It is peculiar that the threatenings throughout both chapters are always introduced in the same manner. The phrase "for three—and for four," is well explained by Hitzig, who says: "The number four is added to the number three, to characterize the latter as simply set down at pleasure, to say that it is not exactly three but much more." Three would be enough, but it is not limited to three. The plurality is not rigidly defined, on purpose to indicate the ever increasing number of sins. These nations therefore have incurred not a

light but a heavy degree of guilt.—The לַעֲוֹנוֹתָיִךְ with which the threatening begins is in each case repeated before the special transgression mentioned, and this latter, being a single case, seems to conflict with the preceding plurals. But in truth the commencement, having firmly asserted the plurality of the sins, may well allow the subsequent address, as it hastens from one people to another, to be content with naming a single wrong act as a flagrant example which necessarily presupposes the existence of many others. The phrase interposed in each case—I will not reverse it, *i. e.*, the punishment decided upon—cuts off every thought of repeal, and declares the execution to be inevitable. In every case the judgment is described as a sending of fire to consume the palaces, which can mean only the fire of war, conquest, and destruction. Because they threshed, refers to the cruelty with which they crushed the captured Gileadites under iron threshing-machines. This occurred when Palestine east of the Jordan was subjugated by Hazael under the reign of Jehu (2 Kings x. 32, 33, cf. xiii. 7.—*Benhadad*; was it the first of that name, or the second? Probably both. Shatter the bolt, *i. e.*, of the gate—the conquest of Damascus. The inhabitants of the valley of Aven and the sceptre-holder, *i. e.*, prince or ruler, of Beth Eden, are extirpated.—בְּתֵי עֵדֵן, *lit.*, valley of nothingness, is probably the modern Bekaa, the valley between Lebanon and Antilibanus, of which Heliopolis (*Baalbek*) was the most distinguished city. אֲוֵן, then perhaps = אֲוִן, the name of the Egyptian Heliopolis, whence the LXX. render πειθισμὸν Ἄου; but designedly written in the former method to play upon the idol worship performed there (cf. בְּתֵי אֲוֵן for בְּתֵי אֲוִן).

בְּתֵי גִזְרֵי, either the modern Bet-el-Ganna, not far from Damascus, or, better, the *Parabētisos*, in the district of Laodicea (Ptol. v., 5, 20). The rest are to be carried away to Kir, an Assyrian province, on the banks of the River Kir, *Küros*, the mod. r

Georgia. This was fulfilled by Tiglath-Pileser (2 Kings xvi. 9).

3. *Gaza — Philistia.* Vers. 6-8. Gaza stands as a representative of the other Philistine states which are similarly threatened, and is named first, perhaps because it was most actively engaged in the sale of the captives (Keil). There is perhaps an allusion to the same case which Joel mentions (iii. 6). Although Joel speaks of a sale to the Grecians, and Amos of a sale to Edom, there is no discrepancy, for both occurred. Joel mentions the Greeks, because he sought to set forth the wide dispersion of the Jews and their future recall from all lands; but Amos wishes to emphasize the hatred of the Philistines, and therefore speaks of the sale made to Israel's chief foe, Edom. Why Gath is not named, does not appear. Doubtless it was comprehended under the phrase "remnant of the Philistines."

4. *Tyre — Phœnicia.* Vers. 9, 10. The crime here is the same as in the preceding, namely, the sale of prisoners to Edom. But it does not include carrying them away, therefore they must have bought them from others and then sold them. Hence Joel says that the Philistines sold the prisoners whom they captured to the Greeks. But the Phœnicians as a trading people may just as well have bought from others, such as the Syrians, and sold the captives thus acquired to Edom. Their sin here was the greater, because David and Solomon had made a "brotherly covenant" with the king of Tyre. The threatening in ver. 10 is limited to the commencement of what is denounced upon Damascus and Gaza. The same is true of Edom and of Judah.

5. *Edom.* Vers. 11, 12. No particular crimes are here charged, but an implacable hatred against Israel, which broke out in acts of cruelty. Teman is either an appellative, the South, or the name of a province in Edom (cf. Jer. xlix. 20; Hab. iii. 3; Job ii. 11; Ezek. xxv. 13). Eusebius and Jerome speak also of a city named Teman, six hours from Petra. Bozra, probably the capital of Idumæa, south of the Dead Sea, still preserved in the village of el-Buseireh in Jebâl.

6. *Ammon.* Vers. 13-15. The fact stated here is not mentioned in the historical books of the Old Testament. *Rabbah*, in its full form, Rabbah of the Sons of Ammon, the capital of the Ammonites, is preserved in the ruins of *Amman*. The destruction here threatened is more closely defined. It will take place through a foreign conquest which is compared to a storm, indicating either its speed or its violence.

7. *Moab.* Chap. ii. vers. 1-3. The burning of the body into lime, *i. e.*, to powder, indicates the slaking of vengeance even upon the dead. Nothing is said of this in the historical books, but it was perhaps connected with the war waged by Joram of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah, together with the king of Edom, against the Moabites. In that case the king of Edom was a vassal on the side of Israel, and the insult to him would be, at least indirectly, a crime against Israel. *Kerioth* is the proper name of a chief city of Moab, still preserved in the place called *Kereyat*. קֵרְיֹת is applied to Moab, considered as a person. Here also the occurrence of a battle is mentioned. *Judge*, used only to vary the expression, is equivalent to *king*, or *sceptre-holder* in i. 5. From the midst refers to Moab as a country.

8. *Judah.* Vers. 4, 5. The sin of Judah consists in apostasy from God. Their lies means their idols, as nonentities, destitute of reality.

9. *Israel — the Ten Tribes.* Vers. 6-16. Now in a surprising manner Israel is brought forward, and by a similar introduction placed on the same line with the others; only in place of a short statement, there is a lengthened and detailed representation of its sin, guilt, and punishment.

(a.) *Israel's Sins.*

Vers. 6-8. *Urrighteousness in judgment is charged, ver. 6. The righteous* — one who is such in the judicial sense, *i. e.*, innocent. *Money*, which they had received or expected. *Sell, declare guilty and punish.* The sentence is called a sale because the judge was bribed. The phrase, *for a pair of shoes*, does not state the price with which the judge was bribed [the poorest slave was certainly worth much more than this — Keil], but the occasion of the proceeding, namely, a pair of shoes, *i. e.*, a mere trifle, for which the poor man was in debt and for which the judge gave him up to the creditor as a slave (Leviticus xxv. 39).

Ver. 7. *They who, etc.* Plainly, not a new fault, but a description of the sin out of which the former sprang. *Pant after the dust, etc., i. e.*, endeavor to bring these into such misery that they will strew dust on their heads, or that they will sink into the dust, *i. e.*, perish. *Pervert the way, etc.*, prepare for them embarrassments and distress. *Son and father go in to the (i. e., one and the same) girl.* In order to profane my holy name. The conjunction indicates that the profanation was deliberate and therefore willful. It is so called because it was an audacious violation of God's commandments. *Prostitution in or near the temple itself is not to be thought of here.*

Ver. 8. *Every altar and the house of their God*, certainly refer to the sacred places at Beersheba and Dan, but it must be kept in mind that in these Jehovah was worshipped. There is no reference to the worship of heathen deities, which indeed did not exist under Jeroboam II., for the conduct here condemned is condemned just because it took place in the sanctuary, and thus was a daring contempt of God. *Pawned clothes, i. e.*, upper garments consisting of a large square piece of cloth, used also as a bed-covering by the poor. These were pawned, given in pledge to a creditor, by the poor. Such the law required to be returned before nightfall (Exod. xxii. 25; Deut. xxiv. 12). But instead of this, they were retained, and used as cloths on which the creditors stretched out, *i. e.*, their limbs; and on what occasion? According to what follows, at banquets or sacrificial meals, as the connection shows. *Wine of the punished*, means wine bought with the proceeds of fines. Manifestly the oppression of the poor is censured also in ver. 8. It only connects with this sin that of frivolous luxury.

(b.) The sin is the more heinous because Israel is the chosen people of God.

10. Vers. 9-12. These verses recall to mind the manifestations of God's grace. He had put Israel in possession of Canaan. Here Amos mentions first the direct means by which this was done, namely, the destruction of the Canaanites, then, what preceded, namely, the deliverance from Egypt and the guidance through the wilderness. And I — emphatic, the very being whom you now treat with contempt. The Amorites are named as the strongest race of the Canaanites (cf. Gen. xv. 16; Josh. xxiv. 15); they are likened to a mighty tree, and their destruction to its complete overthrow. A similar reference to these gracious dispensations is found in Deut. viii. 2, ix. 1-6, xxix. 1-8. Further, the gift of prophecy and the insti-

ration of the Nazarites are mentioned as special favors which God had given to Israel but which they despised.

(c). *The Punishment.*

This is to be a crushing so severe that no one can escape. The figure of the cart is explained in Textual and Grammatical.

Ver. 14. Flight is lost to the swift = he will not have time to escape.

Ver. 16. Will flee naked = will not defend himself, but leave behind the garment by which the enemy seizes him (cf. Mark xiv. 52). The punishment threatened in ver. 13 ff. is manifestly the invasion of a superior foe. The powerlessness before him and the consequent fright are depicted in the liveliest manner.

DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL.

1. In Joel, prophecy quickly drops the form of a threatening against God's people which however it certainly has, and then assumes so much the more fully the character of a promise. It is altogether different with the next prophet of whom we have any written memorial, as indeed would be expected from the fact that his mission was to the ten tribes. On one side he stands connected with Joel, but on the other goes far beyond him; his message is not only the earnest calling of a degenerate people to repentance, but the annunciation of God's destructive judgments upon them. But the transition from Joel's point of view to that of Amos is worthy of consideration. The former announced a judgment upon the heathen, but in general terms. This the latter takes up with a slight allusion to Israel, but he does not expand it farther until he has paved the way by a succession of threatenings upon foreign nations. He unrolls before the eyes of Israel a picture of the Divine Justice in its sure and awful march through the kingdoms. But if the people at first regard this with satisfaction because it concerns their foes upon whom they will thus be revenged, they are frightfully awakened from their security by a sudden turn in the direction of the menace. Israel itself is counted among these Gentile kingdoms, and treated in the same way. This shows that the address to Israel's foes is only an introduction; and therefore it passes rapidly from one to another, not entering into details, but content with indicating the multitude of their transgressions, and citing one only as an example of the rest. The prophet thus prepares to make the stroke which at last falls upon Israel heavier and more lasting. Were those nations punished? Not less will this one be. Did they suffer who had not received the law nor enjoyed special tokens of God's favor; far heavier will be the punishment of this people who, although chosen of God, had yet in the grossest manner despised Him and his well-known commands. The storm of divine wrath, which they had gazed at as it fell upon others, would discharge itself upon them in all its fury.

Thus does God prick the conscience of his own people by the judgments threatened upon others. They hear his voice saying, "If I thus punish others, what must I do to you?" The more generally and widely his punishment is inflicted, the less can Israel complain when it comes to them; much rather must they acknowledge it as just.

To Israel in the stricter sense an especial warning is given in the fact that the divine judgment in its circular sweep does not spare Judah, and even names this before Israel. "It should sink deep into

the heart of the ten tribes that not even the possession of such exalted prerogatives as the temple and the throne of David, could avert the merited punishment. If such be the energy of God's righteousness, what had they to expect? (Hengstenberg.) That is, the ten tribes might at first hear gladly, and even feel flattered by a threatening against Judah, but so much the more surprising must it be when the same thing comes in turn to themselves. Then the matter assumes a different appearance, and they could infer from Judah's not being spared, how little they could count upon any exemption.

2. Returning to the judgments upon the heathen, the question arises, Why were they punished? One might answer without ceremony, Because of their offenses against Israel, the people of God. Undoubtedly these nations are considered as Israel's foes, and their crimes so far as specified are crimes against Israel; in part they are the same as those charged by Joel, who speaks so plainly of the hostility of the heathen toward Israel. Only in the case of Moab (ii. 1), is the fact otherwise, for here the offense stated is one only indirectly against Israel. But this shows that the relation to Israel is not the only point of view, and that the threatenings against these nations are not to be attributed solely to this cause; a view which is confirmed by a closer inspection of the sins mentioned; crushing with a threshing sledge, giving prisoners to embittered foes (Edom), forgetting the brotherly covenant, slaying a brother, stifling compassion, ripping the pregnant, displacing the landmarks, burning the bones of a corpse. These are plainly moral offenses, transgressions of the simplest laws of morals. They are therefore sins against a natural divine ordinance, not positively revealed, but manifesting itself in every one's conscience; and as such they incur a heavy guilt. The crimes of these nations then are against God and not merely against his people. So much the more necessary is it for God to punish them.—And He can do this because He is a God who controls all nations, and to whom all are subject even if they do not serve Him. Observe how self-evident this truth is to the prophet. Does not this assumed universality of the power of Israel's God imply indirectly, or at least negatively, that faith in Israel's God is destined for all? Under one God, who has power over all, all shall yet bow themselves.

3. Hence it is the more conceivable that Judah and Israel are joined so directly to the threatened heathen nations. Judah, it is concisely said, has not kept the law, in which God positively declared to them his will. To Israel, on the contrary, nothing is said here of the sin of idolatry (which indeed is presupposed), but individual offenses of a gross kind (partly of course allied with idolatry), are specified; base oppression of the poor through avarice, shameless sensuality, spending in drunkenness money wrested from the poor, and this most offensively blended with idol-worship. How this is regarded is strikingly shown by an expression at the end of verse 7 which applies to the whole series. It is, says God, a profaning of my holy name. In the view of Scripture there is a holy divine ordinance which is violated by such moral offenses. They are therefore offenses against God, "profanations of his holy name," who instituted this ordinance. Therefore the punishment is absolutely necessary. For God cannot suffer his holy name to be profaned with impunity. Upon the sins against the poor, see also Doctrinal and Ethical, 2, upon chap. iii.

4. It is remarkable that the very same threat is made against the heathen and against Judah. This is certainly not without design. Even if it were owing in the first instance to the fact that the prophet had in view one and the same means of punishment for all, namely, subjugation by a foreign foe, still the intentional uniformity suggests equally the unvarying and impartial character of God's punitive righteousness. There is no respect of persons with Him. Wherever there are sins, there inflexibly the divine wrath makes its appearance; and even if the sins are different in kind, yet where God's law whether natural or revealed, is transgressed, there a corresponding reaction of his holiness is provoked.

5. Surely the greatness of what God has done for his people weighs heavily in the scale and greatly aggravates their guilt. The fact of these benefits is the solid ground of the proceeding against Israel's sins. Those benefits are so many loud accusations, from which there is no escape. For all Israel's sins are not merely violations of a divine order, but a shameful contempt of his goodness and the blackest ingratitude; and the punishments therefore are only a righteous reversal of abused mercies. Hosea goes farther and represents the ingratitude as conjugal infidelity, since he conceives God's tender relation to Israel as a marriage bond. The infliction of punishment upon apostate Israel is thus more clearly shown to be a divine right. An approach to this view, an indication of God's loving fellowship with Israel is found in chap. ii. 2: "You only have I known," etc.

6. Along with the great blessings which founded the nation — the deliverance from Egypt, and the guidance through the wilderness, and on the other side, the giving of the law, — the institution of prophecy, and the law of the Nazarites are mentioned. "These are gifts of grace in which Israel had the advantage of other nations, and was distinguished as the people of God and the medium of salvation for the heathen. Amos reminds the people only of these, and not of earthly blessings which the heathen also enjoyed, because these alone were real pledges of God's gracious covenant with Israel, and because in the contempt and abuse of these gifts the ingratitude of the people was most glaringly displayed. The Nazarites are placed by the side of the prophets who declared the mind and will of God, because the condition of a Nazarite, although it was in form merely a consequence of his own free will in execution of a particular vow, was nevertheless so far a gift of grace in that the resolution to make such a vow came from the inward impulse of the divine Spirit, and the performance of it was rendered possible only through the power of the same Spirit. The raising up of the Nazarites was intended not only to set before the eyes of the people the object of their divine calling, or their appointment to be a holy people of God, but also to show them how the Lord bestowed the power to carry out his object" (Keil); cf. also the remarks on Hosea xii. 10, which rests on this passage in Amos.

7. Whether these threatenings against different heathen nations were fulfilled, is a question we must ask still more in the case of Amos than of Joel. For Amos not merely sees and describes in a general ideal sketch the downfall of the heathen power which then stood opposed to Israel's exaltation, but he speaks as if predicting a precise historical occurrence. Yet it is to be considered, that, as was hinted before, the threatening runs essentially in the same terms, is in fact one, and, al-

though subjoining special features in some cases (especially i. 5, 15), yet at bottom is very general, and sets forth simply conquest and loss of independence, but by whom, is not said. Just this fate befell these kingdoms, although at different times and in different ways. Syria experienced it from the Assyrians when Tiglath-Pileser, in the time of Ahaz, conquered Damascus and put an end to the kingdom. Later, the Chaldaean invasion overthrew the other nations, although the information on the point is scanty. Accordingly we are always justified in saying that these predictions were fulfilled, without necessarily affirming that it was in the sense intended by the prophet. [But this latter is a point of no moment, if the fulfillment was in the sense which the Holy Spirit intended. — C.] We must further consider that such threatenings are not absolute. They are given at a particular time, and the issue depends upon the behavior of those whom they concern. For God's purposes, and therefore his punishments are directed according to our conduct. Hence He delays his visitations, or lessens or increases them; so that what takes place at last little coincides with what the prophet had to announce in his name. Nor should the idea be wholly rejected, that these predictions came to the foreign nations themselves, seeing that they were neighbors, and were laid to heart by them just as the heathen oracles were, so that thus the state of affairs might be changed. For these announcements of punishment are to be viewed as warnings as well to the heathen as to Israel — warnings intended to be heard and regarded. That the threatening against Judah, which is of the same tenor as the others, was fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar is well known. But even this fulfillment does not answer exactly to what the Prophet had in view, which manifestly was a judgment closer at hand, perhaps by means of the Assyrians. Hence it is clear that Judah obtained a respite, because its condition had meanwhile improved.

[8. It is remarkable that none of these burdens of Amos are addressed to the greatest powers of the heathen world, opposed to Israel and Judah, — Assyria and Babylon. The Holy Spirit who spake by him, reserved the declaration of the destinies of these two great kingdoms for two other of the twelve minor prophets. Assyria was reserved for Nahum, Babylon for Habakkuk. There seems, therefore, to have been divine forethought in the omission. . . . The prophecies of Amos are expanded by succeeding prophets. Amos himself takes up the prophecy of Joel whom he succeeds. Joel, by a magnificent generalization, had displayed all God's judgments in nature and history as concentrated in one great Day of the Lord. Amos disintegrates this great whole, and particularizes those judgments. Joel declares that God will judge all collectively; Amos proclaims that He will judge each singly. (Wordsworth.)

[9. Pusey (p. 161), with great propriety, calls attention to the fact that the complete captivity of a population, the *baring* a land of its inhabitants, was a thing unknown in the time of Amos. It is true, Sesostris brought together "many men," "a crowd," from the nations he had subdued, and employed them on his buildings and canals (Herodotus, ii. 107-8). But in this and other like cases, the persons so employed were simply prisoners made in a campaign, and the sole object of the removal was to obtain slaves so as to spare the labor of the native subjects in constructing the public works. This is shown by the earlier Assyrian inscriptions, all of which speak only of carrying off

soldiers as prisoners or women as captives, of receiving slaves, or cattle or goods as tribute, or of putting to death in various ways rulers and men at arms. The forced deportation of a whole people, and the substitution of others in their place, is a different thing altogether. The design of this was to destroy effectually the independence of the subject races and put it out of their power to rebel. The first trace of it we find in the policy of Tiglath Pileser toward Damascus and East and North Palestine, and afterwards it came into general use. But Amos foretold this wholesale transportation long before it occurred, and at a time when there was no human likelihood that it would occur. It must have been a divine inspiration which enabled him so clearly to predict such an unprecedented captivity. — C.]

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 2. *The head of Carmel is dried up.* Its glory has passed away, as in the twinkling of an eye. God hath spoken the word and it is gone. "All," says Van de Velde, "lies waste; all is a wilderness. The utmost fertility is here lost for man, useless to man. The vineyards of Carmel, where are they now? Behold the long rows of stones on the ground, the remains of the walls; they will tell you that here where now with difficulty you force your way through the thick entangled copse, lay in days of old those incomparable vineyards to which Carmel owes its name." (Pusey.) — Ver. 3 ff. Every infliction on those like ourselves finds an echo in our own consciences. Israel heard and readily believed God's judgments upon others. It was not tempted to set itself against believing them. How then could it refuse to believe of itself what it believed of others like itself. If they who sinned without law perished without law, how much more should they who have sinned in the law, be judged by the law. (*Ibid.*) — For three transgressions, etc. God is long-suffering and ready to forgive; but when the sinner finally becomes a vessel of wrath, He punishes all the former sins which for the time He had passed by. Sin adds to sin out of which it grows; it does not overshadow or obliterate the earlier sins, but increases the mass of guilt which God punishes. When the Jews slew the Son, there came on them all the righteous blood shed upon the earth from righteous Abel to Zacharias the son of Barachias. So each individual sinner who dies impenitent, will be punished for all which in his whole life he did or became contrary to the law of God. Deeper sins bring deeper damnation at last. As good men by the grace of God, do through each act done by aid of that grace gain an addition to their everlasting reward, so the wicked by each added sin, add to their damnation. (*Ibid.*) — *I will not reverse it.* Sin and punishment are by a great law of God bound together. God's mercy holds back the punishment long, allowing only some slight tokens of his displeasure to show themselves that the sinful soul or people may not be unwarned. When He no longer withholds it, the law of his moral government holds its course. (*Ibid.*) — Ver. 4. *Devour Benhadad's palaces.* What avail the pleasure-houses and palaces of the rich of this world? How soon do they turn to dust and ashes when the fire of God's wrath kindles on them? — Ver. 6. *Carry away prisoners to deliver them, etc.* Who so further afflicts the afflicted, shall in return be afflicted by God. Fugitives who flee to us for

refuge should never be treated with hostility nor robbed of their liberty. — Vers. 7, 8. The five cities of Philistia had each its own petty king. But all formed one whole; all were one in their sin; all were to be one in their punishment. So then for greater vividness, one part of the common infliction is related of each, while in fact, according to the wont of prophetic diction, what is said of each is said of all. — Ver. 9. *Remember not, etc.* It is a great aggravation of enmity and malice, when it is the violation of friendship and a brotherly covenant. (M. Henry.) — Ver. 10. *Fires into the wall of Tyre.* Not fine buildings nor strong walls, but righteousness and honesty are a city's best defense. 2 Kings ii. 12; xiii. 14. — Ver. 11. *Pursues his brother with the sword.* Eleven hundred years had passed since the birth of their forefathers, Jacob and Esau. But with God eleven hundred years had not worn out kindred. . . . It was an abiding law that Israel was not to take Edom's land, nor to refuse to admit him into the congregation of the Lord. Edom too remembered the relation, but to hate him. "Fierce are the wars of brethren." (Pusey.) — *Stifles his compassions.* Edom "stealed himself against his better feelings," as we say, "deadened them." But so they do not live again. Man is not master of the life and death of his feelings, any more than of his natural existence. He can destroy; he cannot recreate. And he does so far do to death his own feelings whenever in any signal instance he acts against them. (*Ibid.*) — Ver. 13. *To widen their border.* The war of extermination was carried on not incidentally nor in sudden stress of passion, but in cold blood. A massacre here and there would not have enlarged their border. They wished to make place for themselves by annihilating Israel that there might be none to rise up, and thrust them from their conquests and claim their old inheritance. Such was the fruit of habitually indulged covetousness. Yet who beforehand would have thought it possible? (*Ibid.*) — Ver. 15. *He and his princes.* Evil kings have evermore evil counsellors. It is ever the curse of such kings to have their own evil reflected, anticipated, fomented, enacted by bad advisers around them. They link together, but to drag one another into a common destruction. (*Ibid.*) — Chap. ii. 1. Even the iniquity done to the goddess, God will not leave unpunished. To rage against the bodies of the dead is sinful and horrible. Pusey justly remarks, "The soul being beyond man's reach, the hatred vented upon one's remains is a sort of impotent grasping after eternal vengeance. It wrecks upon what it knows to be insensible the hatred with which it would pursue, if it could, the living being who is beyond it. Hatred which death cannot extinguish is the beginning of the eternal hate in hell." — Chap. i. 3-ii. 3. Who shall not tremble at the judgments of God? But who shall not gain confidence against all the insolence of men, from the thought how God has judged the world? Who shall not shun all rage, cruelty, and violence, since he knows that God avenges all such sins? — Ver. 4. *Because they despised the law, etc.* Many other sins prevailed among the Jewish people, but by mentioning only these two, — contempt for the law and false worship, — the Lord shows that they are the most grievous, since they violate the first and great commandment, and make up the three and four, i. e., seven, the complete number of sins, the fullness of the measure of iniquity. For it is one of God's greatest benefits that He gives us his Word containing the revelation of his will and thus points the way not only to our temporal wel

fare but to eternal blessedness. To throw to the winds such a gift is the grossest ingratitude. From this contempt of the Word, there follows necessarily the other sin of idolatry. For a man cannot exist without a God and worship; his nature forbids it. If any one turns away from the Word in which God reveals his nature and will, he must needs devise to himself a deity and a worship which is nothing but a pernicious lie. — *Despised.* The prophet uses a bold word in speaking of man's dealings with God. Man carries on the serpent's first fraud, *Hath God indeed said?* He would not willingly own that he is directly at variance with the mind of God. It were too silly as well as too terrible. So he smoothes it over to himself, *lying* to himself: "God's Word must not be taken so precisely." "God cannot have meant." "The author of nature would not have created us so if He had meant." Such are the excuses by which man evades owning to himself that he is trampling under foot the mind of God. Scripture draws off the veil. Judah had the law of God and did not keep it; then he *despised* it. This ignoring of God's known will and law and revelation is to despise them as effectually as to curse God to his race. (Pusey.) — *After which their fathers walked.* The children canonize the errors of their fathers. Human opinion is as dogmatic as revelation. The second generation of error demands as implicit submission as God's truth. The transgression of error against himself, God says, aggravates the evil, does not excuse it. (*Ibid.*) — Ver. 5. *Will send fire into Judah.* So we know that a fiery stream will come forth and destroy all who, whether or no they are in the body of the Church, are not of the heavenly Jerusalem; dead members in the body which belongs to the living Head. And it will not the less come, because it is not regarded. Rather, the very condition of all God's judgments is to be disregarded and to come, and then most to come when they are most disregarded. (*Ibid.*) — Ver. 6. *For three transgressions of Israel, etc.* We see here that the idolatry of Israel was a fountain of all sorts of misdeeds, even of such as would shock a reasonable man, as the list shows; perversion of justice, oppression of the poor, unnatural uncleanness and shameless luxury. — Ver. 7. *Pant after the dust.* Covetousness, when it has nothing to feed on, craves for the absurd or impossible. What was Naboth's vineyard to a king of Israel with his ivory palace? What was Mordecai's refusal to bow to one in honor like Haman? Covetousness is the sin, mostly not of those who have not, but of those who have. It grows with its gains, and is the less satisfied the more it has to satisfy it. (Pusey.) — *To profane my holy name.*

The sins of God's people are a reproach upon himself. They bring Him, so to say, in contact with sin, and defeat the object of his creation and revelation. "He lives like a Christian," is a proverb of the Polish Jews, drawn from the debased state of morals in Socinian Poland. The religion of Christ has no such enemies as Christians. (*Ibid.*) — Ver. 8. *They stretch themselves, etc.* They condensed sin. By a sort of economy in the toil they blended many sins into one: idolatry, sensuality, cruelty, and, in all, the express breach of God's commandments. This dreadful assemblage was doubtless smoothed over to the conscience of the ten tribes, by that most hideous ingredient of all, that the "house of their God" was the place of their revelry. What hard-heartedness to the willfully-forgotten poor is compensated by a little church-going! (*Ibid.*) — Vers. 9, 10. *And I destroyed, etc.* We need often to be reminded of the mercies we have received, which are the heaviest aggravations of the sins we have committed. God gives liberally and upbraids us not with our meanness and unworthiness, and the disproportion between his gifts and our merit; but He justly upbraids us with our ingratitude and ill-requital of his favors, and tells us what He has done for us, to shame us for not rendering again according to the benefit done to us. (M. Henry.) — Ver. 11. *I raised up . . . dedicated ones.* The life of the Nazarite was a continual protest against the self-indulgence and worldliness of the people. It was a life above nature. They had no special office except to live that life. Their life taught. Nay, it taught in one way the more, because they had no special gifts of wisdom or knowledge, nothing to distinguish them from ordinary men except extraordinary grace. They were an evidence what all might be and do, if they used the grace of God. (Pusey.) — Ver. 12. *Made them drink wine.* What men despise they do not oppose. "They kill us, they do not despise us," were the true words of a priest in the French Revolution. Had the men in power not respected the Nazarites, or felt that the people respected them, they would not have attempted to corrupt or to force them to break their vow. (*Ibid.*) — *I command the prophets, Prophecy not.* Those have a great deal to answer for who cannot bear faithful preaching, and those much more who suppress it. (M. Henry.) — Vers. 13-16. When God's judgments go forth, no power, wisdom, wealth, arms, swiftness or experience, is of any avail. Because men so readily fall into contempt of God's judgments as something easy to be avoided, He at times expresses them in such terms as to show that no escape is possible. (Rieger.)

CHAPTERS III.-VI.

II. *To the Kingdom of Israel, especially to its Great Men, the Divine Judgment is announced upon the Prevailing Sins, unless Men seek the Lord.*

CHAPTER III.

1. *As surely as the Prophet bears the Divine Commission, will God punish Israel.*
 - 1 Hear this word,
Which Jehovah speaks concerning you, ye sons of Israel,
Concerning the whole family
Which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,
 - 2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth ;
Therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities.
 - 3 Do two walk together
Unless they have agreed ?¹
 - 4 Does the lion roar in the forest
When he has no prey ?
Does the young lion utter his cry out of his den
Unless he has taken something ?
 - 5 Does a bird fall into a trap² on the ground
When there is no snare for him ?
Does the trap rise up from the earth
Without catching anything at all ?
 - 6 Or is a trumpet blown in a city,
And the people are not alarmed ?
Or does misfortune occur in a city,
And Jehovah has not caused it ?
 - 7 [No ;] for³ the Lord Jehovah does nothing
Without having revealed his secret to his servants, the prophets
 - 8 The lion roars,
Who does not fear ?
The Lord Jehovah speaks,
Who must not prophesy ?
 - 9 Make it heard over the palaces in Ashdod,
And over the palaces in the land of Egypt,
And say, assemble upon the mountains of Samaria,
And see the great confusions in the midst thereof,⁴
And the oppressed in the heart thereof.
 - 10 And they know not to do right, saith Jehovah,
They who store up violence and devastation in their palaces
 - 11 Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah,
An enemy, and that round about the land !⁵
And he shall bring down thy strength⁶ from thee,
And thy palaces shall be plundered.

- 12 Thus saith Jehovah,
As the shepherd rescues from the mouth of the lion
Two legs or an ear-lappet,
So shall the sons of Israel deliver themselves ;
They who sit in Samaria
On the corner of the couch and on the damask of the bed.⁷
- 13 Hear ye and testify to the house of Jacob,
Saith the Lord Jehovah, the God of Hosts :
- 14 That in the day when I visit Israel's transgressions upon him,
I will visit the altars of Bethel,
And the horns of the altar⁸ shall be cut off and fall to the ground.
- 15 And I will smite the winter-house with the summer-house,
And the houses of ivory shall perish,⁹
And many¹⁰ houses shall disappear.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 3. — נוֹעְדוּ. To meet together at an appointed time and place.

2 Ver. 5. — פֶּחַ is the fowler's net, מִקְשָׁ, the springe or snare which holds the bird fast. זְפוּרָה belongs to מִקְשָׁ [In order to catch a bird in the net, a springe must be laid for it.]

3 Ver. 7. — כִּי. Not "surely," as in E. T., a signification which it never has, but, "for," in connection with a negative implied in its relation to what precedes. Cf. Micah vi. 4, Job xxxi. 18.]

4 Ver. 9. — בְּהִרְמוּתָּהּ, noise, disorder, denotes a state of confusion, resulting from a complete overturning of right, such as is expressed by שֹׁדְדֵי הָעָם, probably to be taken as an abstract, "the oppression" (of the poor) or possibly concrete, "the oppressed."

5 Ver. 11. — עֲזָתָהּ, thy strength, i. e., Samaria's.

6 Ver. 11 — וְיִסְבְּבוּ is explanatory, "and that round about the land," i. e., will come and attack it on all sides.

7 Ver. 12. — מִטָּה, the corner of the divan, the most convenient for repose. דְּמִשְׁכָּן, damask, covered with a costly stuff. [Pusey and Wordsworth revert to the old view (Sept., Vulgate, Syriac, Targum), which is followed in the Authorized Version, and interpret, "and recline on Damascus as a couch," but their reasons do not seem to have much weight.]

8 Ver. 14. — הַקִּרְוִי is the singular of species, and is equivalent to a plural.

9 Ver. 15. — Ivory houses are such as have their apartments adorned with inlaid ivory (cf. 1 Kings xxii. 39).

10 Ver. 15. — רַבִּים, not "large" as E. T., but "many."

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

1. Vers. 1-2. Hear this word which Jehovah, etc. "Hear this word." This phrase is repeated at the beginning of chaps. v. and vi. It therefore shows this chapter to contain one address complete in itself. See the Introduction. Upon the whole family. Although afterwards destruction is threatened only against the ten tribes, yet here the entire race is included. The people as a whole were known and chosen of God, and therefore the punishment of sin is set forth in universal terms. Just so far as sin extends, punishment will and must come. Certainly this occurred first in the case of the ten tribes, but how little Judah could count upon being spared, has already been seen in ch. ii. 4, etc.

Ver. 2. Only you have I known. This is equivalent to "I have chosen," since the knowing expresses a relation of sympathy and love, as "the motive and the result of the election."

2. Vers. 3-8. Do two walk together, etc. The general announcement of a punitive judgment is followed — without any apparent connection with the foregoing — by a series of propositions illustrated by examples from daily life. Plainly, these perhaps proverbial phrases are here introduced only by way

of comparison. They illustrate the principle that every effect has its cause.

Ver. 4. When he has no prey, refers, as Keil justly states, not to the actual seizing of the prey by the lion, but to his having it before him so that it cannot escape. In like manner, the phrase in the second clause, "unless he has taken something," is to be explained. The lion makes his capture not merely when he has seized and is rending the prey, but when it is so near that escape is impossible. [The lion, as a rule, roars most terribly when it has the prey in sight, upon which it immediately springs. Bochart.]

Ver. 5. Does the trap rise up? because lifted up by the bird flying away. Without catching, i. e. the bird.

Ver. 6. In the first member the usual order of these propositions is reversed, and the cause is mentioned first, — the blowing of the trumpet, — and the result follows. In the second, the other order is restored. In this last, similes are abandoned, and the discourse states directly what had been implied in numerous comparisons. As little as two can walk together without, etc., etc.; so little can misfortune occur in a city without the Lord's hand; or rather, as in all these cases, one thing is the result of the other as its cause, so is it here. "Misfortune" in the city is the result, the

"Lord" is the cause. Even this is to be considered as a kind of proverbial speech, but it explains the subject treated of in this passage. The prophet has threatened the whole people in ver. 2, with a visitation from God. Against this the consciousness of Israel revolts, especially because the visitation is to come from God, their own God, Jehovah. Therefore the prophet proves the correctness of his declaration by these examples, in which he traces with the certainty of the strictest logic every effect to a cause, and so every misfortune in the city to Jehovah as its author (and to his punitive righteousness as the cause). If this be so, every objection is obviated. Whatever misfortune exists must be traced back to Jehovah. This however is not proved, but only illustrated, by the examples cited, which show simply that as every event has its cause, so also must misfortune; so that the question remains, Is this result to be attributed to Jehovah's activity? The answer to this is found in vers. 7, 8, which must be taken together, since it is only thus that they furnish the desired proof.

Ver. 7. For presupposes the answer No, to the foregoing questions, especially the last. No, misfortune does not occur without Jehovah's hand, for, etc. The proof in the first instance is this: Jehovah does nothing without having disclosed his "secret," i. e. his secret counsel, to his servants, the prophets. The latter is certainly not the cause, but it is the indispensable condition of Jehovah's activity, so that between the two there is a necessary connection. But this very revelation to the prophets has as an inevitable result (ver. 8), their prophesying, which again is illustrated by an example drawn from experience, the lion roars, etc. so that this prophesying is not an accidental or capricious thing, but proceeds from a *causa sufficiens*, which lies in Jehovah himself. Therefore the meaning is: when the prophet speaks or predicts, Jehovah has revealed it to him, and the former is the result of the latter. But if Jehovah has made a revelation to him, then what he predicts, namely, misfortune, is really impending from Jehovah. The Lord will let it come. He will not indeed in the absence of such a revelation; but wherever this occurs, it is a token that He will bring it to pass. Therefore a prophecy, a foretelling of calamity by a prophet, is a voucher — כִּי — that the calamity is from the Lord, that a causal connection exists between the two as certain as that between the things mentioned in vers. 3-6. Otherwise, the prophet could not announce such a calamity, since he announces only what Jehovah reveals to him, but must announce that. The divine origin of his prophecy is to the prophet, therefore, the basis on which he proceeds as on a certain reality, and from this he argues and proves the divine authorship of the fact which he predicts, namely, a punitive judgment. Thus is sustained the truth of the saying, that Jehovah would visit Israel. — Only

in this way do we understand the כִּי in verse 7. It is therefore a reversal of the order of thought when most interpreters say that from ver. 3 the prophet is proving the divine origin of his prophecy against the objection that he spoke only from subjective influences, i. e., "as little can a prophet speak without a divine impulse as any other effect can be produced without a cause" (B. Baur). No, the prophet does not justify himself or his calling, he is sure of that; he only seeks to convince his hearers or readers that they are really to expect the judgment which he announces, and to this end he uses the fact that prophecy comes from God. —

Concerning the examples in ver. 3 ff. Baur correctly remarks, "There is no occasion to regard them as anything more than mere analogies representing the general relation of cause and effect, or to assign to each case a special reference to the prophet's thought, e. g., the two as a figure of God and the people, the lion as representing Jehovah, and the prey and the bird, the wicked, etc." Such a method leads to constrained refinements, as may be seen in Keil, *in loc.* The illustration of one principle by so many examples may seem somewhat tedious, but to understand it, one must consider the partiality of the Orientals for figurative and proverbial speeches, which leads them to express in these concrete forms even such an abstract truth as the relation of cause and effect. There is nothing strange, therefore, in finding such a representation coming from the herdmn of Tekoa.

3. Vers. 9-15. Here the Lord's purpose respecting the sinful people is openly declared.

(a.) Vers. 9, 10. *The sins.* Make it heard, etc. Not only are the sins to be punished set forth, but the heathen are summoned as witnesses. This turn in the address indicates that the sinfulness is very great, enough even to surprise the heathen, and thus puts Israel to shame.

Ver. 9. *Publish ye.* Jehovah is the speaker, and we must regard the command as addressed to the people in these heathen lands. The palaces, i. e., those who dwell there, are to be informed, because the question concerns what is done in the palaces of Samaria. Ashdod, as part for the whole, is put for the Philistines, who were regarded by Israel as godless heathen. Egypt, "whose unrighteousness and ungodliness Israel had once abundantly experienced" (Keil). — On the mountains of Samaria, i. e. around Samaria, whence they could look into the city.

Ver. 10. They know not to do right. They do not understand it, so accustomed are they to unrighteousness. They who store up violence, etc.; evil treasures which, so far from helping, destroy them.

(b.) Vers. 11-15. Therefore thus saith, etc., כִּי may be abstract or concrete. The latter is more probable, especially as in that case it is naturally connected with the verb וְהוֹרִיךְ, which otherwise would require Jehovah to be understood as its subject. The clause is an emphatic assertion in the form of an exclamation.

Ver. 12. In this plundering of Samaria, the great men will be able to save their lives only to the smallest extent and with the greatest difficulty. Both points are suggested in the comparison. ("A pair of shin-bones and a piece, i. e. a lappet, of the ear." Keil.)

Ver. 13. Renews the threatening and raises it still higher. There will be an utter destruction. Hear ye, etc., is addressed to the Israelites, as in ver. 1, since among even these God has those who will testify what He is going to do. They shall, when summoned as witnesses of wrong doing, announce also the punishment of Israel. House of Jacob means all Israel, i. e., the twelve tribes; even Judah should hear it so as to learn a lesson. The Divine names are accumulated for emphasis; the threat of such a God ought to make a deep impression. The visitation of Israel will begin with the destruction of the altars in Bethel, i. e., of idolatry, the religious source of the moral corruption. This is more closely defined by the cutting off of the horns, which destroys the significance of the altar.

Ver. 15. Winter houses and summer houses are primarily those of the royal family, but perhaps also those of the noblemen. — The threatened judgment, therefore, is the overthrow of Samaria, especially its palaces, with the complete extermination of the inhabitants (ver. 12).

DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL.

1. "Israel stands to us as a constant example both of the unsearchable riches of grace which God bestows and of the inconceivable judgments He sends upon those who receive his grace in vain." (Rieger.) Here again the bringing out of Egypt appears as the fundamental act of God's grace. It is mentioned alone, because by it as the condition of its outer and inner existence was Israel constituted the people of God. This bringing out, however, includes the guidance through the wilderness and the giving of the law. This people alone did God "know;" to them alone He stood in a relation of nearness and confidence; all others were aliens. Therefore so much the greater their guilt, and the more certain their punishment.

2. The sin of Israel, especially of the ten tribes, is apostasy, at least in the calf-worship (comp. ver. 14, chaps. iv. 4, v. 5). But that which particularly provokes rebuke and menace is, as appears by chap. ii. and the following chapters, the extreme moral corruption, which naturally is regarded as the violation of the divine commands, covetousness and luxury, and in connection therewith, the shameless disregard of the elementary duties due to our neighbors, violent oppression of the poor. This last is continually the subject of sharp censure (cf. ii. 6, 7, and subsequently iv. 1, v. 6, 11, 12, vi. 12, viii. 5, 6). The poor always stand under the especial protection of the divine law, a peculiar feature of which is its compassion for the lowly, as the Mosaic institute shows in many of its provisions. How fully the prophet was in sympathy with this trait, is shown by the fact that upon no point is he so zealous as upon the oppression of the poor. This was doubtless because such instances frequently occurred; still it is significant that instead of merely touching them and then passing on, he brings them forward and brands them with an especial stigma. "To pervert the way of the poor," as it was before expressed in chap. i. ver. 7, is, as it were, the unpardonable sin. For this reason the prophet's rebuke is addressed mainly to the great, the higher classes; but certainly not because these alone were corrupt while the lower classes needed no particular censure, although at bottom this was the fact. Are we then to recognize a democratic feature in the circumstance, and observe how a man of the people, a herdman, feels himself called chiefly to scourge the sins of the nobles and especially those by which the humble suffered? If it is correct to assert that God called and employed him to chastise such sins, we may admit this. Only let us not ascribe to Amos that modern democratic view which reviles the higher classes because it condemns all distinctions of ranks. Rather the reverse is true of Amos. He inveighs against the sins of the great, just because their position is so important, because he knows that upon their conduct depends the weal or the woe of the community, for if corruption prevails in their circles, the foundations of the national prosperity are undermined and shaken. With equal or even greater propriety may one ascribe an aristocratic leaning to our prophet, but

after a proper manner, *i. e.*, he considers the position of the higher classes very important, but for that very reason very responsible, and holds that their rights and privileges impose corresponding duties. They have much ability, but much is also expected from them, "to whom much is given," etc. And if they mistake and abuse their position, so much the heavier is their guilt and the greater the harm they work. Their degeneracy at last brings destruction upon the whole. If then a prophet were silent, or censured only the lowly and not the high, he would be justly chargeable with servility and fear of men, which would ill agree with his call to be a witness of divine truth (cf. chap. iv., Doctrinal and Ethical, 2).

3. Misfortune as a punishment comes only from Jehovah. It comes not of itself nor is casual, but has a definite cause and author, who is Jehovah. He who chose and blessed his people, the same punishes them. Men may struggle against this truth, but still it remains incontestable. And when a doubt of the divine authorship intrudes, there comes a voucher in the words of the prophets. Before God executes anything, He reveals it to his servants, and these cannot but declare what is thus revealed. A calamity announced by them is a punishment proceeding from God.

4. The lofty significance of prophecy is strongly expressed in vers. 7, 8. The prophets are not only "God's servants" in general, but are also entrusted with "his secret," his "counsel," *i. e.*, what He proposes respecting his people. Yes, he does nothing until He has revealed it to the prophets. Thus He, as it were, binds himself to them. Is it asked, Why? The answer is, The aim of the revelation is to secure its announcement, as it is expressly said (ver. 8), the speaking of God to his servants necessarily leads them to prophesy. The object of their utterances is simple and single, to set plainly before men the severity of God against sin, the truth of his punitive righteousness. If this is done, so to speak, in the interest of God, naturally it is still more in the interest of men. These are to learn how the matter stands with them and what threatens them, so as to take warning while there is time. And if men do take warning — for this is the implied thought, — then "God does nothing," *i. e.*, does not carry out his secret counsel. Therefore He, as it were, puts prophecy between his "secret" and its execution, and so prophecy is justly reckoned among Israel's peculiar privileges (comp. ii. 11 and the remarks there). Well remarks Rieger in reference to the present times: "Those to whom God has intrusted the duty of bearing witness to his truth in the world now, cannot put themselves on a level with his ancient prophets, nor should they indulge any natural passion herein. Yet it is very significant that the Lord Jesus addressed to the overseers of the churches of Asia the precious testimony of his revelation, and therein the secret counsel by which God's wrath is fulfilled, and thus indicated for all time the participation of the teacher's office in the judgments of God, partly in foreseeing them, partly in foretelling them, and partly, moreover, in influencing them for good by prayer and watchfulness."

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 1. *Hear the word which Jehovah speaks to you.* Here we learn that God's Word should be preached in such way that its hearers should

recognize that it is intended for and applies to them. For when it is declared only in general terms, especially as respects God's wrath against sin, the people commonly sit and think it does not concern them out only folks in far-off lands. It should be said, Hear what the Lord says to you who sit here under the pulpit.

Ver. 2. *You only, etc.—therefore I will, etc.* This is a wonderful inference. We should rather expect; therefore will I spare you. But we see that the Lord is accustomed to punish those who have received much at his hands more severely than others not so favored. For his kindness is not intended to encourage us in sin, but to render us through gratitude more devoted to Him. He has chosen us in Christ that we should be holy and blameless before Him in love (Ephes. i.), but where this result does not follow, God's goodness ceases, and his punishments fall the heavier. — (W. S.)

Vers. 3 ff. The comparisons here may be practically explained as (1) teaching us what just grounds God has for his punishments. If two walk together, they must agree, but you, He says, do not agree with me, but are my foes, by your evil works, and therefore I cannot walk with you in complacency. (2) As a lion does not roar unless the prey is just before him, so my threatenings are not uttered unless I see men just ready to fall, as it were, a prey to my wrath. Of this, however, they think lightly, and deem any calamity that befalls them an accident. But (3) just as little as a bird falls into the net without a fowler, or a fowler lifts the snare without having caught something, so little does misfortune occur without God's mind and will, who does not give up his purpose but carries it out unless withheld by a true repentance. As every one fears when the trumpet announces the enemy near at hand, so should my people when my prophets announce to them judgment for their sins. These similes remind us of the divine providence in punishments. They do not fall promiscuously, but in the righteous retribution of God, who determines beforehand who shall suffer and who escape.

[Ver. 6. *Dor's misfortune occur, etc.* Evil which is sin, the Lord hath not done; evil which is punishment for sin, the Lord bringeth. (Augustine.)

Ver. 7. *The Lord Jehovah does nothing, etc.* God has ever warned the world of coming judgments in order that it may not incur them. As Chrysostom says, He has revealed to us hell in order that we may escape hell. He warned Noah of the coming deluge. He told Abram and Lot of the future judgment of the cities of the plain. He revealed to Joseph the seven years of famine, and to Moses the ten plagues, and to Jonah the destruction of Nineveh; and by Christ He foretold the fall of Jerusalem; and Christ has warned all of his own future coming to judge the world. God does this that men may repent; and that if they obstinately continue in sin, He may be justified in executing punishment upon them. (Wordsworth.)

Ver. 8. *Who does not fear?* There is cause for you to fear when God roars from Zion, but if ye fear not, the prophets dare not but fear. So Paul

says, "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel." So Peter and John, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." Moses was not excused, though slow of speech; nor Isaiah, though of polluted lips; nor Jeremiah, because he was a child. And Ezekiel was bidden, Be not rebellious like that rebellious house. (Pascy.)

Ver. 9. *Publish in the palaces, etc.* "Since ye disbelieve, I will manifest to Ashdodites and Egyptians the transgressions of which ye are guilty." (Theodoret.) Shame towards man survives shame towards God. What men are not ashamed to do, they are ashamed to confess that they have done. Nay, to avoid a little passing shame, they rush upon everlasting shame. So God employs all inferior motives, shame, fear, hope of things present, if by any means He can win men not to offend Him. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 10. *They know not, etc.* It is a part of the miserable blindness of sin, that while the soul acquires a quick insight into evil, it becomes at last not only paralyzed to do good, but unable to perceive it. *Store up violence.* They stored up, as they deemed, the gains and fruits; but it was in truth the sins themselves, as a treasure of wrath against the day of wrath. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 11. *Therefore thus saith, etc.* There was no human redress. The oppressor was mighty, but mightier the avenger of the poor. Man would not help, therefore God would. *Thy palaces shall be spoiled.* Those palaces in which they had heaped up the spoils of the oppressed. Men's sins are in God's providence the means of their punishment. Their spoiling should invite the spoiler, their oppressions should attract the oppressor. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 12. *As the shepherd rescues, etc.* Amos as well as Joel (ii. 32) preaches the same solemn sentence, so repeated through the prophets, "a remnant only shall be saved." So it was in Judah. In the Gospel, not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble were called, but God chose the poor of this world, and the Good Shepherd rescued from the mouth of the lion those whom man despised. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 13. *Hear ye and testify.* It is of little avail to testify, unless we first hear; nor can man bear witness to what he doth not know; nor will words make an impression, *i. e.*, be stamped on men's souls, unless the soul which utters them have first hearkened unto them. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 14. *In the day when I visit, etc.* Scripture speaks of "visiting offenses upon," because in God's providence, the sin returns upon a man's own head. It is not only the cause of his punishment but a part of it. The memory of a man's sins will be a part of his eternal suffering. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 14. *The altars, etc.* The vengeance of a just and holy God will one day certainly root out false worship.

Ver. 15. *The winter-house and, etc.* What are the palaces and pleasure-houses of the wicked in the time of judgment, but a brand which kindles the wrath of the Lord.

CHAPTER IV.

2. Punishment must come, since despite all Chastisements the People will not amend.

1 Hear¹ this word, ye kine of Bashan,
 Who are upon the mountain of Samaria,
 Who oppress the poor,
 Who crush the needy,
 Who say to their lords,
 Bring hither that we may drink.

2 The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by his holiness,
 Behold days are coming upon you,
 When men will drag² you away with hooks
 And the remnant³ of you with ash-hooks.

3 And through breaches⁴ in the wall ye shall go out, every one before her,⁵
 And be cast forth⁶ to Harmon⁷ saith Jehovah.

4 Go to Bethel and sin, —
 To Gilgal,⁸ and sin still more !
 Bring every morning your sacrifices,
 Every three days your tithes.

5 Offer⁹ a praise-offering of what is leavened,
 Call out for voluntary offerings, proclaim them !
 For this liketh you,¹⁰ O sons of Israel,
 Saith the Lord, Jehovah.

6 And I, even I,¹¹ have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities,
 And want of bread in all your places ;
 And ye have not returned unto me, saith Jehovah.

7 And I, even I, have withheld the rain from you,
 When there were yet three months to the harvest,
 And have caused it to rain upon one city,
 And cause it not to rain¹² upon another.
 One field is rained upon,
 And the field upon which it does not rain, withers.

8 And two, three cities stagger to one city
 To drink water, and are not satisfied ;
 And ye have not returned unto me, saith Jehovah.

9 I have smitten you with blight and with mildew ;
 And the multitude¹³ of your gardens and your vineyards,
 And of your fig trees and olive trees, the locust devoured ;
 And ye have not returned to me, saith Jehovah.

10 I have sent pestilence among you in the manner of Egypt,¹⁴
 I have slain your young men with the sword,
 Together with the booty¹⁵ of your horses,
 And caused the stench¹⁶ of your camps to ascend even into your noses,
 And ye have not returned unto me, saith Jehovah.

11 I have overthrown among you,
 As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah,

And ye were like a brand plucked out of the burning ;
And still ye have not returned unto me.

12 Therefore thus will I do to thee, O Israel.
Because I will do this to thee,
Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.

13 For, behold, He that formeth the mountains and createth the wind,
And declareth to man what is his thought,
Who maketh dawn darkness,
And goeth over the high places of the earth,
Jehovah, God of hosts, is his name.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

- 1 Ver. 1. — שָׁמַעַךְ for שָׁמַעְתָּךְ, because the verb stands first. Cf. Is. xxxii. 11.
- 2 Ver. 2. — נָשָׂא is Piel, as in 1 Kings ix. 11. Green's *Grammar*, § 164, 2. נָּ pleonastic, like the Greek ἄν, in direct address.
- 3 Ver. 2. — אַחֲרֵי־יָמַי is not posterity (Fürst, Henderson), but remnant, "all even to the very last." Cf. Hengstenberg, *Christol.*, i. 367.]
- 4 Ver. 3. — קָרְבָּיִם is accusative of place.
- 5 Ver. 3. — בְּיָמֶיךָ, i. e., without turning to the right or the left." Cf. Josh. vi. 5-20.
- 6 Ver. 3. — הַשֶּׁלֶכְתָּךְּ, i. e., simply the full form of the pronoun, added here to obtain a similarity of sound with the preceding verb. The Hiphil form is found in all the MSS. save one, and is defended by Hitzig, Ewald, etc., but as it is very harsh, it is better, with the LXX., Syr., Sym., Vulgate, and Arabic, to take it as Hophal (Jerome, Fürst, Kell, etc.)
- 7 Ver. 3. — הַדְּרֹמָה. This *hapax legom.* is not yet satisfactorily explained, although almost every possible interpretation has been given. The final letter appears to be ה local, and in that case the word indicates the place into which the fugitives are cast. But where that place is none can say; we have only conjectures, for which see Kell and Henderson *in loc.*
- 8 Ver. 4. — "Gilgal" is in the accusative after "go" understood from the preceding clause. "Every three days," is the literal rendering adopted by Ibn Esra, Rosenmüller, Maurer, Kell, etc. Kimchi gives it as E. V., and is followed by Henderson. The LXX., Vulgate, and Luther agree with Ibn Esra.
- 9 Ver. 5. — הַיָּמָר, infin. absol. used for the imper.
- 10 Ver. 5. — "For this liketh you." This fine archaism seems preferable to the marginal equivalent of the E. V., "So ye love."
- 11 Ver. 6. — The first personal pronoun, when separately expressed in Hebrew, is always emphatic; hence the repetition in the version, "I, I, even I."
- 12 Ver. 7. — אֲמַטִּיר. The imperfects from here on are used as the historical present to give life to the description.
- 13 Ver. 9. — הַרְבֹּת, infin. const. used as a substantive = multitude.
- 14 Ver. 10. — "In the manner of Egypt," because pestilence is epidemic in Egypt (Is. x. 24-26).
- 15 Ver. 10. — עִם שָׂבִי is usually explained: "together with the carrying away of your horses," so that even your horses were carried away. But Keil renders it concrete = the booty, so that even the horses that were captured, perished.
- 16 Ver. 10. — וּבְאֵימָתָם — even into your nostrils, "like as a memorial of their sins" (Hitzig).
- 17 Ver. 13. — עֹשֶׂה־דָּוָה, may be, who turns the dawn into darkness, or, by asyndeton, who makes dawn, darkness, i. e., both. [The latter is preferred by Calvin, is expressed in the LXX., and is said by Henderson to be the reading of more than twenty of Kennicott's MSS.]

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

1. Vers. 1-3. Hear this, etc. Plundering and destruction had been threatened; here carrying away is added. They who are threatened are the same as in chap. iii. The comparison to kine of Bashan, i. e., strong, well-fed, well agrees with the description of their extortions and their luxurious life in that chapter. They are compared to cows rather than bulls, manifestly because the latter figure would be too dignified for such persons as are intended. Perhaps their effeminacy is also hinted. But it is certainly wrong to understand the expression as meaning specifically the women of Samaria. For nothing characteristic of women is said of the cows, but only what had previously been said of the great in general. Nor is the phrase who say to their lords, any objection to this

view; for cows have their "lords," and the term here means the king and the princes under whom the other great men are ranked. So the Targum, Jerome, Calvin, Maurer, and others.

Ver. 2. The threat is introduced by an oath. Jehovah swears by his holiness, for this perfection must desire the punishment of such an unholy life. Your remnant, what has not been dragged away with hooks. To understand this as meaning "posterity," would require us to consider two generations as included in the punishment threatened, which is a thought foreign to the context.

The breaches in the walls, are those made at the capture of the city. [There will be no need to resort to the gates, for egress will be possible in every direction. — C.] As to the much disputed Hermon, all the ancients and most of the moderns take it as a proper name, — Armenia, Rimmon, Hermon, etc. Kimchi, followed by Gesenius, Winer

Henderson, resolves the word by a change of its first letter into the term meaning palace or citadel, and renders "will be cast down as to the palace," *i. e.*, from it. Dr. Van Dyck in the New Arabic Bible, also takes it as appellative, and renders "to the citadel."

2. Vers. 4, 5. Go to Bethel, etc. You will not arrest this judgment by your idolatrous worship, eagerly as you may pursue that worship. Such eagerness is only an enlargement of your sins. This thought is expressed in a manner bitterly ironical by a summons to greater zeal. Gilgal was, like Bethel, a seat of idol worship (cf. on Hos. iv. 15). The whole passage is hyperbolic. "Even if you offered slain offerings every morning and tithed every three days, it would only increase your guilt."

To the same effect in ver. 5 they are told, instead of being content with unleavened cakes, to offer also upon the altar even the leavened loaves which were not required by law to be consumed (Lev. vii. 13, 14). And so with the free-will offerings. Instead of leaving these to spontaneous impulses, they in their exaggerated zeal called out for them, published them. The words, for this liketh you, make a mock of this zeal. But the mock is subsequently turned into earnest. For men surely should not persist in such love and zeal for idol-worship, after God had so often punished them for it.

3. Vers. 6-11. All punishment hitherto had been in vain. This is shown in five instances, each concluding with the sorrowful refrain, and yet ye have not returned unto me, which strikingly display the love of Jehovah, who visits and punishes his people only to prevent the necessity of severer punishment.

(a.) Ver. 6. And I also, etc. To what they did, the prophet sets in opposition what Jehovah did. Cleanness of teeth, because they had nothing to eat.

(b.) Vers. 7, 8. Withheld the rain when, etc. The latter rain is meant. As this fell in February and March, while the harvest occurred in May and June, the interval was reckoned in round numbers at three months. ["This is utterly ruinous to the hopes of the farmer. A little earlier or a little later would not be so fatal, but drouth three months before harvest is entirely destructive." *The Land and the Book*, ii. 66.] The withholding of rain is stated as partial, in order to show more distinctly that it was a divine ordering.

(c.) Ver. 9. The third chastisement was a bad harvest, arising from a blight upon the cereal grains and the destruction of fruits by locusts.

(d.) Ver. 10. The fourth chastisement was pestilence and war. For the grievous sufferings of Israel in the latter, see 2 Kings xv. 12, xiii. 3, 7.

(e.) Ver. 11. I overthrew, etc. This manifestly does not indicate a new chastisement in addition to the foregoing, but sums them all up in a single utterance. "The comparison of the doom of Ephraim to that of Sodom and Gomorrah, is a general indication of the greatness of their punishment (cf. Is. i. 9). The way in which the destruction of the cities of the plain is spoken of, plainly refers to Gen. xix. 29, where occurs the word 'overthrow,' which became the standing phrase to describe this fearful fate (Deut. xxix. 22; Is. i. 7, xiii. 19; Jer. xlix. 18, l. 40)." (Baur.) As a brand. The emphasis does not lie on the actual escape, but on the fact that it was so narrow. The phrase vividly depicts the severity of their chastisements hitherto; so much the more inexcusable are they for not having returned to the Lord.

4. Vers. 12, 13. Therefore thus will I, etc. *Thus*, but *how* is not said. "Thus," is therefore to be regarded as a general threat, which is so much the more severe, because it is not stated what shall come, so that there is everything to fear. The punishment is indeed generally indicated in this chapter, as also in chapter iii. But the chief point of the chapter is to recall the past hard-heartedness of Israel, not to describe their punishment, since there are only brief references to the judgment already mentioned, the full description of which is resumed in chap. v. As yet it is only a threat: hence the summons, Prepare, etc., *i. e.*, not to meet your doom, but to avert it by true repentance (cf. chap. v. 4, 6). "To give the greater emphasis to this command, ver. 13 depicts God as the Almighty and Omniscient who creates prosperity and adversity." (Keil.) "His thought" does not mean man's thought, but God's own, which He makes known by the prophets, *i. e.*, his purpose to punish. [It seems more natural, as it is more in accordance with the uniform usage of the word

יָדַעַתִּי to refer it to man. As Pusey says, "To man, a sinner, far more impressive than all majesty of creative power is the thought that God knows his inmost soul. He declareth unto man his meditation, before he puts it into words."] Treads upon the high places = rules over all, even the highest of earth. Finally the whole is confirmed by the lofty title of God as God of Hosts.

DOCTRINAL AND ETHICAL.

1. "This discourse (vers. 1-3) strikes at those who are in authority and practice violence at court and elsewhere. In them, unrighteousness in act concurs with great looseness in speech. The more violently men deal in matters of office and government, the more viciously do they proceed among their fellows, trying to stifle all humane feeling for others' need and all complaints at the wrong that is done. But the more frivolous their talk, the more earnest is God in his counsel and oath against them; and as they have done much for the sake of advancing and enriching their posterity, so the judgment of God strikes them with their posterity." (Rieger.)

2. "Since the prophet here attacks so severely the heads of the state, we are to consider that if a modern preacher were to do the same, it would be regarded as an insult and a calumny. But if a preacher out of a proper zeal should at times handle somewhat harshly acknowledged public offenders who can be reached in no other way, this is by no means to be deemed an unbecoming insult, for the same reproach would apply to the prophets, to our Lord Himself, and to his Apostles, all of whom often uttered severe language. When in any such case the rebuke aims only at the benefit of the persons concerned, it is not an impropriety or an outrage, but a work of love demanded by the preacher's office, which is to censure the impenitent. This must be done not only upon the lowly but upon the lofty, and indeed the more upon the latter because they do so much more harm when they act amiss." (*Wurt. Bi.*) It is a natural inference that such a thing should be done not in passion nor personal provocation, but really from a holy zeal against sin. But clear as the matter is so far, the more difficult is it in practice. One can only say, Let each man approve himself to God as to his inward feeling. The fear of man should not close the mouth to an open testimony against the high. But it does not follow that an open mouth

is always a token of zeal for God's honor. Least of all is such a thing found in a mere copying of others, even though they be prophets. Nor should the difference between prophets and the preachers of our day be obliterated. With the courage to bear testimony must be united the courage to suffer on account of such testimony (cf. at chap. iii. Doct. and Eth. 2).

3. They who shamelessly transgress the simplest moral duties, develop along with this course a powerful religious zeal and cannot do enough in worship. An apparent contradiction, yet one confirmed a hundred times by experience; moral corruption and religious bigotry amalgamated! Yet is it altogether natural; the religious form covers over the moral nakedness and quiets the conscience; but this is certainly a horrible delusion. That it was a false worship in which the Israelites were so zealous, enhances their guilt, for it was an apostasy from Jehovah. But even a religiosity which is formally correct, may be used as a cover for wickedness, and be blended with moral corruption. Thus it is well to remember that religious zeal in itself is no proof that all is well.

4. God tries all means before proceeding to extremities. If benefits are not recognized, He sends chastisements. These in the first instance aim not at destruction, but at opening the eyes through the perception of the divine wrath so that men may repent and seek God. They are therefore as much tokens of grace as proofs of wrath. But if this aim is not reached, the forbearance of God ceases, and a decisive judgment steps forth. But this last is something extorted from God, it is against his real disposition; only with reluctance does He resolve upon it. He waits long in the hope that there will be a change and so the last step be unnecessary. Most clearly does the sorrowful love of God shine out from the vivid delineation of the prophet. National calamities, according to our chapter, are to be viewed as chastisements from God. This view does not conflict with the existence of natural causes, but recognizes God as the being in whose service these act. It sees in the course of the world, not the blind mechanism of a clock, but the work of a personal intelligent will, and considers the laws of that course as the thoughts of this will, which rules and governs the whole, the domain of the physical as well as that of the moral and spiritual, and naturally does not leave these to run on merely side by side, but puts them in constant and intimate relation and alternation with each other, so that physical life finds its highest aim in the loftier domain of moral and spiritual life. National calamities are only a lower degree of the revelation of God's wrath. Heavy as they may be, they endanger only the material conditions of a nation's life, and that in a superficial way from which there may be a recovery, but they do not imperil its essential being, which consists in its political "independence and freedom." That a nation is determined to maintain and guard this, that it considers the loss of it the last punishment from God's hand, comes forth very clearly as the prophet's view. A nation therefore should defend this against the attack of a foreign foe. But it is equally clear that where the inner conditions, piety and righteousness, no longer exist, there all pains to preserve independence are vain. God gives the power and victory to the foes. What enemies do, that God himself does through them (cf. chap. ii. 13, iii. 15). Here also there is no denial of the nearer causality, that of the human will. But while man is doing only his own will, he at the same time does the will of God, acts as his instru-

ment, and serves his aims, which are the highest, the only absolute ones.

5. With a short but lofty delineation of God's transcendent greatness and almighty power, the prophet concludes the chapter, showing that Jehovah is one who speaks with emphasis and can execute his threatenings. It is as beautiful poetically as it is profound theologically. It exhibits an elevation and depth in the conception of God, which permits a very definite conviction as to the strength and clearness of the divine manifestation made to Israel. As thus controlling all things, God is called the God of Hosts. Observe how fond Amos is of this phrase in the vehement outpouring of indignation in the chaps. iii.-vi., cf. iii. 13, iv. 13, v. 16, 27, vi. 8, 14. Here Jehovah appears as One who towers above all creaturely existences, who rules the highest spheres of might, against whom therefore nothing can avail, around whom everything stands ready to execute his will. He is not the national God of Israel alone, but the God of the world. Hence He is not merely a natural force which builds and again destroys, but a personal God who acts according to his own "thought," which He makes known to men. And as such a personal, self-conscious, self-active being, He stands in constant relations with his personal creatures.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[Ver. 1. *Who oppress the poor.* He upbraids them not for fierceness, but for a more delicate and wanton unfeelingness, the fruit of luxury, fullness of head, a life of sense, which destroy all tenderness, dull the mind, deaden the spiritual sense. They did not directly oppress, perhaps did not know that it was done; they sought only that their own thirst for luxury and self-indulgence should be gratified, and knew not, as those at ease often know not now, that their luxuries are continually watered by the tears of the poor, tears shed almost unknown except by the Maker of both. But He counts willful ignorance no excuse. (Pusey.)

Ver. 2. *Behold, days are coming.* God's day and eternity are ever coming. They are holding on their steady course. Men put out of their minds what will come. Therefore God so often in his notices of woe brings to mind that those days are ever coming; they are not a thing which shall be only; in God's purpose they already are, and with one uniform, steady noiseless tread are coming upon the sinner. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 4. *Go to Bethel and sin,* etc. Words uttered in bitter irony and indignation, as Ezekiel says (xx. 39), "Go ye, serve every one his idols," and our Lord, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers" (Matt. xxiii. 32). It is a characteristic of idolatry and schism, to profess extraordinary zeal for God's worship and go beyond the letter and spirit of his law by arbitrary will-worship and self-idolizing fanaticism. (Wordsworth.)

Ver. 5. *Call out for voluntary offerings,* etc. The profuseness of idolaters in the service of their false gods may shame our strait-handedness in the service of the true and living God. (M. Henry.)

Ver. 6 ff. *Have given you cleanness of teeth,* etc. Before, we had a thoughtful appeal to God's mercies; now his chastisements are enumerated. These are the two chief evidences of God's approach to a people, a community, a family, or even an individual, in love or in sorrow, and what fruits one or the other has borne (Rieger). [*And ye have not returned unto me.* By repeating this sorrowful ejaculation four times (vers 6, 9, 10, 11) God em-

phatically declares the loving design of his chastisement of Israel. (Wordsworth.)

Vers. 7, 8. The preaching of the Gospel is as rain; God sometimes blesses one place with it more than another; some countries, some cities are like Gideon's fleece, wet with this dew while the ground around is dry; all withers where this rain is wanting. But it were well if people were but as wise for their souls as they are for their bodies, and, when they have not this rain near them, would go and seek it where it is to be had. If they seek aright, they shall not seek in vain. (M. Henry.)]

Ver. 9. Of what avail are judgments? Men now are as little influenced by them as Israel of old. They do not believe they are punishments, much less that they are sent for the causes assigned. They deem them accidental, or else invent other causes, and even ascribe droughts, floods, hail, caterpillars, etc., to witchcraft and sorcery, in the face of the Scripture which expressly attributes such plagues to God. (*Wurt. Bible.*) [Ordinarily, God makes his sun to arise upon the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, but He does not enslave himself to his own laws. There are variations, and in his Word He reveals to us the meaning of his daily variations in the workings of nature. (Pusey.)

Ver. 10. *After the manner of Egypt.* Israel, having sinned like Egypt, was to be punished like Egypt. One of the threatenings in Deuteronomy in case of disobedience was (xxviii. 27), The

Lord shall smite thee with the botch of Egypt (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 11. *I have overthrown, etc.* The earthquake is reserved to the last as the most special visitation. It is at all times the more terrible, because unseen, unannounced, instantaneous, complete. The ground under a man's feet seems no longer secure, his shelter is his destruction; men's houses become their graves. War, pestilence, and famine seldom break in at once. The earthquake at once buries it may be, thousands, each stiffened (if it were so), in that his last deed of evil; each household with its own form of misery; each in its separate vault,—dead, dying, crushed, imprisoned. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 12. *Thus will I do unto thee.* God having said this is silent as to what He will do; that so Israel hanging in suspense as having before him each sort of punishment—which are the more terrible because he imagines them one by one,—may indeed repent, that God inflict not what He threatens. (Jerome.)]

Ver. 13. *He that formeth the mountains, etc.* This noble description of God on one hand arouses the conscience to appreciate his threatenings and renounce all vain confidence, and on the other encourages the heart to come again into communion with such a God by sincere conversion. (Rieger.) [If He be such a God as He is here described to be, it is folly to contend with Him, and our duty and interest to make our peace with Him; it is good having Him our friend, and bad having Him our enemy. (M. Henry.)]

CHAPTER V.

3 *Lament for Israel. The only Safety is in seeking the Lord. Woe to the Fools who desire the Day of the Lord.*

1 Hear this word,

Which I raise over you as a lamentation, ¹ O house of Israel

2 Fallen is the virgin ² Israel, she does not rise again,
She is stretched out upon her soil, no one raises her up.

3 For thus saith the Lord Jehovah,
The city which goes out by a thousand ³
Shall retain a hundred,
And that which goes out by a hundred
Shall retain ten, for the house of Israel.

4 For thus saith Jehovah to the house of Israel,
Seek ye me, and ye shall live. ⁴

5 And seek not Bethel,
And go not to Gilgal.
And pass not over to Beersheba.
For Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, ⁵
And Bethel shall come to naught.

6 Seek ye Jehovah, and ye shall live,
Lest he break forth like fire upon the house of Joseph,
And it devour, ⁶ and there be none to quench it for Bethel

7 They who turn justice into wormwood,
And cast righteousness down to the earth!

8 He who makes the Seven Stars ⁷ and Orion,
And turns the shadow of death into morning,
And darkens day into night;

- Who calls to the waters of the sea,
And pours them over the face of the earth,
Jehovah is his name!
- 9 Who makes desolation to flash⁸ upon the strong,
And desolation comes upon the fortress.
- 10 They hate the reprover⁹ in the gate,
And him that speaketh uprightly they abhor.
- 11 Therefore, because ye trample¹⁰ upon the poor,
And take from him a gift of wheat;
Houses of hewn stone ye have built
But ye shall not dwell in them,
Pleasant vineyards ye have planted,
But ye shall not drink their wine.
- 12 For I know that many are your transgressions,
And your sins are great,
Ye who oppress¹¹ the righteous,
Who take a bribe,
And they push aside the poor in the gate from their right.
- 13 Therefore, the prudent at this time is silent,
For it is an evil time.
- 14 Seek good and not evil that ye may live,
And that so Jehovah, God of hosts, may be with you, as ye say.
- 15 Hate evil and love good,
And set up justice in the gate;
Perhaps Jehovah, God of hosts, will favor the remnant of Joseph.
- 16 Therefore thus saith Jehovah, God of hosts, the Lord,
In all streets wailing!
And in all the highways shall men say, Alas, alas,
And they call¹² the husbandman to mourning,
And lamentation to those skilled in lamenting.
- 17 And in all vineyards shall be lamentation,
For I will pass through the midst of thee, saith Jehovah
- 18 Woe to those who desire the day of Jehovah!
What good is it to you?
The day of Jehovah! it is darkness and not light.
- 19 As if a man fleeth before the lion,
And the bear meets him;
Or he goes into the house
And rests his hand upon the wall,
And the snake bites him.
- 20 Is not the day of Jehovah darkness and not light,
And gloom without any brightness?
- 21 I hate, I despise your feasts,¹³
And take no delight in your assemblies.
- 22 For if ye offer me burnt-offerings,
Your food-offerings I will not accept,
And the thank-offering of your fatlings I will not regard.
- 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs,
And the playing of your harps I will not hear.
- 24 And let judgment roll on like water,
And righteousness like an inexhaustible stream.¹⁴
- 25 Did ye offer me sacrifices and food-offerings
In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?
(No) but ye bore the tent of your king¹⁵
And the pedestal of your images,

The star of your God,
Which ye made for yourselves.
27 Therefore will I carry you away captive beyond Damascus,¹⁶
Saiḥ Jehovah, whose name is God of hosts.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 1. — הַיָּקָה is the word used to denote David's dirge over Saul and Jonathan, 2 Sam. i. 17. It is here in apposition with דָּבָר.]

2 Ver. 2. — נִפְּשָׁה, E. V. *forsaken* is quite inadequate. Targum and Vulgate have *cast down*, but better is the literal meaning given above — *stretched out*, and therefore prostrate and helpless.

3 Ver. 3. — The numerals define more closely the manner of the going forth, *i. e.* to war.

4 Ver. 4. — The two imperatives by a usage common in all languages, express command and result; *e. g.*, Latin, *divide et impera*.

5 Ver. 5. — There is in גִּלְגַּל גְּלוּהָ וְגִלְגַּל גְּלוּהָ, a play upon words which cannot be expressed in English. A similar paronomasia is suggested in the last clause, cf. Hos. iv. 15. [Pusey offers, as illustrative parallels, "Paris péria," or "London is undone."]

6 Ver. 6. — וְאֵבְדָה cannot be rendered as in E. V. "and devour," as if Jehovah were the subject.

7 Ver. 8. — עֲיִיבָה, the crowd, is the Seven Stars or Pleiades. פְּסִיל, the *fool*, but according to the old interpreters, [whom Fürst follows] the *giant*, is Orion. Both constellations are mentioned together in Job ix. 9; xxxviii. 31. The connection between vers. 7 and 8 is, They are acting in this atrocious way, whereas Jehovah is the Almighty and can bring sudden destruction upon them.

8 Ver. 9. — מִבְּלִיג, causes to break in. [Following an Arabic analogy, Keil and Wordsworth suppose an allusion to the swiftness of lightning, expressed in the version by *flash*. Pusey follows Aquila and Jerome, and renders *maketh to smile*. The E. V. followed a conjecture of Kimchi, and is clearly wrong, besides quite needlessly turning שָׂדֶה in both members from an abstract into a concrete noun.]

9 Ver. 10. — מוֹכִיחַ. Not merely a judge acting officially, but "any one who before a tribunal lifts up his voice against acts of injustice." Cf. Is. xxix. 21.

10 Ver. 11. — בּוֹשֵׁשׁ, *an. ley.*, a variant orthography for בּוֹסֵס. Fürst derives it from בּוֹשׂ, *i. q.* בָּאֵשׁ, to be *loathsome*, *h. bad*. *Hiph.*, to bring evil upon.

11 Ver. 12. — בְּזִרְהֵי. This and the following participle belong to the suffixes in the nouns preceding.

12 Ver. 16. — To proclaim mourning to the husbandman = to call him to mourning.

13 Ver. 21. — הַיָּמִים are the great yearly festivals. עֵינָרוֹת is of uncertain meaning, commonly explained, *festive assemblies*. Cf. Joel i. 14. [All agree that it denotes convocations in connection with religious observances, whether penitential or otherwise.] אֲרִיחַ, *lit.* to smell, is an expression of satisfaction, in allusion to "the odour of delight" which ascended to God from the burning sacrifice. Cf. Lev. xxvi. 31; Gen. viii. 21; Ephes. v. 2.

14 Ver. 24. — אֵינָן. The later critics give the primary meaning as *constant, abiding*, and hence when applied to streams, *inexhaustible*.

15 Ver. 25. — The words here are difficult, since סִכּוּת and כִּיּוֹן are *an. ley.* Perhaps they are proper names of idols, so that the adjoining words are in apposition, and we should render — Sikkuth, your king, and Chiun, your image. So Luther, and of later critics, Fürst. The name Sikkuth (in Syriac with another pointing, כִּיּוֹן, Chevan) has been explained to mean Saturn, who indeed in Arabic is called Kaiman, but it is not certain that this did not originate from the passage before us, and therefore "it has no more worth than that of an exegetical conjecture" (Keil.) The LXX, changing the word, make out of כִּיּוֹן an idol, Παῖδαν (Acts vii. 43, Περμφαν), the meaning of which is equally uncertain, since the name does not occur elsewhere in the LXX., or in the writings founded upon that version. Keil therefore conjectures an exchange of letters; instead of כִּיּוֹן they read רִיבֶן. Then the plural צִלְמֵיכֶם becomes difficult, for although Fürst says that תְּלָמִים is like גְּלוּהָיִים, גְּלוּהָיִים, used here as a singular for an idol, that is a mere assertion. Naturally then the appellative פִּזְבֵּךְ would belong to both the proper names. But that כּוֹכַב אֱלֹהִים is not to be coördinated with the two preceding phrases, is plain from the omission, first of the יָתֵּן which stands before each of those clauses, and then, of the ׀ by which they are closely bound together.

More probable then is the appellative view of Sikkuth and Chiun. The former from כָּכַן, to cover, hence a covering, a booth. So the LXX., σκαπη. (But they improperly take מְלִיכָיִךְ as a proper name, του μολέχ.) Therefore, "tent of your king," meaning doubtless a movable shrine in which the image of the god was kept; such as, according to Herod. ii. 63, and Diod. Sic. i. 97 were used by the Egyptians. Chiun is correspondingly explained as pedestal, from צִבְּן, and allied to כֶּן and מְכוּבָה, therefore, the *pedestal or framework of your images*, that by which they were carried about. What follows is to be considered as in explanatory apposition, *viz.* the star of your god = the star who was your god. Undoubtedly even this explanation has great difficulties. [But still it is easier than the others which have been proposed, and is sustained by the sanction of Ribera, Junius, Gesenius, Hengstenberg, Keil, and Wordsworth.]

In any case we must understand by פִּזְבֵּךְ the image of a star, for the carrying it about is inconsistent with its being an actual star, — *which ye have made* refers either to this star-image or to "your god."

16 Ver. 27. — מִתְּהַלְאָה לְבַדְּמִשְׁקֵי. From a distance in respect to Damascus = far beyond Damascus

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

1. Vers. 1-3. Lament over the fall of Israel. This word is further defined as a mournful song or dirge. The song follows in ver. 2. The virgin expresses the fact that the daughter of Israel had hitherto been unconquered (Is. xxiii. 12). This now should have an end. Vers. 3 briefly explains the dirge. Israel will perish in war even to a very small remnant.

2. Vers. 4-17. The deeper ground of the dirge; For Israel might easily be saved if they would seek the Lord, but this they will not do.

(a.) Vers. 4-6. What God desires is that they should seek Him and forsake idolatry. To live means in the first instance to remain in life, but naturally includes the whole welfare of the state, its independence, etc. Gilgal and Bethel, so far from helping those who resorted to them, should themselves perish. Beersheba, in Southern Judæa, must have been a place of idolatrous worship, to which people from the ten tribes resorted, and in so doing passed over the boundaries of their kingdom.

Ver. 6. Once more is the seeking of Jehovah declared to be the means of life, and more strictly, the means of averting the judgment. The house of Joseph = Ephraim, the whole kingdom being named from the principal tribe. Bethel, as the chief seat of worship, was the central point of the kingdom.

(b.) Vers. 7-9. By a peculiar *asyndeton* the two parties are placed in vivid contrast with each other; the people in their ungodly course, and Jehovah in his omnipotence, naturally with the implied thought, such a God can punish—ought to be feared.

Ver. 7. Wormwood as a bitter plant is an image of bitter wrong, as in vi. 12; righteousness therefore is conceived as a sweet fragrant plant (cf. Deut. xxix. 19). Casting down to the earth = trampling under foot.

Ver. 8. Turns the shadow of death, etc. As these words are preceded by a reference to the stars and followed by a mention of natural phenomena, they are certainly to be understood in the same way, the aim of the entire passage being to cite the obvious manifestations God thus makes of himself, in support of the foregoing threatening. The tropical explanation—"he changes the deepest misery into prosperity," does not suit here, but only the natural, literal meaning; although "the shadow of death" does not in itself signify the regularly recurring shades of night, but as, *e. g.* in Job xxv. 17, the appalling gloom of night. Here night in general is set forth under this point of view, and is compared with the shadow of death. For its gloom is conceived of as an image of the divine judgment, of the hiding of God's face. But in any case the energy of the divine power in turning darkness into light is rendered so much the more prominent. [Keil and Pusey prefer the figurative meaning, which indeed is more in accordance with the constant usage of מַלְאָכָה, but is certainly unnatural in this place in view of the literal references before and after.]—Who calls to the waters, etc., can refer only to fearful inundations by waves of the sea. [The allusion to the judgment of the Flood can hardly be overlooked. Keil.]

Ver. 9. Whether the evil mentioned here is to be viewed as caused like the foregoing by manifestations of God's power in the natural world, is doubt-

ful, but not improbable. The reference might be to an earthquake or a storm.

(c.) Vers. 10-13. They hate the reprover etc. The prophet returns to the conduct of Israel, which must be punished.

Ver. 10. "In the gate," shows that the reference is to judicial proceedings. "The reprover," therefore, and "the one speaking uprightly," cannot be understood of the prophets, however natural such reference would be on other grounds.

Ver. 11. Take a gift = do him justice only when they are paid for it. Houses of hewn stone are costly dwellings, Is. ix. 10. The threat is borrowed from Deut. xxviii. 30.

Ver. 12. Who take a bribe, may either indicate a fresh sin, *i. e.*, taking atonement money in satisfaction for a murder, against the law in Num. xxxv. 31, or may belong to the foregoing, thus, ye who oppress (imprison) the righteous and then take a ransom, *i. e.*, will release him only for a ransom. The former is more consistent with the prevailing use of the Hebrew term. [So Pusey and Keil; but certainly the word in one instance at least, 1 Sam. xii. 3, is used to denote any sort of bribe.]

Ver. 13. Manifestly belongs to what precedes, since it further describes the period of corruption. He who has prudence = whose counsel is wholesome, will be compelled to silence (cf. ver. 10, the upright speaker is abhorred); instead of attentive hearing he has only violence to expect.

(d.) Vers. 14-17. Once more the way of deliverance is pointed out, at least for a remnant. But for the mass, nothing is to be expected but deep sorrow on all sides.

Ver. 14. And that so . . . with you as ye say. That is, Then will that be really the case which ye now vainly imagine,—that God is with you.

Ver. 15. Set up justice, etc. = maintain a righteous administration of justice. Then possibly there may be favor for a remnant. This does not refer to the existing condition of the ten tribes as reduced by Syrian conquests, for the kingdom under Jeroboam II. had recovered its former territorial limits. The remnant refers to that which would be left in future after the great chastisement impending. See a similar allusion in reference to Judah in Joel iii. 5, and Is. vi. 13, x. 21, 23.

Ver. 16. Therefore, introducing the threat, presupposes a denunciation of sins. The entire chapter is full of this, and therefore naturally, vers. 16, 17 do not refer simply to vers. 14, 15. Yet these latter do, indirectly at least, contain a reproof. The warning implies that the warned are not seeking good, etc. But only such seeking can save, and it is only too certain that these are not doing it; therefore, etc.,—general mourning. The sense is, on every hand there will be dead to weep for. There will be repeated what happened in Egypt at the smiting of the first-born; as the words I will pass through the midst of thee, allude to Exod. xii. 12. As in the cities, so in the land, there will be such a death-wail. And they call is to be supplied before the last clause. The skilled in lamenting, are the professional wailing women who were employed at funerals.

Ver. 17. Even in the vineyards, usually the places of liveliest joy, wailing should resound. ["A vintage not of wine but of woe."—Pusey.]

3. Vers. 18-27. Woe to the confident who deceive themselves with false hopes.

(a.) Vers. 18-20. Woe to those, etc. It would be foolish to expect help from the day of the Lord.

Ver. 18. Who desire the day of the Lord. Since they fancied that the carnal Israel and the

true people of God were identical, this day must of course bring to them deliverance from all distress, and also power and glory. But it is made clear that this day to them can only bring harm, can only be a day of destruction (Joel ii. 2). Therefore, should they escape one danger (from a foe), they would only the more certainly fall into another. This in ver. 19 is set forth by a figure taken from common life, the meaning of which is clear.

Ver. 20. Once more is the threatening character of the day of the Lord affirmed and repeated.

(b.) Vers. 21-27. Even with festivals and sacrifices the people do not avert the judgment. For worship, rendered as a mere *opus operatum*, as it is by Israel, is worthless before God, and even offensive to Him. Since the question concerns the ten tribes, we may assume from the following representation that the worship they rendered was as to ritual substantially conformed to that at Jerusalem.

Ver. 22. For. God's displeasure at the feasts, etc., arise from his dislike of the sacrifices. The construction is interrupted, the first clause having no apodosis; but this is easily supplied from the second; and the sense is, I will accept neither your burnt offerings nor your meat offerings.

Ver. 23. The singing is contemptuously called a noise of songs.

Ver. 24. Such worship, instead of averting the judgment, rather provokes its full execution. It should pour over the land, like a flowing stream. It is wrong to interpret the verse [with Pusey, *et al.*] as an exhortation to the people to practice judgment and righteousness. The image of a flood of waters is much too strong for such a thought; it points rather to an act of God. [Yet, one may ask, is the expression any stronger here than in the cognate passage in Isaiah xlvi. 18, "then had thy peace been as a river and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea?" But the connection manifestly favors the author's view.]

(c.) Vers. 25-27. Did ye offer, etc. No wonder that such a judgment impends over Israel. From of old they had been recreant to their God. Their present offensive worship was in reality only a continuation of the idolatry practiced in the wilderness.

Ver. 25. Did ye offer to me sacrifices and food-offerings (=bloody and unbloody oblations)? The question implies a negative answer. The people therefore are described as having omitted the sacrifices to Jehovah for forty years, which certainly could be affirmed of the race as a whole, even if there were no express statements to that effect in the Pentateuch. Still, see *e. g.* Josh. v. 5-7, for the neglect of circumcision. While the people thus omitted the service of Jehovah, they carried on in place of it, idol-worship.

Ver. 26. And — namely, in place of bringing me the appointed offerings — ye bore the tent of, etc. (see Text. and Gram.). The idolatry censured by the prophet here is of Egyptian origin. Certainly the worship of the sun was widely diffused there, but we cannot affirm its nature more precisely. The existence of a literal god of the stars cannot be historically sustained.

Ver. 27. After Israel's apostasy had been established from the history of their forefathers, the judgment (cf. ver. 24) is briefly described as a literal carrying away. Even more plainly does it appear that the prophet in his threatenings is thinking of Assyria as the power from which the downfall of Israel is to come. Far beyond Damascus,

is only a sort of euphemism for Assyria. The conclusion is, as in the case of the preceding chapter, the phrase, *Jehovah, whose name is the God of hosts*, a token that here another division ends.

[*The Quotation by Stephen.* In Acts vii. 42, 43, the proto-martyr is represented as quoting vers. 25, 27, in terms which vary considerably from our text. The explanation is as old as Jerome. "This is to be observed in all Holy Scripture, that Apostles and apostolic men, in citing testimonies from the Old Testament, regard not the words but the meaning, nor do they follow the words, step by step, provided they do not depart from the meaning." (Quoted by Pusey in *loc.*) Stephen quoted from the Septuagint, because its variations, whether real or seeming, made no difference as to the force of the passage in establishing the fact that Israel in the wilderness worshipped false gods. Stephen also substitutes Babylon for Damascus in the closing clause of the quotation; but the idea is the same; for the prediction turned not upon the name, but the fact, namely, that God would scatter them into distant lands. Stephen was not guilty of an error or an inadvertence, but simply brought the prophecy, without any real change of meaning, into agreement with the historical associations of the people in relation to the Babylonish exile.]

DOCTRINAL AND MORAL.

1. The prophet himself calls this chapter a wail over the house of Israel. Now as in such a wail the existing sorrow is touchingly expanded, but with it whatever can serve for its present and future amelioration, so in this lament the terribleness of sin and of the destruction to which it leads is sadly depicted, but at the same time are interwoven warnings to seek God so that in some measure the evil may be abated. (Rieger.) It is indeed remarkable; from what has gone before one would think Israel's fate decided, that all admonition and warning were vain and nothing but punishment remained; and yet this chapter, far more than those which precede, gives admonition with a promise annexed. The sharper the threatening, the more the way of escape is pointed out, for "God desires not that any should perish." Certainly it is the only way; therefore the admonition only states more emphatically the complaint; this only can save you, but you will none of it.

2. "Seek the Lord that ye may live." Equally simple and definite are the monition and the promise. Man knows what he has to do, and what to expect. Not merely is warning given, but also promise and the reverse. The gain is certain if one fulfills the condition, but the condition is indispensable. Yet how little is asked — only to seek the Lord, — and at the same time how much! And on the other hand, how little apparently is promised — to live — and yet how much! Warning and promise therefore are connected together not merely by an outward, casual juxtaposition, but by an inward coherence. The result always follows upon the performance of the conditions; for it is the Lord from whom life and death proceed. Hence no other condition for the attainment of life can be imposed than just this, Seek the Lord; and no smaller gain can be promised to the fulfillment of that condition than this, — Life. How strong a testimony for the truth of religion is contained in a single maxim of this kind, and that one recorded in the Scriptures, even in the Old Testament! The condition imposed is in the first instance religious —

"Seek the Lord, and cleave not to idols" — (ver. 5, also vers. 25, 26), but this naturally involves also one of an ethical character. This is expressly stated, in accordance with the rigidly ethical character of the Old Testament, when afterwards (ver. 14) the demand is changed into, "Seek good and not evil," with the same promise attached — "that ye may live." Only he therefore seeks the Lord in truth, who seeks good, and *vice versa*. And this seeking of good is more closely defined as hating evil and loving good. Both must concur; then only is there a real seeking of good; for God does the one as well as the other. Evil must be earnestly repelled and shunned, otherwise the seeking of good lacks truth and energy; in like manner must good be grasped at, otherwise the attempt misses its aim and soon becomes fruitless. Piety must have an ethical element, must show itself by hating evil and loving good. A mere outward religiousness, however zealous in ceremonies, is worthless in the eyes of God. Amos pronounces most decidedly against a sacrificial service destitute of a corresponding disposition of heart, where the offerings and gifts are not the expression of inward devotion and obedience to God.

3. The "good" which men are to love and to do, appears here continually as rectitude, in opposition to the prevailing unrighteousness, "the turning justice into wormwood, and casting righteousness down to the earth." This is the least that can be expected, yet in another sense it is the most important, for in vain do we look for the other, and, so to speak, rarer duties from the neglecter of justice, whereas he who sincerely observes this will soon reach something farther. Justice is the foundation of social order; when it is wanting, all in the end comes to ruin.

4. "What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh" (Rom. viii. 3), appears clearly here as it does in the other prophets. Clearly and frankly the law declares God's will, and tells man what he *ought* to do; notwithstanding, sin only increases, and apostasy becomes worse. For the law cannot along with its "Thou shalt" give to man the "I will." Rather on account of his inborn depravity, its commands and prohibitions stir up the motions of sin, and lead them to a bolder outbreak. Then surely the whole course of the law must at last light upon the transgressor; and the prophets announce this through the judgments with which they threaten the disobedient people. Thus the insufficiency of a legal position is ever more plainly set forth. The law cannot give a new heart — and this is really the question if sin is to be checked and perfect obedience secured, — but grace alone can, full and free grace. Israel had already, from the time of the Exodus, experienced many acts of grace from God, among which very properly the giving of the law itself may be ranked. But these were only benefits which address men from the outside, real benefits indeed, in which God expressed his love, but only in order thus to render his commands more acceptable. But there was wanting the peculiar, unparalleled manifestation of love which is made in Christ. He bore and suffered the full curse of the law; He took upon Himself the entire condemnation pronounced upon the transgressor. But this resulted in the largest grace to men, since He without sin took upon Himself that curse, and thus freed us from it; and through the Holy Spirit streaming into men united by faith in Him, there is created a new heart which wills what it should, which hates evil and loves good, and in which the

power of the *σάπξ* is broken, so that "the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

5. Upon the day of the Lord, see Joel ii. Doctrinal and Moral, 1. The reproof which Amos utters, stands, as we may confidently assume, in close relation to Joel, *i. e.*, refers to an abuse which had been made of Joel's announcement of the day of the Lord. It appears here again that this day is essentially one of judgment. It certainly brings to Israel as God's people deliverance from their foes, but still only in so far as they are really God's people. So far as they are unfaithful and put themselves on a level with the heathen, that day is for them one of judgment, since it brings destruction upon all that is ungodly and anti-godly. The name, Israel, therefore, gives no license. Only in this sense is the announcement made. The people saw in this desired period one that would overthrow their foes and deliver them from their present distresses, without remembering that their guilt caused these distresses, and that they deserved punishment rather than deliverance. In this view, the announcement of the last day is still gladly welcomed. Men assign the evil, the punishment, to others, especially to those by whom they suffer, but claim the good for themselves, and anticipate the end of all sorrows and the dawn of cloudless prosperity. Hence results the security which is directly opposite to the watching and praying so earnestly enjoined by our Lord. Men then may long for the day of the Lord as a day of deliverance, but let them look well to the way in which they regard it, and see that this day finds them prepared and true to the Lord, so that He may recognize them as his own. Certainly it is not to be longed for in a spirit of revenge, *i. e.*, in the view that the quicker it comes the sooner will God's judgments fall upon a godless world. The true Christian rather appreciates the wisdom and long-suffering with which God forbears to judge, and rejoices that room is left for the conversion of God's foes, even if meanwhile he is to suffer by them. He who with carnal impatience wishes for God's judgments upon others, will experience them himself, and truly in a different way from that of God's people. Empty forms and lip-service, however zealously pursued, are no defense against the divine judgments, and no earnest of the salvation which proceeds thence for the true people of God (See also under Homiletical and Practical.)

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 1. *As a lamentation.* God is so gracious that He not only shows us our sins, but even mourns when He must punish us for them (Luke xix. 41). The accusation before punishment becomes a lament afterwards. Did we heed God's charges, we should not need to hear his lament. [The bewailed who know not why they are bewailed, are the more miserable because they know not their own misery. Dion.]

Vers. 2, 3. God's judgments increase in severity as they go on; if the earlier and milder are fruitless, at last comes total destruction. (Pf. B. W.) [*Fallen.* A dirge like that of David over Saul and Jonathan, over what was once lovely and mighty but had perished. (Pusey.) God had said, How should one chase a thousand! but the blessings of obedience are turned into the curses of disobedience. As the ancient Christian poet says, If the Lord is against us, our walls become

cobwebs; but if the Lord is with us, our cobwebs become walls. (Wordsworth.)

Ver. 4. *Seek me and live.* Four times repeated (vers. 6, 8, 14). Wonderful conciseness of the Word of God, which in two words comprises the whole of the creature's duty and his hopes, his time and his eternity. . . . The object of the search is God himself. *Seek me, i. e., seek God for himself, not for anything out of Him, not for his gifts, not for anything to be loved with Him.* This is not to seek Him purely. All is found in Him, but by seeking Him first, and then loving Him in all, and all in Him. (Pusey.)

Ver. 5. *Seek not Bethel.* Israel pretended to seek God in Bethel. Amos sets the two seekings as incompatible. The god worshipped at Bethel was not the one God. To seek God there was to lose Him. *Pass not to Beersheba.* Jeroboam I. pretended that it was too much for Israel to go to Jerusalem. And yet Israel thought it not too much to go to Beersheba, perhaps four times farther off. So much pains will men take in self-willed service, and yet not see that it takes away the excuse for neglecting the true. — Pusey. *Gilgal shall surely,* etc. Literally, "the place of rolling away," so called because there God rolled away the reproach of Egypt from Israel (Josh. v. 9). "Shall be clean rolled away." This is the law of God's dealings with man. He curses our blessings if we do not use them aright. Our holiest Gilgals — our sacraments, our Scriptures, our sermons, our Sundays, — which were designed by God to roll away from us the reproach of Egypt, will be rolled away from us if we do not use them aright; and will roll us downward unto our destruction. Wordsworth.]

Ver. 6. The same promise and the same warning, — a proof that there is no other way to life, and also that the warning cannot be given too often, alas, is so often in vain. *Ye shall live.* God's gracious promises must be held before sinners, lest in despair they go from sin to sin. For how can one feel genuine repentance, if he has no hope? [None to quench for Bethel. Bethel, the centre of their idol hopes, so far from aiding them then, shall not be able to help itself, nor shall there be any to help it. Pusey.] God's wrath is a consuming fire; only true repentance can extinguish it.

[Ver. 8. *Seek him that maketh,* etc. Misbelief retains the name God, but means something quite different from the one true God. Men speak of "the Deity" as a sort of first cause of all things, but lose sight of the personal God who has made known his will. "The Deity" is no object of love or fear. For a First Cause who is conceived of as no more, is an abstraction, not God. God is the cause of all causes. All things are, and have their relations to each other as cause and effect, because He so created them. A "great first cause" who is thought of only as a cause, is a mere fiction of man's imagining, an attempt to appear to account for the mysteries of being, without owing that since our being is from God, we are responsible creatures who are to yield to Him an account of the use of our being which He gave us. In like way probably Israel had so mixed up the thought of God with nature that it had lost sight of God as distinct from the creation. And so Amos, after appealing to their consciences, sets forth God to him as the creator, disposer of all things, and the just God who redresses man's violence and injustice. (Pusey.) Ye who worship the stars are rebelling against Him who made them. (Wordsworth.)]

Ver. 10. Impatience at a well-meant and friendly rebuke is the mark of an evil and perverse spirit. Such rebuke should be esteemed a kindness, even a balsam upon the head. On the other hand, reproof is to be administered with discretion. (Pf. B. W.)

Vers. 11, 12. *Because ye trample,* etc. Men should shun the oppression of the poor. Whence comes the swift ruin of entire families? It is because the sighing of the poor before God testifies against them. (*Ibid.*)

[Ver. 13. *The prudent is silent.* So our Lord was silent before his judges, for since they would not hear, his speaking would only increase their condemnation. So Solomon said, "He that reproveth a scorner getteth himself shame." "When the wicked rise, then men hide themselves." (Pusey.)

Ver. 15. *Hate evil,* etc. He hateth evil who not only is not overcome by pleasure, but hates its deeds; and he loveth good who, not unwillingly nor of necessity nor from fear, doeth what is good, but because it is good. (Jerome.) To hate evil and to love good belong together. (Rieger.) *And set up justice,* etc. Justice is a pillar of the state. To set it up when fallen is the duty of all men, but especially of those in posts of honor or profit. — *Perhaps,* etc. Temporal promises are made with an "It may be," and our prayers must be made accordingly. (M. Henry.)

[Ver. 16. *Therefore saith Jehovah,* etc. For the third time here as in the two preceding verses, Amos reminds them of Him in whose name He speaks, namely, the I Am, the self-existent God, the God of all things in heaven and earth, He who has absolute power over his creatures to dispose of them as He will. (Pusey.) *Alas, alas!* The terrible-ness of the prophecy lies in its truth. When war pressed without on the walls of Samaria, and within was famine and pestilence, woe, woe, woe must have echoed in every street; for in every street was death and the fear of worse. Yet imagine every sound of joy or din or hum of men, or mirth of children, hushed in the streets, and woe, woe, going up in one unmitigated, unchanging, ever-repeated monotony of grief. Such were the present fruits of sin. Yet what a mere shadow of the inward grief is its outward utterance! (*Ibid.*) *Call the skilled in lamenting.* The same feeling makes the rich now clothe their households in mourning, which made those of old hire mourners, that all might be in harmony with their grief. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 18. *Woe to those who desire,* etc. A similar spirit manifested itself in those who said in Jeremiah's days, "The Temple of the Lord are these" (vii. 4), and who prided themselves on their national religious principles, but did not obey the Lord of the temple, and were therefore condemned by the Prophet. A like temper was manifested after the Captivity. The Hebrew nation was eager for the Messiah's coming to the new-built temple, but the prophets reminded them that his coming would be a day of fear and woe for the ungodly. Mal. iii. 2. (Wordsworth.)

Ver. 19. *As if a man fleeth before the lion,* etc. The day of the Lord is a day of terror on every side. Before and behind, within and without, abroad under the roof of heaven or under the shelter of one's own, everywhere is terror and death. (Pusey.)

Ver. 20. *Is not the day,* etc. An appeal to men themselves, Is it not so? Men's consciences are truer than their intellect. Intellect carries the

question out of itself into the region of surmising and disputings. Conscience is compelled to receive it back into its own court and to give the sentence. Like the God of the heathen fable who changed himself into all sorts of forms, but when he was still held fast, gave at last the true answer, conscience shrinks back, twists, writhes, evades, turns away, but in the end will answer truly when it must. The prophet then turns round upon the conscience, and says, "Tell me, for you know." (*Ibid.*)

Vers. 21, 22. *I hate, I despise*, etc. Israel would fain be conscientious and scrupulous. What they offered was the best of its kind; whole burnt offerings, fatted beasts, full-toned chorus, instrumental music. What was wanting to secure the favor of God? Love and obedience. And so those things by which they hoped to propitiate God became the object of his displeasure. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 23. *Take away the noise*, etc. Here is a warning to all who think to please God by elaborate musical services in his house; while they do not take heed to worship Him with their hearts and to obey Him in their daily life. (*Wordsw.*)

Ver. 24. *Did ye offer unto me*, etc. The ten tribes, by approving and copying the false worship of their forefathers, made that sin their own. As the Church of God is at all times one and the same, so that great opposite camp, the city of the devil, has a continuous existence through all time. These idolaters were filling up the measure of their forefathers, and in the end of those who perished in the wilderness they might behold their own. As God rejected the divided service of their forefathers, so He would their's. (*Pusey.*) — *Unto me*. This is emphatic. If God is not served wholly and alone, He is not served at all. As Jerome says, He regardeth not the offering, but the will of the offerer. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 25. *Which ye made for yourselves*. This

was the fundamental fault. Whereas God made them for Himself, they made for themselves gods out of their own mind. All idolatry is self-will, first choosing a god and then enslaved to it. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 27. To break the force of the prophecy contained in this verse, De Wette says, "Although the kingdom of Israel had through Jeroboam recovered its old borders, yet careless insolence, luxury, unrighteousness *must* bring the destruction which the prophet foretells. He does but dimly forebode the superior power of Assyria." To which Pusey justly answers, that decay does not involve the transportation of a people, but rather the contrary. A mere luxurious people rots on its own soil and would be left to rot there. It was the little remnant of energy and warlike spirit in Israel that brought its ruin from man. In the faults referred to, they were no worse than their neighbors, nor so bad; not so bad as the Assyrians themselves, except that, God having revealed Himself to them, they had more light. God has annexed no such visible laws of punishment to a nation's sins that man could of his own wisdom or observation of God's ways foresee it. They through whom He willed to inflict it in this case, and whom Amos pointed out, were not provoked by the sins De Wette specifies. There was no connection between Israel's present sins and Assyria's future vengeance. No eastern despot cares for the oppressions of his subjects so that his own tribute is collected. As far too as we know, neither Assyria nor any other power had hitherto punished rebellious nations by transporting them. Only He who controls the rebellious wills of men, and through their self-will works out his own all-wise will and man's punishment, could know the future of Israel and Assyria, and how through the pride of Assyria, He would bring down the pride of Samaria.]

CHAPTER VI.

4. *Woe to the Secure who think that the Day of the Lord is far off.*

- 1 Woe to the secure ¹ in Zion,
And to the careless in the mountain of Samaria!
To the princes of the first of nations,
To whom the house of Israel comes!
- 2 Pass over ² to Calneh and see,
And go thence to Hamath the great,
And go down to Gath of the Philistines;
Are they better than these kingdoms,
Or is their territory greater than your territory?
- 3 Ye who put far off the evil day,
And bring near the seat of violence;
- 4 Who lie upon beds of ivory
And stretch themselves upon their couches,
Who eat lambs out of the flock,
And calves from the fattening stall:
- 5 Who trill ³ to the sound of the harp,
Like David, they invent string instruments,⁴
- 6 Who drink wine out of sacrificial bowls,⁵

- And anoint themselves with the best oils,
And do not grieve for the hurt of Joseph.
- 7 Therefore now shall they go captive at the head of the captives,
And the shout ⁶ of the revellers shall depart.
- 8 The Lord Jehovah hath sworn by himself,
Saith Jehovah, God of hosts,
I abhor the pride of Jacob ⁷
And hate his palaces,
And will give up the city and the fullness thereof.
- 9 And if ten men are left in one house they shall die.
- 10 And his cousin ⁸ and his burier shall lift him up,
To carry his bones out of the house,
And shall say to the one in the inmost recess of the house,
"Is there still any one with thee?" and he says, "Not one,"
Then shall he say, "Be still,
For we must not call upon Jehovah's name."
- 11 For behold, Jehovah commands, and men smite the great house ⁹ into ruins
And the small house into pieces.
- 12 Do horses indeed run upon the rock,¹⁰
Or do men plough there with cattle,
That ye have turned justice into poison,
And the fruit of righteousness into wormwood?
- 13 Ye who rejoice in a thing of nought,¹¹
Who say, "With our own strength we have taken to us horns."
- 14 For, behold, I raise up over you, O house of Israel,
Saith Jehovah, God of hosts, a nation,¹²
And it shall oppress you from the entrance Hamath to the brook of the desert.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

1 Ver. 1. — בְּטֹהִים comes from the intransitive form, and is equivalent here to its use in Is xxxii 9, 10, 11. Mount of Sam. is not the object of trust (as in E. V.) but the place where the careless security is cherished. הַגְּבִי, a Mosalaic word (Num. i. 17), = specified by name, chosen, distinguished.

2 Ver. 2. — עָבַרְךָ, *pass over*, because the Euphrates must be crossed in going to Calneh.

3 Ver. 5. — הַלְרִמְסֵם, *ἀπ. λεγ.* perhaps = פָּרַד, to divide. According to Fürst it is here = to break out, especially in song. Keil interprets it to strew around, *i. e.*, words, and thinks it describes the singing as frivolous nonsense. Meier renders it "to jingle." [Pusey understands it as meaning "a hurried flow of unmeaning words in which the rhythm is everything, the sense nothing." The rendering in the text, *trill*, is from Wordsworth.]

4 Ver. 5. — כְּלֵי נְשִׁיר, *lit.*, instruments of music, seems, from a comparison of 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12 with 2 Chron. xix. 26, 27, and 1 Chron. xxiii. 5, to denote stringed instruments. [So Keil and Pusey.] הַשֵּׁב, to invent, devise.

5 Ver. 6. — מִזְרְקִים, *lit.* sprinkling vessels, always elsewhere denotes bowls used in the temple service. Ex. xxxviii. 3; Num. iv. 14; 2 Chron. iv. 8.

6 Ver. 7. — מְרִיזֵחַ constr. of מְרִיזֵחַ, a loud cry, here of joy. קְרִיזֵחַ as in ver. 4, *the stretched out*, *i. e.*, at a banquet = the revellers. Fürst assumes a second root of the same radicals, to which he gives the meaning, to be bad, to stink, and metaph., to be corrupt, and renders here, the degenerate. [This seems quite needless.]

7 Ver. 8. — גְּבִי, the pride of Jacob, *i. e.*, everything of which he is proud. הַיְסִירֵךְ to give up, *i. e.*, to the enemy. "The city," means Samaria, and "its fullness," whatever it contains.

8 Ver. 10. — דִּדְךָ, *lit.*, uncle, here denotes any kinsman. בֹּרְךָ, *lit.*, his burner. As the Israelites were wont to bury and not burn their dead, it is supposed that the multitude of corpses compelled the latter course. עֲצָמֶיךָ, bones, here = body, as Exod. xiii. 19; Josh. xxiv. 32; 2 Kings xiii. 21.

9 Ver. 11. — הַבַּיִת, the singular is used indefinitely = every house, great and small. Cf. iii. 15.

10 Ver. 12. — Meier points בְּבִקְרֵי, thus, בְּבִקְרֵי. Does man plough the sea with oxen? [But this is a mere conjecture].

11 Ver. 13. — לֹא־דָבָר a not-thing, somewhat which does not exist, namely, the strength mentioned in the next clause.

[12 Ver. 14. — Few instances are found in Hebrew in which the object of a verb is so far removed from it, as גְּבִי is from בְּטֹהִים. Henderson. הַעֲרָבָה is the well known Arabah, the deep and remarkable depression, now called the Ghor, which extends from the lake of Genesareth to the Dead Sea.]

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

1. Vers. 1-6. A sharp censure of the thoughtless revelry of the heads of the nation. The woe points back to the similar exclamation in ch. v. 18. There a woe was pronounced upon those who mistakenly desired the day of the Lord, as if it would bring to them prosperity. Here the question is of the confident who bestowed no thought at all upon that day. Ver. 1, in Zion: shows that the rebuke includes Judah also, although the subsequent description refers especially to the great men "in the hill of Samaria." And as these are the distinguished in the nation, so the nation itself is called the first or most exalted of all nations, naturally enough, since it was the chosen, peculiar people of God. These princes are further described as those to whom the house of Israel comes, *i. e.*, for counsel and direction. Justly remarks Hengstenberg (*Auth. Pent.*, i. 148), that thus "the chief men were reminded that they were the successors of those 'princes of the tribes' who were formerly thought worthy to be joined with Moses and Aaron in managing the affairs of the chosen people."

Ver. 2. How high they stood, is now shown by the fact that Israel, at whose head they were placed, was not inferior in prosperity or greatness to the mightiest heathen states. [He bids them look east, north, and west, and survey three neighboring kingdoms. Calneh (Calno in Isaiah, Calneh in Ezekiel), was built by Nimrod in the land of Shinar (Gen. x. 10) but is not mentioned again in Scripture until this place. Afterwards it became celebrated under the name of Ctesiphon. Julian's generals held it impregnable, being built on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by the Tigris. Hamath the great was the capital of the Syrian kingdom of that name on the Orontes. Gath was one of the five chief cities in Philistia, and in David's time the capital of the whole country.] Than these kingdoms, namely, Judah and Israel. Others say that the prophet speaks of destroyed cities, and that the Israelites are reminded of their fate as intimating that the same was in store for themselves (so Luther). This view would commend itself to favor, were it not opposed to the fair construction of the words. It might be allowed, if the double question, are they better, etc., admitted of an affirmative answer, namely, yes they are better. But this plainly cannot be. Bauer indeed sees this, and accordingly explains thus: "Observe these heathen states. Their lot is not better, their power not greater than yours; rather they have fallen while you by God's grace still stand; if you apostatize from Jehovah, the same fate will befall you." But how could any one speak of a power which was overthrown as "not greater" than one still standing? A comparison in respect to greatness can be made only with a still existing power. [Pusey adopts Bauer's view, but Wordsworth and Keil agree with Schmoller in making the verse simply an expansion of the statement in ver. 1, that Israel's first of the nations, unexcelled by any of their heathen neighbors.]

Ver. 3 begins the further explanation of the careless security charged in ver. 1. Regarding the evil day, *i. e.*, day of judgment as far off, they cause violence to erect its throne nearer and nearer among them. [Pusey follows Jerome, Grotius, Newcome, and others in referring the throne of violence to the rule of Assyria, which the people

brought nearer to them while they were thinking to put it far off.] But the former reference is much more natural.]

Ver. 4. To oppression they added luxurious sensuality (cf. ch. ii. 8; iii. 12).

Ver. 5. Like David they employed themselves in inventing musical instruments, but with a very different aim.

Ver. 6. They used the best oils, at a time when there was abundant cause for mourning in the breach, *i. e.*, the overthrow of Joseph. [The custom of anointing was usually suspended in times of mourning, 2 Sam. xiv. 2. But these so far from grieving employed the most costly unguents.]

2. Vers. 7-10. These verses announce the punishment. The phrase at the head of the captives, contains a bitter irony. The princes should maintain their preëminence even in the procession of captives.

Ver. 8. [The oath here is like that in ch. iv. 2, except that it is by himself instead of by *his holiness*, but the sense is the same, for the *nephesk* of Jehovah, *i. e.*, his inmost self or being, is his holiness. Keil.]

Vers. 9, 10. Ten, that is, many; but even of the many not one shall escape. This is made plainer by what follows.

Ver. 10. When on the death of the ninth, a relative comes to the house to bury the dead, he will ask the last one, the tenth, who has retired into a remote corner to save his life, whether there is any one still with him, *i. e.*, alive. On receiving the reply, None, he calls out to him, Silence! (literally 'St), *i. e.*, he interrupts him quickly lest he may utter Jehovah's name, and by attracting Jehovah's attention, bring down a judgment upon himself. The words, there must be no mention of the Lord's name, are spoken, not by Amos but by the kinsman, and they do not express despair but fear. The deaths mentioned occur partly by the sword and partly by famine, both in consequence of the conquest and overthrow of the city.

[Ver. 11. The For assigns the reason of the fearful destruction. It is the Lord's command, and his arm reaches rich and poor alike, "*regum turres ac pauperum tabernac.*"]

3. Vers. 12-14. Upon rocks can neither horses run nor man plough. What is the force of this comparison? Either the attempt to do one or the other of these things is represented as something preposterous, and the meaning is, Even so preposterous is your turning justice into poison, etc.; or it is represented as something impossible, and the sense is, Is then the impossible possible, that you turn justice, etc., and do you think you can escape unpunished, and even attain prosperity? That ye turn, etc., cf. ch. v. 7. Fruit of righteousness is said, because unrighteousness is compared with a bitter fruit.

Ver. 13. With our strength, taken, as if the whole originated with themselves. Horns, the usual symbol of strength, here = means of overcoming foes.

Ver. 14 contains Jehovah's answer to this presumption. You are rejoicing in a thing of nought, for I will, etc. At the same time this verse resumes and confirms the threat in ver. 11, which begins with the same words, "For behold!" Assyria is plainly intended by a people, but as it was still in the distance, Amos nowhere mentions it by name. Perhaps, too, the omission was designed, in order to awaken the more attention. The entrance of Hamath, was the standing term for the northern boundary of Israel, Num.

xxxiv. 8; 2 Kings xiv. 25. [For its exact place, see Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, Amer. ed. p. 987]. The brook of the desert, the southern boundary, is the present Wady el-Ahsi which separated Moab from Edom at the lower extremity of the Dead Sea. [Israel's strength had of late been increasing steadily. Jehoash had thrice defeated the Syrians and recovered several cities. What he began, Jeroboam continued during a reign of forty-one years, until he had completely restored all the ancient boundaries of the kingdom. Amos here declares that the whole region of their triumphs should be one scene of affliction and woe. This was fulfilled after some forty-five years at the invasion of Tiglath Pileser. Pusey.]

DOCTRINAL AND MORAL.

1. "Israel the first among the nations." Again and again is the lofty position of Israel emphasized, *i. e.*, its peculiar enjoyment of the divine favor, which was shown even in its outward relations, its power and influence as compared with surrounding nations. In these respects it could measure itself with any of them. This was not the highest motive of action, yet it should have sufficed to confirm them in fidelity to God. For the penalty of unfaithfulness was the loss of their position hitherto, a fall below other nations and a shameful end.

2. But alas, prosperity only led to self-will, and rendered them arrogant and secure. There is a striking picture in vers. 4-6 of an insolent, presumptuous community in which every thought of danger is drowned. The internal evils of the national life are not seen, nor is it observed how all tends steadily downward to destruction. Alas, the higher ranks here precede with their example. Instead of becoming pillars of the state by their position and culture, they help to undermine it. No wonder then that when the crash comes, they are most deeply affected and meet a frightful end.

3. The judgment which the prophet everywhere speaks of is conquest and overthrow by a foreign enemy. From this we may learn the right conception of war. It is natural to consider it a heavy calamity, since it involves the loss of fortune and life to thousands, and sometimes the downfall of entire states. But while it is true that on this account we must desire its general cessation, yet the declamations against it of the so-called friends of peace are vain, proceeding, if not always yet generally, from a mind which comprehends little or nothing of the divine government of the world. In spite of all these well-meant performances, war neither will nor can cease in this world, *i. e.*, so long as sin still exists. For it is necessary as a means of inflicting the divine chastisement upon sin. Through it God executes the judgments which, being required by his righteousness, are therefore indispensable and irresistible, — not so much upon individuals as upon nations and states which are considered as collective persons. Such acts are either processes of purification, or when the measure of iniquity is full and the time has come, works of destruction. On this ground even a war which subjectively is altogether wrong, as a war of conquest, may still be objectively justified, in so far as it is a means of executing God's righteous wrath upon a people. On the other hand we can conceive how a war undertaken only in self-defense, and therefore righteous in itself, may yet fail of the issue one would expect. It

comes as a judgment upon a people ripe for such a process, and therefore no defense avails. In other cases it does avail, and a deserved punishment overtakes the foe eager for conquest. But even then the war, by the distress it causes and the sacrifices it requires, proves a serious time of sifting for the victor. Hence it is right and proper to maintain beforehand an earnest conflict against sin, lest such a heavy scourge as war should become necessary. But when such a point is reached, it becomes Christians not to utter empty declamations against war nor womanish complaints over it, but humbly to bow beneath God's hand and patiently bear their sorrows, so that thus may spring up the fruit of a new spirit well pleasing to God. For even the destruction of a nation is so far stayed that at least "a remnant" is left to undertake a new life. And the more the kingdom of God prevails among men to the overthrow of sin, the less needful will be the frightful scourge of war; but the complete reign of peace will come only when the first earth and the first heavens are passed away and all things become new. The horrors of war may and should aid in keeping alive and intense our longing for that blissful period.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 1. *Woe to the secure.* Security and vain confidence, the common faults of man! He is blind to his danger. He reels around the abyss without perceiving it, and at last would plunge headlong, were it not that God startles him with judgments. It is this that renders such strokes necessary. They are therefore to be deemed gracious acts, since they are intended to save from a total overthrow. But alas, how many refuse to heed them! *First of nations.* What an honor! But so much the worse if such a divine favor is not properly recognized, so much the greater the responsibility and the guilt. The author applies this thought directly to his own nation, in view of God's recent dealings with the German people. But surely it is equally applicable to our own favored land. If our territorial extent, our material development, our liberal institutions, our final welding together in the furnace of the war for the Union, have made us first of nations, this fact should not generate vain confidence and a stupid sensuality, but rather awaken a lively gratitude and a generous obedience to the Ruler of nations, the God of hosts.]

Ver. 2. *Pass over to Calneh, etc.* A comparison with others less favored than ourselves is always wise when it prompts to humility and thankfulness. "Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?" Alas, often all the thanks God receives for giving us more than to others, is that we forget Him the more.

[Ver. 3. *Who put far off the evil day.* The thought that the Lord has a day in which to judge man, frets or frightens the irreligious, and they use different ways to get rid of it. The strong harden themselves, and distort or disbelieve the truth. The weak and voluptuous shut their eyes to it, like the bird in the fable, as if what they dread would cease to be, because they cease to see it. (Pusey). Henderson quotes a parallel from Claudian, *In Fu trop.*, ii. 50-54.

"*Sed quam cœcus instat vitii amor! omne futurum Despicitur, suadentque crevem presentia fructum,*

*Et ruit in vetitum damni secreta libido
Dum mora supplicii lucro, serumque quod instat,
Creditor.*"

Ver. 5. *Who trill to the sound of the harp.* An artificial effeminate music which relaxes the soul, frittering the melody and displacing the power of divine harmony by tricks of art, is meet company for giddy, thoughtless, heartless versifying. Debased music is a mark of a nation's decay, and promotes it. *Like David they invent,* etc. The same pains which David employed on music to the honor of God, they employed on their light, enervating, unmeaning music, and, if they were earnest enough, justified their inventions by the example of David. Much as people have justified our degraded, sensualizing, immodest dancing by the religious dancing of Holy Scripture. (Pusey.) See Bishop Sanderson, *Lectures on Conscience*, iii. § 13.

Ver. 6. *Drink wine out of sacrificial bowls.* The first princes of the tribes (Num. vii. 13 ff.) showed their zeal for God by offering massive silver bowls for the service of the tabernacle; the like zeal had these princes for their own god, their belly, using the huge sacred vessels for their compositions. Like swine in the trough, they immersed themselves in their drink, "swimming in mutual swill."¹ (*Ibid.*) *Anoint themselves,* etc. In this crisis, when the divine wrath was about to break out upon the nation, and they ought to have been sitting in sackcloth and ashes, they were curious to procure the best ointment for their own use. Roman patricians, in Cicero's days, cared only for their own fish-ponds that their tables might be well supplied with mullets and other fish, while their country was in danger of being overwhelmed with a flood; they "thought only of the cock-boat of their own fortunes when the vessel of the state was going to wreck." . . . Here is another prophetic warning for our selfish luxury. (Wordsworth.)

Grieve not for the hurt of Joseph. Joseph, the ancestor of Ephraim, the head of the ten tribes, was afflicted by his own brethren, who saw the anguish of his soul and were not moved by his tears; and when they had sold him to the Ishmaelites, sat down in heartless indifference "to eat bread" (Gen. xxxvii. 23). So their descendants, the Jews, feasted at the Passover after they had killed the true Joseph (John xviii. 28). How many dwell in ceiled houses and sing to the sound of the harp and feast on the richest dainties, and care nothing for the sorrows of Christ and his Church! (Wordsworth.)

Ver. 7. *Go at the head of the captives.* Preëminence in rank or wealth is often followed by pre-

¹ Thomson, *Autumn*.

eminence in sorrow and shame. As the *Wisdom of Solomon* says (vi. 6): "For mercy will soon pardon the meekest, but mighty men shall be mightily tormented."

Ver. 8. *The Lord hath sworn,* etc. Our oath mean, "As God is true and avenges untruth, what I say is true." So God says, "As I am God, this is true." God then must cease to be God if He did not hate oppression. (Pusey.)

Ver. 9. Ten righteous men in Sodom would have saved that city. Here ten were left in one house after the siege was begun, but they did not turn to God; and therefore all were taken or destroyed. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 10. *We must not call upon Jehovah's name.* Things have come to a fearful pass when a man trembles at God's name because he fears and must fear his wrath, and hence instead of turning to Him would rather flee away. This is a frightful exhibition of the power of an evil conscience. There must be a broken heart before a man can turn in prayer for forgiveness to the God whom his sins have offended. [He who has obstinately abused the intellectual powers given him by God, to cavil at God's truth, will be forsaken by Him at last, and will not be able to utter his name. (Wordsworth.)]

Ver. 11. *Jehovah commands, and men smite,* etc. When a people is ripe for judgment, a human conqueror acts only as a divine instrument. God's judgment strikes equally the high and the low.

[Vers. 12. *Do horses run upon rocks,* etc. It is more easy to change the course of nature, or the use of things of nature, than the course of God's providence or the laws of his just retribution. They had changed the sweet laws of justice into the gall of oppression, and the healthful fruit of righteousness into the life-destroying poison of sin. Better to have ploughed the rock with oxen for food. For now where they looked for prosperity, they found not barrenness but death. (Pusey.)]

Ver. 13. *Who rejoice in,* etc. How striking, to rejoice in a non-thing! Yet this is the way with men. How much of that in which they trust is a mere nonentity! It seems to be something, and still is nothing. *With our own strength,* etc. Such is the language of arrogant self-confidence. But God alone is strength, and only through Him are we strong.

Ver. 14. *I raise up,* etc. No foe could ever invade us, if the Lord did not raise Him up. War, therefore, is not an accident, but a providential dispensation. [Pharaoh, Hadad, Rezon, the Chaldees, are all expressly said to have been raised up by the Lord (Ex. ix. 16; 1 Kings xi. 14, 23. Hab. i. 6).]

CHAPTERS VII.-IX.

III. *Threatening Discourses against the Kingdom of Israel in the Shape of Visions.*
A Promise in the Conclusion.

CHAPTER VII.

Three Visions. Two of National Calamities are averted at the Request of the Prophet. The Third, of a Plumb-Line, indicates the certain Downfall of the Kingdom. Attempt of the Priest Amaziah to banish Amos from Bethel: thereupon a sharper Threat, especially against Amaziah.

- 1 THUS the Lord Jehovah showed me ;
 And behold, He formed locusts,¹
 In the beginning of the springing up of the second crop ;
 And lo, it was a second crop after the king's mowing.
- 2 And when they had finished eating the plants ² of the land,
 Then I said, O Lord Jehovah, forgive, I pray,
 How can Jacob stand,
 For it is small.
- 3 Jehovah repented of this ;³
 It shall not take place, saith Jehovah.
- 4 Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me,
 And behold, the Lord Jehovah called to punish with fire,
 And it devoured the great flood,⁴
 And devoured the inheritance.
- 5 Then said I, O Lord Jehovah, leave off, I pray.
 How can Jacob stand,
 For it is small.
- 6 Jehovah repented of this ;
 This also shall not take place, saith the Lord Jehovah.
- 7 Thus he showed me,
 And behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made with a plumb-line⁵
 And a plumb-line was in his hand.
- 8 And Jehovah said to me,
 What seest thou, Amos ?
 And I said, a plumb-line.
 And the Lord said, Behold, I put a plumb-line in the midst of my people, Israel ;
 I will pass by him no more.
- 9 And the high places of Isaac⁶ shall be laid waste,
 And the sanctuaries of Israel shall be desolated,
 And I will arise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.
- 10 And Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam the king of Israel, saying,
 Amos has conspired⁷ against thee in the midst of the house of Israel ; the land is
 11 not able to bear all his words. For thus has Amos said,
 " By the sword shall Jeroboam die
 And Israel shall go into exile out of his land."
- 12 And Amaziah said to Amos, " Seer, go, flee into the land of Judah ; and there eat
 13 thy bread and there mayest thou prophesy. But in Bethel thou shalt no longer
 14 prophesy, for it is the king's sanctuary⁸ and a seat of the kingdom." And Amos
 answered and said to Amaziah, " I am no prophet, nor am I a prophet's son, but
 15 I am a herdsman and a gatherer of sycamores.⁹ And Jehovah took me from fol-
 lowing the flock ; and Jehovah said to me, Go, prophesy to my people, Israel."
- 16 And now hear the word of Jehovah,
 Thou sayest, Prophecy not against Israel,
 And drop¹⁰ nothing against the house of Isaac.

17 Therefore thus saith Jehovah,
 Thy wife shall be dishonored in the city,
 And thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword ;
 And thy land shall be divided by line,
 And thou shalt die in an unclean land,
 And Israel shall go into exile out of his land.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

- 1 Ver. 1. — פֶּה points to what follows. יְהוָה has Jehovah for its subject [omitted because יְהוָה immediately preceded it. Jehovah, as usual, takes the pointing of הַלְלוּיָם when הַלְלוּיָם precedes it. פֶּה, not a plural but a singular used collectively, is usually rendered locusts, but its precise origin is still in dispute.]
- 2 Ver. 2. — עֵשֶׂב, not grass, as in the A. V., but all vegetable growth. מִי, literally, "as who" = *qualis*, i. e., how? יָקִים, stand, i. e., endure. [So Keil and Fürst.]
- 3 Ver. 3. — עַל-זֶמֶר = that which was threatened in the vision. הַקָּטָן, small = weak.
- 4 Ver. 4. — תְּהוֹם רַבָּה, elsewhere the ocean, e. g., Gen. vii. 11 ; Is. li. 10. In Gen. i. 2, it denotes the immeasurable deep at the beginning of the creation. חֵלֶק, not "a part," but the portion or inheritance.
- 5 Ver. 7. — חֵבֶל, plumb-line. חֻמַּת זָקֵן = a perpendicular wall. [Fürst follows the LXX., Sym., and Syr. in making חֵבֶל, ἄβραμ, a pointed hook for destroying, and the wall, a pointed wall, i. e., rising up as a pinnacle.]
- 6 Ver. 9. — בְּמִזְבְּחֵי, heights used for idolatrous altars and shrines. יִשְׂרָאֵל for יִשְׂרָאֵל, so also in ver. 16. Jer. xxxiii. 26 ; Ps. cv. 9 = Israel.
- 7 Ver. 10. — קָשְׁרָה, to form a conspiracy
- 8 Ver. 13. — מִקְדָּשׁ, sanctuary.
- 9 Ver. 14. — בְּלִים. Perhaps from a root meaning to nip or scratch (LXX., κνίζω), because it was common so to treat the mulberry or sycamore fruit to make it ripen the sooner [or a denom. from the Arabic urne for the mulberry fig. (Keil) ; but Fürst says that in that case שְׂקָמִים would not be added to it]. The meaning is, one that gathers figs and lives upon them.
- 10 Ver. 16. — רַגְזֵי, to drop, is used in the sense of prophesying, also in Micah ii. 6, 11, and Ezek. xxi. 2, 7. The usage is borrowed from Deut. xxxii. 2. "My teaching shall drop as the rain."

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

1. Vers. 1-6. *The two first visions.* The judgments they represent are at the prayer of the prophet averted.
 (a.) Vers. 1-3. *First Vision.* The locusts. Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me. "Showed me" is used also in the following visions. These are thus defined to be "visions," inward intuitions, rather than mere poetical fictions. But the question arises and must be answered, What did the prophet see in the first two visions? Certainly threatening judgments. But did he see the judgments themselves, or were the transactions only a figurative representation? Did they point symbolically to the future chastisements? The latter is certainly the natural view of the third vision, and also of the fourth (chap. viii.). The plumb-line and the basket of fruit are mere symbols which are subsequently explained. In the fifth vision, also, a symbolical representation is made, although the form there is somewhat different from that of the third and the fourth. But it remains to determine how we are to regard the first two. For the prophet sees here a desolation produced by locusts and by fire. Are then these the actual judgments which threaten the people, or have they only a symbolical significance? I think we must decide for the former view. In their external form, these two differ greatly from the two following. In the latter, the prophet sees only an object, but what is to be done with it or what stroke it represents, has to be stated

in words; but in the former he sees a judgment fully accomplished; why then should one look for anything farther? In that view, too, the analogy between the contents of these two visions and what we read in Joel is not to be mistaken. There also there is a plague of locusts, and then "fire" (chap. i. 19); the drought, also, is there described in words transcending actual experience, so that we must regard it as a poetical representation. Yet what is there treated of is what has actually happened, while here is something which is threatened, so that it need not offend if here the colors are higher, and we read of even an ocean dried up by the heat (ver. 4). If now in Joel locusts and fire are found in close connection, why not here also? What, too, should the locusts and the fire "signify?" It must be destruction by the foe; and yet of this it is here said that at the request of the prophet it shall not take place, while in the third vision it is said that it shall. The first two visions then must have a different object from the third. If the meaning is that the threatened infliction is twice revoked, then it is strange that the same judgment is presented in two different images. Keil therefore assigns a different meaning to each image, regards the first two visions as the more general and severe, and gives to them — although not very clearly — a scope comprehending all the past and all the future. They indicate an entire destruction except a remnant spared at the prophet's request, and the second vision points also to a judgment that falls upon the heathen world (= רַגְזֵי). The removal of the two at Amos's request teaches that 'these

judgments are not intended to effect the annihilation of the people of God but their purification, and the rooting out of sinners from them; and that in consequence of God's sparing grace, a holy remnant will be left. Both the following visions refer to the judgment which awaits the kingdom of the ten tribes in the immediate future.

How gratuitous is all this! Nothing of it is found in the visions themselves. What the prophet saw in the second vision is certainly not to occur; therefore the judgment upon the heathen, if it is contained there, is not to occur. Of a remnant remaining over, not a word is said. Therefore the first vision cannot be understood differently (see below). In place of assuming an anticlimax, we must rather, since the discourse has various stages, determine the contrary. But this does not suit the symbolical view of the first two visions, for, taken figuratively, they would by no means indicate a lighter judgment than the third, but rather a complete devastation of the land. A climax is obtained only by a literal interpretation, according to which there is first a national calamity, and then a blow which overturns the state as such. The sense of the whole is that God will have patience for a time, and spare the land the plagues which it deserves. But if there be no change, and the goodness of God does not lead to repentance, forbearance will cease and the downfall come. The view that the two first visions refer to the kingdom of Judah which finds forgiveness, and only the third relates to the kingdom of Israel which is not forgiven, has much apparently in its favor, *e. g.*, the appeal to the smallness of Jacob. Still it is to be rejected. Judah is not in question here at all. The entire chapter treats of the kingdom in the midst of which the prophet is. Were Judah meant, it would be plainly stated. Manifestly, the three visions form one series, so that it is unnatural to suppose that the two former relate to Judah, and that the third refers to something altogether different. The appeal to the smallness of Jacob admits also of being fairly applied to the kingdom of Israel. In the conduct of that kingdom the prophet finds no ground for forbearance; on the contrary, so far as this is concerned, the plagues must come. There remains, then, nothing but an appeal to the divine mercy and compassion on the ground of the smallness of Israel. Upon this motive alone can the prophet base his prayer, since no claim of merit is possible. Israel is small, is weak, in comparison with the strong hand of Jehovah; as if he would say, What would then become of him? Necessarily, he must be annihilated.

We return to ver. 1. That He, *i. e.*, Jehovah, formed locusts, shows clearly that the infliction is due to Jehovah, without whose will they would not come, nay, would not exist at all. At the same time the prophet sees the plague in its very beginning. But this image of the locusts occurs at a period which is defined in two ways: first, as that in which the second crop springs up, and then, this second crop is that which follows the king's mowings. The meaning is, that the period is a very unfavorable one, first, because then the only further product of the year would be destroyed, and in the next place, because the early crop having already been mown by the king, the people were restricted to the second, and this was now threatened with destruction. Since nothing is now known of any right of the king to the early crop, Keil, in accordance with his figurative conception of the vision in general, maintains that the king is Jehovah, and the mowing denotes the judgments He

has already decreed upon Israel. But this is plainly an inconsistent mingling of the sign with the thing signified. Even if we adopt the symbolical interpretation, still the feature mentioned in the supposed comparison, *i. e.*, in the process taken from actual life, must have a definite meaning. For one cannot, on account of the *signification* of a comparison, attribute to it features which in themselves are foreign to it. Therefore we must assume a mowing of the early crop by the king, whether only as a fact in the present case, or as a custom, even if we know nothing from other sources of any such right.

Ver. 2. **Plants of the land.** Keil says that this does not mean the second crop just mentioned, but vegetable growth suited for the food of men. When this was devoured, the second crop of grass began to grow. But if the second crop itself had been devoured, the intercession of the prophet would have come too late. This is incorrect. The prophet sees a complete destruction of what had sprung up, and just because this image with its consequent misery stands before his eyes, he prays for the entire removal of it. "The plants of the earth," therefore mean, certainly not the second crop in particular, but all vegetable growth in general; yet in any event the grass is included. Nor can it be inferred from the conclusion of ver. 1 that this second crop was conceived of as not yet grown. Rather on the contrary it was when the locusts were formed; still we cannot assume that they at first spared it and attacked only the plants.

(b.) Vers. 4-6. **Second Vision. Devouring fire = Drought.** Ver. 4. "He called to contend with fire" = he called the fire in order to punish with it. The flood, etc. = even the deepest waters should be dried up by the "fire."

Ver. 6. **This also, i. e.**, as well as the threatening contained in the first vision.

2. Vers. 7-9. **The Third Vision, the plumb-line.** The downfall of Israel is announced. The vision is introduced just like the two preceding, but unexpectedly has a different result. Even the symbol used — plumb-line — indicates this. But Jehovah Himself gives the explanation to the prophet, and shows that the reference is to a hostile invasion which shall certainly fall upon the kingdom as a judgment. This is the more terrible, because in such vivid contrast with the foregoing.

Ver. 7. The wall may be considered an image of Israel, which resembled such a solid, well-constructed wall, built, as it were, by Jehovah with a plumb-line. And now Jehovah comes again with a plumb-line, not however to build up but to tear down. As carefully and thoroughly as the wall had been erected, even so carefully should it be destroyed. In the midst is emphatic. The Lord's judgment strikes not an outwork, but the very centre. Like the plumb-line it turns neither to the right nor to the left, nor varies at all from its aim. No longer will Jehovah pass by = spare. This naturally refers to the previous threats which had been withdrawn.

Ver. 9. Specifies the "middle" which is to be struck by the judgment, namely, the idolatrous sanctuaries of the people, and the king's house, *i. e.*, the monarchy, for in truth with the fall of this house, "the power of kingdom would be broken." (Keil.)

3. Vers. 10-17. Opposition to the prophet at Bethel on account of his predictions. New prophecies of wrath. Priest of Bethel is plainly the high priest in the sanctuary of the golden calf at Bethel. In the midst of the house of Israel

= in the religious centre of the kingdom, at Bethel. For it was from Bethel (ver. 13) that he was ordered away.

Ver. 11. **By the sword shall Jeroboam die**, cf. ver. 9; here the head of the house is named, but this was naturally included in the house itself. But the threat in the present form sounds more severely, and hence not without design is it thus recited in the accusation.

Ver. 12 Amaziah informs the king concerning the prophet, not so much in order to procure his punishment, as to justify the banishment which he proposed. But he represents it to the prophet in such a way as to effect a courteous removal. Hence the command comes in the form of good advice, — **Flee, eat bread**, etc. = there you may earn your bread by your prophecies. He considers prophesying a calling which Amos pursued for a living — a view against which the prophet guards (ver. 14) in his answer. For a king's sanctuary = founded by the king, clothed with regal authority. **A house** = seat of the kingdom = a royal capital. Therefore nothing should be said against the king! Unconscious, bitter satire on "the sanctuary," where all was decided by respect for the king, not for truth, nor for God's command.

Ver. 14. **No prophet, i. e.**, by profession. **Prophet's son, i. e.**, scholar, have never been trained in the prophetic schools — gatherer of **sycamores** refers to the direction in ver. 12. There eat thy bread. Amos says that he need not go anywhere for the sake of bread, nor did he come to Bethel or Israel for a better support. As a herdsman he had been accustomed to be content with little; that was enough for him and he sought no more. And at any moment he could return to that occupation. If he were now prophesying in Israel and acting independently, he did this not out of selfish aims, but according to ver. 15, only because he must, in obedience to a divine command. Whoever therefore would hinder this, sets himself against Jehovah. Therefore Amos announces to Amaziah the punishment he is to suffer when the judgment comes upon Israel.

Ver. 16. In return for his endeavor to stop the mouth of Jehovah's prophet, he must bear the announcement of his own doom.

Ver. 17. **Wife become an harlot**, to be dishonored at the storming of the city. **Thy land** = landed possession, **unclean land** = among the heathen. This presupposes his exile, and with that the exile of the whole people. The latter is expressly threatened in the conclusion; and thus is confirmed what Amaziah had charged before the king (ver. 11), although that threat was not uttered by Amos in ver. 9.

DOCTRINAL AND MORAL.

1. Divine judgments are announced by the prophets with so much boldness that men might easily attribute to them a lack of tenderness as if they had no regard to the sadness and misery certain to follow from what they announce. But how wrong this would be! They do feel and that very deeply. They seek by the announcement to prevail on men to repent while there is yet time, and thus forestall the impending judgments. Certainly, as they have intense moral convictions and firmly believe in the truth of a moral government of the world, they distinguish between a people ripe of judgment and one that is not. In the latter case they intercede with God for the people.

So pressed are they with love and desire to see the nation delivered or spared, that, although they best know the holy earnestness of God as judge, they go to meet Him and wrestle for forgiveness. Thus the reproach of a want of compassion fails to lie in the least upon them, but rather passes over to God, the Holy. But —

2. Even He is not truly liable to it. "It shall not be!" therein his mercy set itself against his justice and overcomes it. Thus is it proved the mightier. "The Lord repented" — not surely as if He would confess the unrighteousness of his threatening, but merely to express the frank, positive withdrawal of the threat. What was threatened was deserved, but still the punishment as destructive has not yet become a necessity. God can still spare. If the stroke did fall, there would be no unrighteousness in God, and also just as little, if it did not. How the case stands only He who is the searcher of hearts and the Judge of all the earth can certainly know. But men may and should presume that forbearance is possible, and therefore should intercede. Even this has its limits, and cannot be a duty under all circumstances, otherwise the conviction of a moral government of the world would grow weak. It is therefore by no means of course a mark of a godly mind, but it is to be highly esteemed when in men like the prophets who consider God's punitive righteousness a holy truth, it manifests itself as an expression of love for their fellow-men; and then, too, it is efficacious. That it has efficacy indicates its high importance. It affects the action even of God Himself, and thus conditions the destiny of men, toward whom He would have acted otherwise without these intercessions than He actually has done for the sake of them. This to be sure is a position which only a theism having full faith in a personal God can allow. But such a faith involves just this, as appears by the Holy Scriptures, which, standing on the ground of an actual theism, know nothing else than that intercession has such an efficacy, and everywhere speak of it as a matter that is self-evident. It is therefore clearly impossible to accept the Biblical theism, and at the same time deny the power of prayer. The question is then whether we will admit the latter, or deny theism, and with it religion in general which necessarily presupposes it. If any will not accept the latter alternative, then they must demand of science that, instead of affirming a conception of God drawn from the assumed impossibility of a theism which maintains a real efficiency of prayer with God, it should either correct its idea of God, or, if this be not allowed, should admit its inability to come to a satisfactory conclusion, and thus exercise a modesty, which so far from being degrading, would be honorable.

3. Impending judgments are here set forth by the prophet in visions; partly such as in themselves disclose the judgment God is about to execute; partly such as contain a symbolical action which afterwards is distinctly explained by God. The appearance of visions here is something new. But it must be admitted that prophetic speech and vision stand nearer together than would appear at first blush. Even in the prophetic word there lies in a sense what is substantially a vision, since the prophet at first "sees" what He is to announce; for which reason the prophet is called a "seer" (even in our chap. v. 12), and the prophetic speech "a vision," 2 Sam. vii. 17; Is. xxii. 5; i. 1, and the word "to see" is used simply of prophecies or prophetic utterances. If therefore Amos in chaps

i.-vi. announces punishment in the most various forms, fire, plunder, desolation, killing, we must believe that through the divine efficiency such images presented themselves to his inner intuitions as incited him to the warnings and exhortations which he uttered through the power inwrought in him by the same Spirit. The two first visions afford us a glance into these inner processes. But no details of the judgment follow, because the threatened evil is averted by prayer. On the other hand, we must not obliterate the distinction between prophetic speech and vision. From the inward contemplation in which God revealed his will to the prophet, it was quite a step to the literal vision. In the latter there was a complete crystallization of the perception, which was not a necessity in every case, for even without it, the perception could find expression in prophetic words. Especially does the pure symbolical vision distinguish itself from the *seeing* which lies at the basis of all prophecy, and therefore from prophetic speech as such. Here at once the image as such is the principal thing. There is urgent need, however, of explanatory speech, so that here again, only from the other side, we encounter the mutual dependence of word and vision. But the vision is at first its own end, and because it does not speak for itself but needs explanation, it is here a *vision* in the literal sense. Whether we are to suppose that in such a case the prophet is always in an ecstatic state, we do not inquire. For the most part he is, in the case of a pure symbolic vision. Since in vision, the divine revelation becomes peculiarly precious to the prophet and makes a deeper impression than bare speech, the end it seeks is apparent. This aim is first upon the prophet who sees the vision. It renders the truth which is disclosed to him and which he is to announce, more vivid and impressive, so that he cannot do otherwise than set it forth just as he has not heard but seen it, whether actually or in the shape of a symbol. But the plastic form of the vision aimed also, and ultimately in a still greater degree, at impressing the hearer. When the prophet sets forth a literal vision, that is, what he has seen, the judgment he announces takes a concrete, tangible form which gives emphasis to the utterance, and thus dispels doubt and wins attention. The discourse seizes one more firmly when it is united with an image, even though it be symbolical; and in a certain sense this latter kind of image is still more impressive, because it is somewhat mysterious, and thus provokes attention to the explanation, and this again for that reason prints itself deeper on the mind, because it awakens surprise that a symbol so unpretending should have such a weight of significance. Hence the reason appears why visions make their appearance in the conclusion of our book. There was in the sense declared, *i. e.*, not so much in fact as in form, a climax in the revelations to the prophet and therefore in the disclosure to the people. Since the direct statement of his message respecting the certainty of the judgment and the ripeness of the people for it, appeared not to be enough; at last, to leave nothing undone, these things were brought under the eye in the form of plastic visions which the prophet saw and naturally repeated to his hearers. The discourses therefore now have at least a negative efficiency in the opposition to which they aroused the priest Amaziah. (It is certainly wrong therefore to refer these visions with the narrative depending on them to an earlier period than the foregoing discourses.) Thus visions occur, as we

see, in one of the oldest prophets. It may be asked, why do the other older prophets have either none at all or only faint traces of them? It is hardly a sufficient reply to refer the matter to the free action of the divine Spirit. Yet this would not be incorrect if we included with it the subjective factor in the case, since men allow that it stands in close connection with the separate individuality of the prophets. Not every one of these was equally inclined to this mode of representation, but one more than another, since a certain preponderance of the imaginative faculty, a peculiar excitability of the soul, was requisite in order to fit one for seeing visions. These are found in Amos, and we can easily see a certain natural affinity between the herdsman Amos with his quick sensibilities and the formation of outward visions. As to the visions in Ezekiel and Jeremiah, we refer to the Commentary on those prophets.

4. The centre, the heart of a nation and kingdom, is found in its sanctuaries and capital. From these proceeds its life; yes, as they are, so is the life of the whole people, either sound, or diseased, or altogether rotten. If the heart is corrupt, the blow must at last fall on this, otherwise no help is possible. The sanctuary of a nation is its chief nerve. But upon this the court, the secular government, exerts a powerful influence. If it uses this influence to subdue the sanctuary into an instrument of its own plans and thus corrupts it, the whole people is corrupted; and its guilt becomes so much the greater and God's judgment the more certain. How significant is it that the priest can oppose no contrary testimony to the prophetic word! All he can do is to denounce Amos to the king, and thus call in the secular power. Naturally enough; for he is the court-priest, and is stationed at Bethel, which is, as he says with a *naïve* candor, "a king's sanctuary and a seat of the kingdom." He obviously means to say something of great moment which will awe the prophet, and is not conscious of the poverty of the claim he makes for the sanctuary. As sacred it should take its authority from God, and its highest boast should be that it is a sanctuary of God. Certainly it is of no avail to root its authority in that of the great and noble, for then it becomes a mere tool of state craft. A testimony against all *Cæsareopapismus*, a warning to every state Church never to forget where all Church authority strikes its roots, — not in the protection of the state nor in civil privileges, but only in the Word of God; and that the highest glory even of the strongest established Church should be that it has, not the state, but God and his Word on its side.

5. "There eat thy bread!" This is certainly the main thing in the view of the idol's high-priest. He sees in office only a means of "bread." Therefore without scruple he ascribes the same view to Amos. But the true prophet repels the charge with dignity. He seeks not for money or means, he needs it not; he does not once claim the title of prophet, for he had nothing to do with the title. When he came forth as a prophet, it was not for the sake of the name or the office any more than it was for bread, but solely in obedience to God's direction. But as he did not seek reward, neither did he shun danger or persecution; he knew that the divine commission to announce wrath to a godless people involved peril, but he did not therefore forbear. He did not allow himself to be intimidated by threats. Even if men would not hear him but would try to close his mouth, he would not be silent. He must speak, because he bore a divine command

6. Strong faith belongs to the calling of a prophet who is to announce God's punitive wrath. And not only that; but quite independent of the duty of reproving the lofty, a high measure of faith is needed in order to maintain and firmly to utter, in the midst of a degenerate race, the conviction that God still rules and will at last vindicate his honor and his law, and show Himself as Lord and Judge. This point may be weakened by a reference to the fact that the prophets did not speak of themselves but only as organs of God, and made their announcements only by virtue of their commission. But however firmly we hold the objective character of the prophetic speech, the more we regard it on this side, yes, even the more the announcement of wrath is a literal prediction of a definite form, and kind and degree of punishment; still the less are we to overlook the subjective factor in the case. The prophets were not soulless instruments of the Holy Spirit, according to the mechanical theory of inspiration, but what they had to disclose, they themselves believed and were firmly convinced of, as was certainly the case with the herdsman of Tekoa. Their predictions of punishment in the face of a prevailing religious and moral corruption testified the strength of their theocratic conviction, and the measure of their vigorous faith, which enabled them to stand unmoved and declare with all confidence, the Lord — although He so long delays, and human sin appears to triumph — will lay a plumb-line in the midst of his people Israel, or as in chap. viii., the time is ripe for judgment. Certainly there is a reciprocal action between the objective factor and the subjective, between the divine revelation and the prophet's degree of faith. That was on one side conditioned by this, but so, on the other, a higher measure of confidence of faith was the fruit and effect of the divine revelations to the prophets. But in any case the strength of any one's faith who was chosen for a prophet, rooted itself in the general revelation to and in Israel, therefore especially in that which was deposited in the holy Scriptures. This school of the Spirit, consisting in the Word of God, was, as it appears, the only school which Amos ever attended, but he showed himself a very apt scholar, he was not so much an *αδρος* as a *θεοδιδάκτος*. He had such a firm conviction of the power and majesty of God and especially of his righteousness that he was sure that He would maintain his honor and demonstrate his government. As he was thus, in the sense of 1 Cor. i. 26 ff., worthy and fit to be chosen by God for his messenger and prophet, so on the other hand that mission fully confirmed him in the assurance of faith.

[7. The latter half of this chapter (vers. 10-17) has been cited by one of the writers of Essays and Reviews, Prof. Jowett, as an illustration of his assertion that "the failure of a prophecy is never admitted in spite of Scripture and of history." But wherein is the failure here? The predictions are first, the rising against the house of Jeroboam with the sword, which was fulfilled (2 Kings xv. 10) in the slaughter of Jeroboam's son and successor by Shallum; secondly, the captivity and exile of Israel, the fulfillment of which is patent; thirdly, the terrible denunciation against Amaziah, his wife and his children, the execution of which is confessedly not recorded. But this is true of the doom pronounced upon other individuals, as Shebna (Is. xxii. 17, 18), Ahab and Zedekiah (Jer. xxix. 22), Shemaiah (Jer. xxix. 32), Pashur (Jer. xx. 3), etc. Nor is it all strange, when one considers

the excessive brevity of the accounts of the later kings and revolutions. There is nothing at all impossible or improbable in the fate pronounced upon Amaziah. And "unless the execution of God's sentence upon one of the many calf-priests in Bethel is necessarily matter of history, it has rather to be shown why it should be mentioned than why it should be omitted." Surely the burden of proof lies upon the objector. — C.]

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[Ver. 1. *And behold he formed* (was forming) *locusts*. The very least things then are as much in his infinite mind as what we call the greatest. The same power of God is seen in creating the locust as the universe. But further, God was framing them for a special end, not of nature, but of his moral government in the correction of man. In this vision He opens our eyes and lets us see Himself framing the punishment for the deserts of sinners, so that when hail, mildew, caterpillars, or some hitherto unknown disease wastes our crops, we may think not of secondary causes but of our Judge. (Pusey.)

Ver. 2. *Forgive, I beseech thee*. He sees sin at the bottom of the trouble, and therefore concludes that the pardon of sin must be at the bottom of the deliverance, and prays for that in the first place. Whatever calamity we are under, personal or public, the forgiveness of sin is that which we should be most earnest with God for. (M. Henry.)

Ver. 3. *The Lord repented for this*. See the power of prayer! See what a blessing praying people, praying prophets are to a land! Ruin had many a time broken in, had they not stood in the breach. See how ready, how swift God is to show mercy. (M. Henry.)

Ver. 4. *God called to contend by fire*. Man by rebellion challenges God's omnipotence. God sooner or later accepts the challenge. If man escapes with impunity, then he had chosen well in rejecting God. If not, what folly and misery was his short-sighted choice; short-lived in its gain; its loss, eternal! Fire stands as the symbol and summary of God's most terrible judgments. It spares nothing, leaves nothing, not even the outward form of what it destroys. (Pusey.) — C.]

Ver. 5. We should pray even for those who in our judgment are worthy of punishment. We may at least implore God's mercy on their behalf. Perhaps He will forgive and grant space for repentance. He desires not the death of the sinner, but that he turn and live. On this ground they who know the mind of God, always intercede even for the worst of sinners; although if the judgment falls, they humbly adore the holiness of God's ways but do not murmur.

[Ver. 7. *The Lord stood — with a plumb-line*. There was so to speak an architectural design in God's work of destroying Israel no less than in his former favor in building him up. God does everything according to measure, number and weight. As one said of old, "The Deity is a perfect geometrician." (Wordsworth.)

Ver. 10. *Amos has conspired*, etc. Amaziah, the high-priest, thought that the craft whereby he had his wealth was endangered. To Jeroboam, however, he says nothing of these fears, but makes it an affair of state. He takes the king by what he thought to be his weak side, fear for his own power or life. Similar was the experience of Jeremiah, of our Lord and of his Apostles. And so the

heathen who were ever conspiring against the Roman emperors went on accusing the early Christians as disloyal, factious, impious, because they did not offer sacrifice for the emperors to false gods, but prayed for them to the true. (Pusey.)

Ver. 11. On the supposition that Amaziah wilfully distorted Amos's words, the same writer remarks justly enough, "A lie mixed with truth is the most deadly form of falsehood, the truth serving to gain admittance for the lie and to color it. In slander, and in heresy which is slander against God, truth is used to commend the falsehood and falsehood to destroy the truth." So on the latter clause, "Amaziah omits both the ground of the threat and the hope of escape urged upon them. He omits too the prophet's intercession for his people and selects the one prediction which could give a mere political character to the whole. Suppression of truth is a yet subtler character of falsehood."

Ver. 12. *Go, eat thy bread.* Do thou live by thy trade there, and let me live by my trade here. (Jerome). Worldly men always think that those whose profession is religious make a gain of godliness. Interested people cannot conceive of one disinterested; nor the insincere of one sincere. (Pusey.)

Ver. 13. *It is the king's chapel,* etc. All claims of reverence for a church simply and merely as a national establishment, independently of divine institution, are no better than these assertions of Amaziah. The first royal propounder of what is now called Erastianism was, as far as we know, Jeroboam I.; the first priestly advocate of it, as far as we know, was Amaziah. Jerome, in his note here, applies these words to the Arians who appealed to Arian emperors, supporting their dog-

mas, and persecuting the orthodox teachers, by the secular arm. When in the fourth century Catholic bishops of Spain invoked the power of the Emperor Maximus and would have put the Priscillianists to death, they were sternly rebuked and opposed by the saintly and apostolic bishop, Martin of Tours. (Wordsworth.)

Ver. 14. *I was a herdsman.* One of that class to which Abraham and Moses and David had belonged; but not rich in fields and herds, in men-servants and maid-servants, like the first; nor learned in the wisdom of the Egyptians, like the second; nor with any, the most distant intimation that he might one day be the shepherd of a people, like the third. (F. D. Maurice.)

Ver. 15. *The Lord took me,—the Lord said unto me.* As the Apostles, when forbidden to teach in the name of Jesus, answered, we must obey God rather than man, so Amos, when forbidden by the idol-priests to prophecy, not only prophecies, showing that he feared God bidding more than their forbidding, but boldly and freely denounces the punishment of him who endeavored to forbid and hinder the Word of God. (Jerome.)

Ver. 16. *Drop nothing,* etc. God's Word comes as a gentle dew or soft rain, not beating down, but refreshing; not sweeping away as a storm, but sinking in and softening even hard ground, all but the rock; gentle so as they can bear it. God's Word was to men such as they were to it; dropping like the dew on those who received it: wearing, to those who hardened themselves against it. (Pusey.)

Ver. 17. *Thy wife shall be dishonored.* Thou teachest idolatry which is spiritual harlotry; and thou shalt be punished by harlotry in thine own house for thy sin. (Wordsworth.)—C.]

CHAPTER VIII.

Fourth Vision: Israel ripe for Destruction. Days of Mourning threatened against the Ungodly. Afterwards a Famine of the Word.

- 1 Thus the Lord Jehovah showed me,
And behold, a basket with ripe fruit.¹
- 2 And he said, What seest thou, Amos?
And I said, A basket with ripe fruit.
Then said Jehovah to me,
"The end² is come to my people, Israel;
I will not pass by them any more.
- 3 And the songs of the palace³ shall howl
In that day, saith the Lord Jehovah;
Corpses in multitude; everywhere has he⁴ cast them forth; Hush!"⁵
- 4 Hear this, ye who pant⁶ for the poor,
And to destroy the meek⁷ of the earth,
- 5 Saying, when will the new moon be over,
That we may sell grain,
And the Sabbath, that we may open wheat?
Making the ephah small and the shekel great,
And falsifying the scales of deceit;
- 6 Buying the poor for silver,

- And the needy for a pair of shoes,
 And the refuse of the wheat will we sell.
- 7 Jehovah hath sworn by the pride of Jacob,
 Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.
- 8 Shall not the earth tremble for this,
 And every dweller therein mourn?
 And it shall rise up, all of it, like the Nile,⁸
 And shall heave and sink⁹ like the Nile of Egypt.
- 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord Jehovah,
 That I will cause the sun to go down at noon,
 And make it dark to the earth in clear day;
- 10 And will turn your festivals into mourning,
 And all your songs into lamentation;
 And will bring sackcloth upon all loins,
 And baldness upon every head;
 And will make it¹⁰ like the mourning for an only son,
 And the end of it like¹¹ a bitter day.
- 11 Behold, days are coming, saith the Lord Jehovah,
 When I will send a hunger into the land,
 Not a hunger for bread nor a thirst for water,
 But to hear the words of Jehovah.
- 12 And they shall stagger from sea to sea,
 And rove about from the north even to the east,
 To seek the Word of Jehovah, and shall not find it.
- 13 In that day the fair virgins shall faint,
 And the young men, for thirst.
- 14 They who swear by the sin of Samaria,
 And say, By the life of thy God, O Dan!
 And, By the life of the way of Beersheba!
 They shall fall and rise no more.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

¹ Ver. 1. — פִּי, harvest, summer, here = summer-fruit, or gathered fruit, *i. e.*, fully ripe, as 2 Sam. xvi. 1; Micah vi. 1.

[² Ver. 2. — The paronomasia in פִּי and פִּי is marked and forcible. Cf. Ezek. vii. 6.]

³ Ver. 3. — הַיְקָל here manifestly is *palace*, not *temple*

⁴ Ver. 3. — הַשְּׁלִיחַ has Jehovah for its subject (Keil). Others take it impersonally (Henderson), but Wordsworth supplies "every one" as the subject.

⁵ Ver. 3. — הָרַח is by some, as E. V., rendered as an adverb = *quietly*; but always elsewhere it is an interjection, and should be so considered here.

⁶ Ver. 4. — שִׁנְאָפִים = pant after [like a dog or wild beast yelping and panting after its prey. Wordsworth]. This sense is clearly required by the second member, where שִׁנְאָפִים is to be supplied before לְהַשְׁבִּירָה.

⁷ Ver. 4. — עֲנִי. There seems no reason for departing from the textual reading here.

⁸ Ver. 8. — פֶּאֶר is a defective form for כִּיאֶר (cf. ch. ix. 5), a reading which is found in many of the MSS.

⁹ Ver. 8. — נִשְׁקָה is a softened form for נִשְׁקָעָה, which is given in the Keri, and also in many MSS. Cf. שִׁנְאָפִים, ch. ix. 5.

¹⁰ Ver. 10. — The suffix in שִׁנְאָפִים refers to the following אֶבֶל [but Keil makes it refer to all that has previously been mentioned as done upon that day. So Pusey. Henderson refers it to אֶבֶל, understood.

¹¹ Ver. 10. — The ק in קִיּוֹם, is *Caph. veritatis*.

¹² Ver. 12. — נִנְעָה. This word is used of the reeling of drunkards, of the swaying to and fro of trees in the wind of the quivering of lips, and then of the unsteady seeking of persons bewildered, looking for what they know not where to find. Pusey.]

¹³ Ver. 14. — הַרְבֵּה. Meier's correction of this into הַרְבֵּה, = thy beloved, is correct *et al.* and needless.

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

1. Vers. 1-3. *Fourth Vision.* The basket with ripe fruit. No more forbearance. Ver. 1. This basket is an image of a people ripe for judgment. The play upon words between the original for "ripe fruit" and that for "end," indicates more, clearly the necessary result of the ripeness, namely, the downfall of the people.

Ver. 3. Songs become howlings—wherefore? The answer follows: because of the multitude of the dead. The exclamation **Hush!** is an admonition to bow beneath the tremendous severity of the divine judgment.

Vers. 4-14. What has been briefly expressed in vers. 1-3 is here expanded into a longer discourse, the sinful conduct of the great which makes them ripe for judgment, and the heavy penalty which they must suffer.

(a.) Vers. 4-6. **Hear this, ye who,** etc. A description of their wanton course. They pant after the poor and destroy the meek by grasping all property for themselves. Cf. Job xxii. 8; Is. v. 8. This is further defined in the two following verses, in which the prophet makes the men describe their own feelings and conduct.

Ver. 5. They cannot even wait for the end of the festival in order to resume their traffic. The **new moon** was a holiday, like the Sabbath, on which trade and business ceased. To **open wheat** = to open the granaries; cf. Gen. xli. 56. What Joseph did for the benefit of the poor, these did for their own advantage, making usurious gains from others' poverty. With this they united fraud; by diminishing the measure and increasing the shekel = by demanding one of greater weight than the right standard; and by falsifying the scales = using scales arranged so as to cheat.

Ver. 6. Thus the poor man was made so poor that he was compelled to sell himself either for a piece of silver which he owed, or for a pair of shoes which he had gotten and was unable to pay for. Thus he could not meet the smallest expenditure. To complete the case, only the refuse grain was sold to them, for which yet they had to pay the same as for good grain.

(b.) Vers. 7-14. *Punishment of such wickedness.* (1.) Vers. 7-10. **Hath sworn by the pride of Jacob,** *i. e.,* by himself who was the pride and glory of Israel. "By leaving such sins unpunished He would deny his glory in Israel." (Keil.)

Ver. 8. Therefore or for this, namely, for these deeds. These are Jehovah's words, and carry out the thought of "not forgetting the deeds," by a delineation of the impending judgment. The question, **Shall not,** etc., is intended to forestall the idea that such things could be left unpunished. It is incorrect to refer the "for this," to the punishment as if it were intended to emphasize that. The form of the speech, *i. e.,* the question, does not suit this view; and besides, in that case the punishment itself would be really indicated only in ver. 7, so that this unusual prominence of its impressiveness would be without a motive. The same words recur in ch. ix. 5, but there as a description of God's omnipotence, manifesting itself, however, in judgments. The earth heaves, because the Lord touches it (ch. ix. 5). The trembling of the earth as a heaving and sinking is explained by comparison with the rise and fall of the Nile.

Ver. 9. In that day, *i. e.,* the day of the judgment, in which what has just been mentioned is to

take place. In close connection with the trembling of the earth is its becoming dark: the one is not conceivable without the other. At bottom ver. 9 describes a return of the earth to its original condition of chaos—the sun go down at midday; not a mere eclipse, but a catastrophe which subverts the order of nature. [An eclipse is not the "going down" of the sun. The minute calculations of Hitzig and Michaelis, repeated and extended by Pusey, are therefore quite aside from the purpose.—G.]

Ver. 10 describes more minutely the general mourning already touched upon in ver. 8. Cf. v. 3; ch. v. 16; Hosea ii. 13. **Baldness upon every head.** The shaving of a bald place was a sign of mourning. Cf. Is. iii. 24.

(2.) Vers. 11-14. A new and peculiar trait in the delineation of the judgment, the **bitter day.** The Word of God, which men now despise, they will then long for, but in vain. **Too late!** This threat bears obliquely upon the insatiable avarice of those who live in luxury through their oppression of the poor. At the same time they are the persons who now will not listen to the Word of God.

Ver. 12. They stagger, because plagued by hunger and thirst. **From sea to sea,** indefinitely, the sea being conceived of as the end of the earth (Ps. lxxii. 8). **From the north to the east** = from north to south, and from east to west, *i. e.,* to every quarter of the globe.

Ver. 13. So great is the torment of this unsatisfied hunger and thirst that the strongest succumb to it; these are individualized as the **young men** and the **maidens**; if they fail, much more the weak.

Ver. 14. The sin of Samaria = that by which Samaria sins, the golden calf at Bethel. This is the most probable explanation, because of the corresponding expression in the next clause, the **god of Dan** = the golden calf there. **By the life of the way;** by the life of, is a customary formula of swearing, here improperly used in reference to a thing. **The way of Beersheba** = the way by which men go to Beersheba, to the worship there. The swearing by these objects shows that the young men and maidens are worshippers of these idols and make pilgrimages to Beersheba.

DOCTRINAL AND MORAL

1. According to our chapter the ripeness of the people for judgment is due to the violence and injustice practiced by the rich and noble upon the poor. These are peculiarly flagitious sins which call down the judgments of God. As such a statement reveals to us a degree of moral corruption which is frightful, so we learn from the severity with which the sins are rebuked and condemned, not only the spirit of justice but also the compassion which belongs to the religion of the Old Testament. It desires that every one, even the poorest, should have his rights, and even comes forward to protect the poor as such against the violence of the rich. They have a counsellor in God, who, as He protects them by the law, continues to do so by the penalties imposed upon the transgressors of the law. He does indeed bear long with those transgressors who oppress the poor, so that it may appear as if He had forgotten them; but as He owes, so to speak, the duty of sympathy with the poor and their necessities, so does He also that of forbearance with their oppres-

sors, because He desires not the death of the sinner but rather that he would turn and live.

2. The frightful severity of God's judgments, so far from being opposed to the compassion which cares for the poor and feeble, is rather in full harmony with it. The modern polemical spirit against the Old Testament descriptions of this severity, betrays its origin too plainly; it knows nothing in truth of sin, and therefore nothing of the divine judgment upon sin. It fails to see that the love which it claims for its God, really becomes the greatest harshness, since it denies the possibility of the punishment of sinners and therefore any efficacious opposition to the unrighteousness wrought by them. Only a God who is truly *terror malorum* can truly be *amor bonorum*. Moreover we do as a matter of fact continually meet with occurrences, in detail and in gross, which undeniably are judgments upon the sins of men, and that in these there is an execution of a law of moral government, can just as little be denied. So much the more foolish then is the opposition to the so-called ferocious God of the Jews, to the retaliatory spirit of the Old Testament. Now because men do not believe that there is and must be in God, along with, or rather for the sake of, the love which He is, strictness in judgment, He is obliged to show to a race which has lost its faith in the God of the Scriptures, by actual facts, as violent as those of the year 1870, that the storms of divine wrath are not merely outgrowths of a crude, undisciplined view of life, and tokens of a low state of culture, but a reality, planted in the midst of a century claiming to itself the highest culture. When the measure is full, these storms break forth, and a hundred times over put to flight "culture," "love," and all similar watchwords of the modern spirit. Then there often comes suddenly a "shaking" of the earth, or gloom falls upon an entire nation so that it becomes dark in bright daylight, or the festivals are turned into mourning and songs into lamentations, or all loins are clothed in sackcloth, — just when men in their blind security held such things to be impossible. Yes, times of war furnish only too striking illustrations of those words of Scripture which a race, strong in the conviction of its own leadership, coolly dismisses as a coarse and antiquated rhetoric, while it passes to the order of the day. Such fearful periods compel even an unbelieving race to forebode that the final judgment may prove a reality compared with which all preceding judgments are trifles. But faith sees in these latter a divine finger-mark pointing to the former, for which reason men of God, like the prophets, continually unite with their descriptions of intermediate judgments a reference to the last great judgment; and this the more when they describe judgments which are at least relatively decisive, inasmuch as they make an end of an entire kingdom.

3. When divine judgments come and give flaming proof of God's existence to a race which has forsaken and forgotten Him, the once despised and hated word of the Lord is appreciated again. Men "hunger and thirst" for it, but often at first not in the right way. They desire as speedily as possible to hear of promises and consolations, and to these every ear is open. But it is in vain. We now need expect no new revelation from God. We have "his Word" in the Scripture. But when this is a long time despised, it follows at last that there is no one to preach it, and without a living preacher, it is finally lost. Or if it is preached, it has no

power to console, and men fail to find what they seek. Thus there ensues a longing which is not satisfied. The result is otherwise only when men bow themselves in penitence under the divine threatenings as deserved, and under the divine Spirit inwardly blame themselves for their previous apostasy. But who knows whether man will find room for repentance? Before he reaches that point, while he is in the midst of his vain longing for comfort, he may be snatched away.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

[Ver. 1. *Thus the Lord — shewed me.* The sentence of Amaziah being pronounced, Amos resumes just where he had left off before. Amaziah's vehement interruption is like a stone cast into deep waters. They close over it, and it leaves no trace. The last vision declared that the end was certain; this, that it was at hand. (Pusey.)

Ver. 2. *A basket with ripe fruit.* At harvest time there is no more to be done for the crop. Good or bad, it has reached its end and is cut down. So the harvest of Israel was come. . . Heavenly influences can but injure the ripened sinner, as dew, rain, sun, but injure the ripened fruit. Israel was ripe, but for destruction. (*Ibid.*) Rev. xvi. 18. Gather the clusters of the earth, for her grapes are fully ripe. (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 3. *The songs shall howl.* When sounds of joy are turned into wailing, there must be complete sorrow. They are not merely hushed but turned into their opposite. Just the reverse is promised to the godly: Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh (Luke vi. 21). (*Ibid.*)

Ver. 5. *When will the new moon be over?* The Psalmist said, When shall I come and appear before God? These said, When will this service be over that we may be our own masters again?

Sin in wrong measures once begun is unbroken. All sin perpetuates itself; it is done again because it has been done before. But sins of a man's daily occupation are continued of necessity, beyond the simple force of habit and the ever increasing drowsy of covetousness. To interrupt them is to risk detection. How countless then their number! When human law was enforced in a city after a time of negligence, scarcely a weight was found to be honest. Prayer went up to God on the Sabbath, and fraud on the poor went up to God in every transaction on the other six days. (Pusey.)

Ver. 7. *Jehovah hath sworn, etc.* God must cease to be God, if He did not do what He swore to do — punish the oppressors of the poor. (*Ib.*) Wo, and a thousand woes, to that man that is cut off by an oath of God from all benefit by pardoning me. cy. (M. Henry.) — C.] The evil deeds of the wicked are inscribed in a perpetual memorial before God; but the sins of believers are cast by Him into the depths of the sea so that they never again come into mind. Micah vii. 19. (Pf. B. W.)

[Ver. 8. *Shall not the earth tremble for this?* Those who will not tremble and mourn as they ought for national sins shall be made to tremble and mourn for national judgments. (M. Henry.)

Ver. 9. *The sun goes down at noon.* Sorrow is saddest when it comes upon fearless joy. God commonly in his mercy sends heralds of coming sorrow; very few burst suddenly upon man. Now in the meridian brightness of the day of Israel, the blackness of night should fall upon him. (Pusey.)

Ver. 10. *Turn your feasts into mourning.* As to the upright there ariseth light in the darkness

which gives them the oil of joy for mourning, so on the wicked there falls darkness in the midst of light which turns their joy into heaviness. *The end of it as a bitter day.* There is no hope that when things are at the worst, they will mend. No, the state of impenitent sinners grows worse and worse; and the last of all will be the worst of all. (M. Henry.)

Ver. 11. *Not a hunger for bread.* In death and dreariness, in exile from the land of their fathers, crushed by oppressors, hearing only of gods more cruel than those who make them, how will they hunger and thirst for any tidings of one who cares for the weary and heavy-laden, one who would have man-servant and maid, the cattle and the stranger within the gates to rest as well as the prince; of one who had fixed the year of jubilee that the

debtor might be released and the captive go free O, what a longing in a land of bondage to hear of such a Being; to believe that all that had been told of Him in former days was not a dream, to have a right to tell their children that it was true for them! (Maurice.)

Ver. 12. *From sea to sea,* etc. Even the profane, when they see no help, will have recourse to God. Saul in his extremity inquired of the Lord, and He answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets. (Pusey.) Such is the present condition of the Jews. They roam in restless vagrancy about the world and seek the word of God; but they find it not, because they have killed the incarnate Word revealed in the written word (Jerome).—C.]

CHAPTER IX.

Fifth Vision. The Downfall. Not even a little Grain perishes. After the Overthrow of all careless Sinners God will raise the fallen Tent of David to new Glory.

- I saw the Lord standing ¹ the altar,
 And He said, Smite the top ² that the thresholds may tremble,
 And dash them ³ upon the head of all,
 And their remnant I will kill with the sword;
 He that fleeth of them shall not flee away,
 And he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered.
- 2 If they break through ⁴ into hell,
 From thence will my hand take them;
 And if they climb up to heaven,
 Thence will I bring them down.
- 3 And if they hide themselves on the top of Carmel,
 From thence will I search and take them out.
 And if they conceal themselves from my sight in the bottom of the sea,
 From thence will I command the serpent ⁵ and he bites them.
- 4 And if they go into captivity before their enemies,
 From thence will I command the sword, and it slays them,
 And I set mine eye upon them for evil and not for good.
- 5 And the Lord, Jehovah of hosts,
 Who toucheth the earth and it melteth, ⁶
 And all that dwell therein mourn;
 And the whole of it riseth up like the Nile,
 And sinketh down like the Nile of Egypt,
- 6 Who buildeth his upper chambers ⁷ in the heaven,
 And his vault, ⁸—over the earth He founded it,
 Who calleth to the waters of the sea,
 And poureth them out upon the face of the earth;
 Jehovah is his Name.
- 7 Are ye not as the sons of the Cushites unto me,
 Ye sons of Israel? saith Jehovah.
 Have not I brought up Israel from the land of Egypt,
 And the Philistines from Caphtor,
 And the Syrians from Kir?
- 8 Behold, the eyes of the Lord, Jehovah, are upon the sinful kingdom, ⁹
 And I will destroy it

- From off the face of the earth,
 Saving that¹⁰ I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the **Lord**.
- 9 For behold, I, I will command
 And will shake the house of Israel among all nations,
 As one shaketh in a sieve,
 And not even a little grain¹¹ shall fall to the ground.
- 10 By the sword shall all the sinners of my people die,
 Who say, The evil will not overtake nor reach¹² us.
- 11 In that day will I raise up
 The fallen hut¹³ of David,
 And wall¹⁴ up its breaches,
 And raise up its ruins,¹⁵
 And build it¹⁶ as in the days of old ;
- 12 That they may possess¹⁷ the remnant of **Edom and all the nations**
 Upon whom my name is called,
 Saith Jehovah who doeth this.
- 13 Behold, the days are coming, saith Jehovah,
 When the ploughman reaches to the reaper,
 And the treader of grapes to the sower of seed ;
 And the mountains drop new wine,
 And all the hills melt :
- 14 And I bring back the captives¹⁸ of my people, Israel,
 And they build the waste cities, and inhabit them,
 And plant vineyards and drink their wine,
 And make gardens and eat their fruit.
- 15 And I plant them upon their land,
 And they shall no more be torn up out of their land which I gave to them,
 Saith Jehovah, thy God.

TEXTUAL AND GRAMMATICAL.

[1 Ver. 1. — על, used with נצב = at or by. Cf. Gen. xviii. 2; 1 Sam. iv. 20.]

2 Ver. 1. — כפרור = knob, h. pillar-top or capital, חך = threshold, usually that over which one enters a building, but also = the foundation-beams in which the posts are inserted. So here.

3 Ver. 1. — בַּצַּיִעִים בַּצַּיִעִים (Green, *Heb. Gr.*, 125, 1). The suffix ים has no exact antecedent. It cannot be referred naturally to הַצַּיִעִים, nor in order to admit of such reference should the latter word be altered to mean "projecting roof of the temple supported by pillars." It belongs to בַּצַּיִעִים, and either denotes that the capital on various pillars was struck, or the thought is that one capital was dashed into many pieces. [Keil and Hengstenberg refer it to both the capitals and the thresholds or the entire building, which is greatly preferable.]

4 Ver. 2. — חָתַר with חָ = to break through into.

5 Ver. 3. — נָחָשׁ = water-serpent, not to be more closely defined — elsewhere called לַוְיָהוֹן or תַּנִּין. Is xxvii. 1.

6 Ver. 5. — מִלֵּג, lit. to melt; here denotes the dissolution of the earth. Others [Fürst] = to fall through fear, to quake. The latter half of the verse is repeated with insignificant alterations from chap. viii. ver. 8.

7 Ver. 6. — מַעְלֹת = מַעְלֵיאוֹת, Ps. civ. 3, lit., places to which one has to ascend, upper chambers, lofts

8 Ver. 6. — אֲבַדָּה, vault = רָקִיעַ.

9 Ver. 8. — בַּמַּמְבֹּא, lit., they rest upon the sinful kingdom, in order to destroy it. [Verbs and nouns expressive of anger are connected by בָּ with the object on which the anger rests. Cf. Ps. xxxiv. 17 [Hengst.].

10 Ver. 8. — כִּי introduces a limitation.

11 Ver. 9. — צָרוּר, lit., a thing tightly bound together; hence anything solid, as a pebble or little stone (2 Sam. xvii. 13); here, a kernel or grain of corn, as opposed to the loose, dusty chaff.

12 Ver. 10. — בַּעֲדָם, lit., to come between = so as to block up the way of escape. [Usage requires us to render, "to come to meet one round about," i. e., from every side.]

13 Ver. 11. — סִבַּת, lit., a booth, here a hut.

14 Ver. 11. — צָדְדֵיהֶן, the "close" of E. V., is better replaced by "wall" from the margin. The plural suffix in צָדְדֵיהֶן probably refers to "walls" understood. [Keil and Hengstenberg say that it indicates that both kingdoms are intended

15 Ver. 11. — The suffix in חֲרָסָם refers to Israel understood [but others refer it to David].

16 Ver. 11. — The suffix in בְּנֵי all agree, refers to the fallen hut.

17 Ver. 12. — וְיִשְׂרָאֵל , take possession of, in reference to Num. xxiv. 18.

18 Ver. 14. — וְשָׂרָה שְׂבֵרָה . Keil vainly contends against explaining this formula as meaning "to restore the cap-
tree," and insists that it = to turn a state of misery into one of prosperity. [Hengstenberg strongly maintains the lat-
ter view, which indeed in such cases as Job xlii. 10 must be admitted.]

EXEGETICAL AND CRITICAL.

A Fifth Vision. In the four previous visions, the Lord showed the prophet only what He was about to do; in this one the prophet sees the Lord actually engaged in executing his judgment.

1. Vers. 1-4, describe an annihilating judgment which none can escape. Ver. 1. The altar here cannot possibly denote the one at Jerusalem, in spite of all that Keil urges to the contrary. In that case the object of the vision would be one essentially different from that which is mentioned in the threatening, namely, all Israel, and would be Judah in particular, and this, without any indication of the change. There is the less reason for assuming such a change, since the chapter does not give any statement of sins as the ground of the judgment the execution of which it records. The reason of the omission is that the necessity for this judgment has been already shown in the setting forth of the sins of the ten tribes. Hence our chapter treats of a judgment upon this kingdom. That judgment has already been threatened and the grounds of it assigned, whereas one of another kind would require the reasons for it to be stated. But there is an entire lack of such reasons; for the prophet, in spite of what he says in chap. ii. ver. 4, does not consider Judah as deserving such a complete destruction of its political existence as this chapter describes. Such a judgment corresponds to the condition of things in Israel, but not at all to that in Judah so far as known to the prophet. And it by no means follows that because an annihilating stroke afterwards fell upon this kingdom, the prophet announced it here. That would be to take a very unhistorical view of prophecy. We should rather say that if he announced such a fate, he would also have described Judah as meriting it. But he does no such thing. Therefore he knows of no such corruption in Judah, regards its measure of iniquity as not yet full, and hence knows nothing of the judgment which was one day to destroy it. But in fact, had Judah's sin become so gross, and had the prophet known of it, still it would not have been noticed in this connection, because Amos is not a prophet for Judah, but only touches that kingdom lightly, for the most part passing it over wholly. And it cannot be assumed that he threatens such a destructive visitation upon Judah equally with Israel, whose desert of punishment he has set forth not only immediately before, but in a continuous series of chapters. A fundamental law of prophecy is to balance, so to speak, the sinfulness and the judgment against each other. But no such statement concerning Judah is found in our chapter. In fine, it is only by violence that the phrase, the sinful kingdom, can be understood to mean "Israel and Judah embraced in one." No, if the kingdom of Israel is so expressly and amply described as sinful and then expressly named "the sinful kingdom," then, according to all the rules of a sound hermenautics, certainly this kingdom of Israel must be intended in the first place, and not at the same time another kingdom the sinfulness of which was not specially noticed.

Smite, according to the simplest view, is addressed to the prophet. For of angels (Keil) there is no mention here. The prophet is not to be merely a spectator, but takes part in the action. That he was not in a situation to do what is here enjoined is no objection, for the whole transaction takes place in vision. A blow which strikes the pillar-capitals so that the foundation-beams shake, is manifestly = a crash that brings the whole building to the ground. We are then to think of a temple. The shaking to the ground is only the first step; the stroke aims farther, namely, to break to pieces. Upon the head of all; the whole people is considered as assembled around the national sanctuary. What is meant, then, is a destruction, and that total. That no one can escape is expressly said afterwards, but with a change from the language of vision to that of reality. Their remnant refers to the all, and shows that it is to be understood in its full force, — should any succeed in escaping the crash of the building, even these God would slay with the sword. The universality of the destruction is also negatively set forth in the remaining clauses of ver. 1, and is still farther expanded with poetical minuteness in the three following verses. Cf. Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8.

Ver. 3. On the top of Carmel. Named partly as a mountain which is of considerable height as compared with the sea over which it rises, and partly as a point on the extreme western boundary of the kingdom. "Whoever hides himself there, must know of no other secure refuge in all the land beside. And if there be no security there, nothing is left but the sea."

Ver. 4. Even going into captivity shall not save them.

2. Vers. 5, 6. To confirm the threatening, God is described as almighty, such illustrations being cited as show his omnipotence in destroying = He who thus speaks is the Lord, who touches the earth, etc. The first two members of ver. 5 stand in close relation to what follows, and are its foundation. Inasmuch as the Lord is enthroned in heaven, he is in a condition to call in the waters of the sea, etc. (and while such devastations are wrought in the earth, He himself is untouched by them). We are not, with Keil, to think here of "a mountain of clouds," or of rain, for the inundation is plainly stated to proceed from the sea, not from rain. Nor is it natural to admit a reference to the physical fact that the waters of the sea ascend on high in vapor in order to come down again as rain. Ver. 6, therefore is not to be regarded as an allusion to the Deluge, but rather as a marine inundation, such as often occurs in consequence of an earthquake; e. g., the tidal wave in Chili in 1868.

3. Vers. 7-10. Are ye not, etc. Degenerate Israel should not rely upon their election; they are to be carried away. Still God in his grace will not destroy them wholly, but only sift them, and even the carrying away is to serve as a means to this end.

Ver. 7. This is the sharpest thing that can be said of Israel, namely, to liken them to the heathen. The "sons" of the Cushites, Ham's posterity, are

as highly esteemed as the "sons" of Israel. And the bringing of Israel out of Egypt avails no more than the bringing of the Syrians and Philistines out of their former dwelling-places. Caphtor, probably, = Crete, from which, according to this statement, at least a portion of the Philistines emigrated. (Others say = Kasluhim.) In chap. i. ver. 5, it was said that the Syrians should be carried away to Kir. According to the present passage, a portion of them must have emigrated from that place.

After thus rejecting Israel's claim for impunity, Amos proceeds in ver. 8 to announce the punishment once more. It is expressly said upon whom it shall fall, namely, the sinful kingdom, which can be none other than the ten tribes, who are thus sufficiently indicated. But in the second member the threatening is mitigated; there still remains grace. The distinction between Israel and the heathen which has just been denied — denied so far as Israel made it a matter of boasting, — is again set up. The preference, however, is a matter not of merit but of grace, and exists only because God will not wholly abandon his own people. House of Jacob is not = kingdom of Judah, denoting that this should be spared; for then it would not be a limitation of the preceding threatening which was aimed at Israel. Literally the phrase is = stock of Israel; but here, according to the prophet's aim, it means simply the ten tribes, just as these have been styled in the previous chapters, "Israel," "House of Israel." The prophet does not acknowledge two nations, but throughout designedly holds in view the *one* people, Israel, of which the kingdom of the ten tribes is only the particularly corrupt portion; *this* house of Jacob, whose punishment is here in question, shall go forth from their own land, but shall not be entirely destroyed. This latter statement does not conflict with the carrying out of what is stated in vers. 1-4. For that only denies that any one can of himself escape the threatened destruction.

How we are to understand ver. 8 is set forth in ver. 9 by a significant figure. By its dispersion Israel comes, as it were, into a sieve, in which the good corn and the dust and dirt are tossed up together. Yet this is only in order to make a more speedy separation. The solid good grains remain, only the trash falls to the ground. So with Israel.

By the sword (ver. 10), shall all the sinners of my people die, — but only these. The sinners are still marked as self-secure, by the addition, *who say, the evil will not overtake, etc.* To the thought expressed in ver. 10 we must assign a more general scope, standing as it does at the close of the book, as including in the wide sweep of the judgment a reference to Judah. For it must be supposed that the prophet sees in the same judgment which destroys Israel the execution of the threatening against Judah in chap. ii. ver. 5, only that Judah is not visited in the same degree, *i. e.*, one which destroys its national existence. The stroke penetrates deeply and destroys the sinners, but at the same time purifies, and thus paves the way immediately for Judah, and so for Israel in general, so far as it still exists, to a new prosperity by which it rises again into a kingdom as powerful and happy as ever before.

4. Vers. 11-15. In that day will I, etc. In the fact that the destruction is not to be absolutely total, the grace of God shines through the furious wrath of the judgment. But the grace is not limited to this negation; it advances to the positive declaration that God will magnify Israel by establishing a new condition of prosperity. This exercise of grace — so the connection of the thought

proves — is not something adventitious but is directly mediated through the action of the judgment. This judgment, just because it is so radical in its extirpation of all sinners among God's people, operates, as before remarked, in a purifying direction, and its limitation contains the condition of a new position, a new salvation, the possibility of a rich bestowment of grace. For with the removal of sinners, every reason for the divine wrath ceases, and room is afforded for such an exhibition of grace as will restore Israel to a new prosperity. Very naturally, therefore, the question is no longer about the restoration of "the kingdom of Israel," in the narrow sense of that term, for this in its separation from Judah represented apostasy from Jehovah, and a constitution exactly opposed to the true idea of a people of God. No, the divine grace shows itself in this, that after the destruction of the ungodly elements, first and chiefly in the ten tribes, but also in Judah, there arises a single but prosperous and powerful kingdom of Israel under the legitimate monarchy, which attracts to itself all the elements spared and refined by the judgment, including those which belonged to the existing ten tribes. The discourse certainly turns in ver. 11 to Judah, yet not as a separate kingdom, but only in so far as it furnishes the divinely appointed basis and point of departure for the restoration of the entire people. More than that Judah cannot be, since it is not only outwardly enfeebled and proportionately suffering, but also, in the prophet's view, contains many sinful elements and must expect the divine chastisement, through which it will become still weaker outwardly, so that its future exaltation is due only to the grace of God, who cannot let his covenant with Israel fall, cannot give up his people. This enfeebled, prostrate condition of Israel — *i. e.*, at first Judah, but also Israel because Judah alone was the true representative of Israel — is expressed in ver. 11 by the fallen hut of David = the Davidic monarchy, and this, in a condition of real prostration. This is set forth by calling it not a palace but a "hut," and this hut a "fallen" one; and the picture is made still more vivid by the mention of breaches and of ruins. Many expositors (among them Keil) think that the phrase, the fallen hut of David, presupposes the actual downfall of the kingdom of Judah, — in connection with the execution of the threatening in the whole chapter against Israel and Judah. But apart from what was said on this view in the comments on vers. 1, the phrase itself contradicts it. For in the downfall, not only a hut, but the house in general was prostrated. The term "hut" has its appropriate meaning only when we think of something not wholly fallen but still existing, for the manner of this existence is then pointed out by the word "hut," and is still further characterized by the epithet "fallen," as also by the following expressions, "breaches," "ruins." The restoration of captives spoken of here, can therefore be no proof of the assumption that the downfall of Judah and the Babylonish exile is presupposed in ver. 11. For while a carrying away is certainly mentioned, it is from the kingdom of Israel, and the return is included in this promise, although in the first instance it refers to Judah; since the thought is that along with the renovation of Judah, as the *one* genuine kingdom of Israel, there is bound up the return of all the Israelites held captive in heathen lands, as a constituent of that future prosperity. But, besides, there were, independent of the exile in Babylon, captives out of the kingdom of Judah, who had been dragged away by the

heathen, as we have already seen in Joel; and the prophet might therefore well suppose that there would be more, before the new period of salvation. It is not to the purpose that in the later prophets the promise of future salvation for Israel, including Judah, presupposes the foreseen destruction of the kingdom of Judah. For it is preposterous from this to infer that all had the same general view, without regard to the differences of time. Surely we cannot without ceremony transfer to the earlier prophets what belongs well enough to the later. — This fallen hut is to be raised up again, and that in such a way that the breaches shall be walled up and the prostrate ruins restored. This then is a *building* of the hut, and the result is that it becomes what it was in ancient times = in the days of David himself. This restoration of the former power and greatness is then expanded in ver. 13, where the term *possession* is an allusion to Balaam's prophecy, "And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession." The acquisition shall be easily made, being Jehovah's gift to his people. The remnant of Edom = what has not already been subjugated again. Edom is particularly mentioned, because while they were related to the Israelites, they were of all nations the most hostile to them. To receive possession of them is therefore a peculiar token of Israel's glory. But Israel is to gain more, even all the nations upon whom my name is called. This phrase manifestly refers in the first instance to the nations who by David were brought under the sway of God's people and therefore were called by Jehovah's name. Still the question recurs why the dependence on Israel was expressed in just this peculiar manner. It was to indicate a peculiar relation of these nations to Jehovah which was the reason of their subjugation. This indeed existed under David, but was not then fully realized. What then lay in intention and was contemplated in their conquest, actually occurs in the new and better time here brought into view. The nations shall so come under Israel's rule that they will bear the name of Israel's God, and be called his people, so that a conversion of the heathen — not of all, for the prophecy does not touch that point — but of heathen nations, is placed in prospect or at least intimated. (Upon the quotation in Acts xv. 16, and also the meaning of the promise in vers. 11, 12, see Doctrinal and Moral.) But to the future prosperity of Israel belongs not only national power and greatness, but also a rich blessing upon the land and thus upon the people (ver. 13), in fulfillment of the promise in Levit. xxvi. 5. What is there said of the action — the threshing shall reach unto the vintage, — is here transferred to the person who performs it. The ploughman reaches to the reaper, *i. e.*, the ploughing will still continue in one place, although the reaping has begun in another, which however does not mean that the crop will grow and mature so quickly, but that so much is there to plough that it lasts to the harvest. This, at all events, is the meaning of the next clause, — The treader of grapes (will reach) to the sower of seed = the vintage will last to the sowing time, so abundant is it. The mountains drop new wine, etc. Cf. Joel iii. 18. There the hills are said to flow with milk, here the expression is stronger, — the hills melt, as it were, dissolve themselves in pure streams of milk, new wine, honey.

Ver. 14. I bring back the captives, etc. This is another essential feature in the picture of Israel's future. For when the period of judgment has once elapsed, and God in his grace brings his people

to a new prosperity, its members cannot longer continue under the power of the heathen, for that would be an evidence that the state of punishment still continued. As to "the captives" thus restored, see above on ver. 11. The phrase, *they build the waste cities, etc.*, clearly depicts the reviving activity of those who have been restored from exile to their desolated land, and the words in ver. 15, *they shall no more be torn up, etc.*, distinctly express the final abolition of an exile. As God's direct judgments, drought, and barrenness, are to cease, so also shall the indirect, namely, desolation by a foe. Therefore they shall not merely build cities but inhabit them; not only plant vineyards, but also drink the wine (the direct reverse of chap. v. ver. 11); not only lay out gardens, but eat their fruit! And (ver. 15) especially shall the restored exiles never again be carried away by enemies. This, in immediate connection with what has just been said of the plantings which Israel is to make, is represented under the figure of a planting which shall never be torn up; at the same time with a reference to the firm "planting" formerly made by means of David, in 2 Sam. vii. 10. The higher fulfillment of this will occur only when David's fallen hut is again raised up.

DOCTRINAL AND MORAL.

1. The prophet paints in a frightful manner the vast power of the divine judgments and man's helplessness before them. God's omnipresence and omnipotence subserve his wrath; hence its energy. Nowhere can man escape Him; by no means can he protect himself; all places are accessible to God; all powers stand subject to his will. The judgment here primarily intended is one that is executed by a conquering foe. Now whence comes the crushing weight of so many conquerors, whom nothing can resist, before whom all means prove impotent? We do not understand how it is possible. Here we have the answer, here where we, as it were, glance behind the scenes. The conqueror is only the instrument of God's wrath; but this is so mighty, so irresistible, that it is no wonder that nothing can withstand the victorious foe, that every resource fails, even though it may have a hundred times in other cases brought relief and defense. If the Lord will not, all is of no avail.

2. But when the judgment is one thus executed by a foreign conqueror, it is not to be denied that the description, as indeed often in the former chapters, so especially here, transcends what usually occurs in case of a hostile invasion and conquest. It has, so to speak, an eschatological coloring. The threatened punishment is a total, final, decisive destruction of sinners. The prophet knows of none that goes beyond it. The only counterpart to it is a glorious act of grace. As surely as the latter is something definite and conclusive, so is the former. If we inquire as to the fulfillment of this threatening, confessedly one such took place for Israel in the overthrow of the kingdom. But a complete and exact fulfillment is not to be found in that event; an unprejudiced comparison shows that the prophecy transcends the experience. This fact does not show that the threatening is unfounded, but that it has an eschatological character. The prophet, indeed, sees the last decisive judgment arise, the day of the Lord (although there is no express reference to that here), but still the judgment which came historically upon the ten tribes was not this last decisive one. What he threatens against Is-

rael was, we venture to say, farther fulfilled in the last judgment upon Israel, when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans; but this still awaits its complete fulfillment in the last judgment at the *Parousia* upon the entire body of the apostate members of God's people, of whom Israel was a type. In this judgment the punitive righteousness of God will be fully revealed in its frightful universality. The threatenings, as well as the promises of prophecy, find their complete fulfillment first in the New Testament, yet not in the literal Israel, but in the people of God represented by Israel in so far as it is apostate. It is not unimportant to make this clear, in order to show the incorrectness of the popular argument, that because all the threatenings have been fulfilled in the literal Israel, therefore the promises must be so likewise; that the latter are to be taken just as strictly as the former, and hence the fulfillment of such of them as have not yet come to pass, is to be expected in Israel after the flesh.

3. But the divine judgment is not a work of absolute annihilation but of sifting, to separate the wheat from the chaff. Herein is revealed the eschatological character of these judgments, in that they are so strictly just; but since the separation of the wheat and the chaff is only relative, the sparing of those who are spared must be deemed an act of grace, and so much the more, since the sparing does not stand alone and simple, but the judgment upon the ungodly is itself a purifying work for "the righteous," and cannot remain without a wholesome influence upon them; while on the other hand it is for them a deliverance, the dawn of a new prosperity which is possible only after the consummated excision of the destructive elements which provoke the wrath of God. What Amos calls "the little grain" in the sieve is substantially that which afterwards appears as the "remnant of Jacob." But still the question with Amos was not about a still surviving remnant of the people in general when he now sees the kingdom of Israel fall, nor was it whether the whole people of God should or could go down or not. Hence the term "remnant" would ill apply to those whom he sees to be spared.

4. Israel's provocation of the divine wrath in general lay in the ungodly course it took at the founding of the kingdom of the ten tribes and ever afterwards persevered in. After the destruction of this kingdom, and after the judgment which is to fall upon Judah, although this kingdom is not to be destroyed, there no longer remains any hindrance to the blooming of a new prosperity for Israel as a whole. Therefore the prophet, since it was his commission to announce the judgment of God upon all the ungodly, but especially upon the ungodly kingdom of the ten tribes, concludes, after this commission has been fulfilled, with a promise for Israel as the people of God. Under the only legitimate monarchy, the house of David, it is by God's blessing raised out of its humiliation; its power and greatness are restored as they were in David's time; the kingdom spreads out over the heathen; the land rejoices in the richest blessings; all captive exiles return, — never again to be carried away; and the kingdom has the prospect of being established forever. It is very perverse to ask if an internal renovation is not also expressed in this exaltation. What is said in ver. 11, etc., concerning deliverance and restoration, refers only to the outward prosperity of Israel, not to its internal character; but certainly an inward renewing is unexpressed, for the destruction of all sinners is,

as ver. 10 shows, the only way to the promised outward restitution, its *conditio sine qua non*. Subjectively it is its ground and root, while objectively all results from the grace of God, who has intended prosperity and salvation for Israel as his people, and who therefore in all his judgments upon Israel aims at least at a new and so much the higher blessing, and the establishment of a complete state of prosperity. The flourishing Israel therefore is naturally to be considered as a people serving God and converted to Him, even though nothing has been expressly said on the point. Or they are considered as his members, consisting partly of those who remained faithful, partly of such as have been converted. The emphasis with which an annihilating judgment is beforehand pronounced upon ungodliness, leaves room for no other view. Such a divine blessing as is here promised, and especially its permanence, presupposes a godly life. Although Amos says nothing of a personal Messiah, yet in the wide sense we must call this prophecy Messianic, in substance if not in form, in so far as the Messiah of the later prophets is He who introduces the consummation of the people of God, and the great time of its happiness, and it is just this final completeness and glory which is here promised.

5. As to the fulfillment of the prophecy, it must be said, just as in the case of Joel, that this has not taken place exactly according to the letter, for that represents the new greatness and never-ending prosperity of the kingdom of Judah and Israel as coincident with the judgment upon the ten tribes. But although this latter event was followed by happier times for Judah, still this was not what is promised here, but in place of a flourishing exaltation of the Davidic line there followed its complete prostration along with the overthrow of the kingdom. But this, as we said above, the prophet does not take into the account. For this reason, the fair prospect of Israel's future glory has maintained and still maintains its truth and validity, as it is not a product of human wish and hope, but flows from a revelation of the Holy Spirit and rests upon a view furnished by that Spirit. Nor do we deceive ourselves when we assume that the later prophets, who also foresaw and announced the downfall of Judah, found a basis for their promises in the promise of Joel and also in that of Amos which is so closely connected with it. For if such a noble future was predicted, the downfall of the kingdom could not be final, rather, not only would a remnant be saved, but there would be a lifting up out of this deep fall, a restitution after the overthrow. Israel, as the people of God by virtue of God's covenant with them, may and indeed must suffer his judgments in case of apostasy, but so far from perishing by these, rather attains a condition of greatness and power, an enduring prosperity; this is the truth forever established and fortified by our promise. A certain fulfillment was no doubt experienced in the restoration accomplished by the Jews who returned from exile. But this was by no means "the Messianic salvation," the consummation of God's kingdom in Israel. Nor can a literal fulfillment of Amos's prophecy be sought herein, because our prophet does not take into account the facts which gave occasion for that return, namely, the overthrow of the kingdom and the exile. The Messiah came in the person of Jesus Christ. Did then the promised great salvation come? Did He fulfill our promise? Not according to the letter, since by no means did a time of new grandeur break in upon Israel after the flesh; but in place of expecting any such thing in the future and seek-

ing there the fulfillment of the promise, we rather affirm that it has already begun with Christ's coming. For as, according to a principle before laid down, we have the true complement of the Old Testament in the New, so we see in Christ's salvation the fulfillment of the promise of a time of glory for Israel, since Israel (with Canaan) was only a type of the true people of God. What therefore was promised to Israel passes over by virtue of the new covenant to all who belong to Israel through faith in Christ and form the people of God. And we are not at all to expect a literal fulfillment of these engagements to a national Israel, and in the shape of temporal blessings on the stand-point of the Old Testament. For, if we did, it would follow that there must be a literal possession of the "remnant of Edom." But the boldest realist will hardly conclude that in the future Edom will again exist alongside of Israel. We may here appropriate in substance the observations of Keil, who says that "the raising up of David's fallen hut commenced with the coming of Christ and the founding of the Christian Church by the Apostles — (as to which we refer, *e. g.*, only to Luke i. 32, 33, where Jesus is represented as the restorer of David's throne, and one whose kingdom shall have no end), — and the possession of Edom and of all the other nations upon whom the Lord reveals his name, took its rise in the reception of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven set up by Christ. . . The land which will flow with streams of divine blessing is not Palestine, but the domain of the Christian Church, or the earth, so far as it has received the blessings of Christianity. The people which cultivate this land is the Christian Church, so far as it stands in living faith and produces the fruits of the Holy Spirit." And — we may add — so far as the Jews are converted to Christ and incorporated into the Christian community, there is "a bringing back of the captives." Still this "bringing back" is not limited to Israel after the flesh. Its fulfillment is to be sought more generally in the freedom which Christ has brought, in consequence of which believers in Him are no longer prisoners under the control of an alien power. They possess "the glorious liberty of the children of God," through their enjoyment of communion with God, — incomplete, indeed, in the first instance, just as the return from exile is not complete. But it will be through Christ. He will one day conduct all the (genuine) members of God's people out of exile and bondage into the heavenly Canaan, and no one shall ever again drive them out. But certainly this promise for the people of God first began to be fulfilled at the appearing of the Messiah and in the domain of the Christian Church. Its complete fulfillment is to be expected at the *parousia* of Christ; and then the spiritual blessing, the spiritual power and greatness, the spiritual freedom which the people of God now enjoy, will obtain a corresponding outward sensible manifestation. Inward prosperity will not lack that which is outward, yet in a higher sense than the Old Covenant understood it, since the distinction between the outward and the inward will in the main be done away. The hope of this final glory of the people of God has a right to nourish itself constantly from the prophecies which give such bright pictures of the future glory of Israel. So far these prophecies preserve constantly their significance for the religious life. By their confident and assured tone they greatly oppose and undermine the doubts awakened by the day of small things in which we live.

6. The opinion that our promise is fulfilled in Christ is confirmed in the New Testament (Acts xii. 15) by the Apostle James. He sees a fulfillment of the words of Amos (ver. 12) concerning the relation of the nations = the heathen, to the restored Israel, in Peter's statement of the effects of faith in Christ among the heathen, since these without being circumcised had received the Holy Spirit. He thus probably understands the phrase, "upon whom my name is called," in a pregnant sense = upon whom God has testified Himself as God, therefore as a promise of an inward relation of God to the heathen, but at bottom a promise of the bestowment of the Holy Ghost upon them. Therefore he regards the advices of Peter as a fulfillment of the prophetic utterance. This explanation does not conform to the original sense of the prophet's words (see above in Critical and Exegetical), just as the words immediately preceding are given by James in a form quite different from the Hebrew. For us the only important point is that James considers the fulfillment of this promise as beginning with Christ. But we may draw a farther conclusion. If James sees this statement of Amos concerning the heathen and their relation to Israel fulfilled in the appearance of Christ, in so far as that caused the reception of the Spirit by believers in Him, then certainly he regards the promise of the restoration of David's fallen hut as fulfilled in Christ. Although the promise, literally understood, treats of an outward restoration, a return of outward greatness to Israel as a kingdom, yet the tenor of the discourse is wholly different; James therefore, since he saw its fulfillment then occurring, could not possibly have cherished any dreams of an outward glorification of the kingdom of Israel to be expected in the future on the ground of the prophetic utterances. The only correct view is, that to him the people of God appeared in the closest union with the national Israel, and he saw Christ and his salvation as obtained in the first instance for the latter. The national Israel to him always stood in the foreground. But he saw the promises to the nation fulfilled in the spiritual blessings which proceeded from Christ. But it was inconsistent to take the prophet's promises literally in respect to "Israel," *i. e.*, to claim them for the national Israel, and yet not to take them literally in respect to their meaning, not to understand them as holding out an earthly greatness, a national blessing; and hence both Peter and Paul went far beyond this view. But it is remarkable that James, who was so pronounced a representative of the Judaistic tendency, should regard such a promise as we have in Amos, as fulfilled, so far as regards its meaning, in the appearance of Christ and the spiritual blessings thence resulting, without even once referring it to the second coming of the Saviour. Even he therefore is a patron of the so-called spiritual interpretation of the prophecies; and if the theological explanation here finds itself in agreement with a disciple of the Lord, and him a man of strong Jewish-Christian feeling, that is a proof that it is on the right track, and has so much the more reason for disowning the doctrine of a future glorification of the national Israel as guaranteed by the prophets.

7. In relation to the promises of prophecy, we may make the same remark as before in relation to prophetic threatenings in chap. vii., sec. 6, of Doctrinal and Moral. As the prophet is not the mere instrument of revelation without will of his own, we must, while fully acknowledging the objective ground of these promises, at the same time

regard them as evidences of the prophet's own strength of faith. While he at first on account of the prevailing sinfulness sees only punishment and downfall, a speedy outbreak of divine wrath, yet at the same time he holds firm as a rock the hope that the grace of God will return and a new salvation begin for the people of God. The divine promises made to Israel as the people of God are an anchor of his faith and a light to illumine the gloomy future before him, so that the final aim of the procedure remains to him immovably noble. If it is the old promises upon which his faith rests, these are reanimated and freshly confirmed by the new revelations he receives. But this occurs only when they are firmly believed, and therefore the utterance of them is an evidence of strength of faith.

HOMILETICAL AND PRACTICAL.

Ver. 1. *Smite the top*, etc. The judgments of God when they begin are like mighty blows, which make everything tremble, if they do not altogether dash to pieces. Apostasy from God (idolatry) is that which decides the case, and at last makes the divine judgments break forth.

Vers. 2, 3. That which is our greatest confidence when God is on our side, namely, that He is everywhere present, is our terror when He is against us. [The prophet has not employed a superfluous heap of words. Every syllable is important, even though at first it may seem otherwise. The Holy Spirit designs to shake off our self-flatteries and rouse our innate torpor, that we may not think of God as of ourselves, but know that his power extends to all hiding-places. — Calvin.]

Ver. 4. *And I set mine eye*, etc. The eye of God upon us is our whole hope and stay and life. It is on the confessor in prison, the martyr on the rack, the poor in their sufferings, the mourner in the chamber of death, for good. What if that eye, the source of all good, rests on his creature only for evil? — Pusey.]

Vers. 5, 6. God's omniscience and omnipresence gain their whole significance from his omnipotence. But He is as certainly almighty as He is allwise and everywhere present. He commands the earth when and as He will, and it must obey Him. If He only touch it, it trembles. But no wonder that the earth obeys Him, for it is He who rules also the heaven. [This is the hope of His servants, the hopelessness of his enemies. — Pusey.]

Ver. 7. *Are ye not as the sons of the Cushites*, etc. Woe to him who considers what God through grace has made of him, as his own merit, and therefore boasts! God will be ashamed of him, and humble him under those over whom he exalts himself.

Ver. 8. *The eyes of the Lord*, etc. Nothing escapes the eyes of God; even though the contrary may often seem to be the case, yet in the end it is proven that He has seen all, and in his own time administers chastisement. Whole kingdoms as well as individuals are objects of God's attention for joy or for sorrow. Why does many a kingdom meet a frightful end? The eyes of the Lord were upon it and upon its sins, and though men were not conscious of it, finally the fact became manifest.

Vers. 8, 9. *I will not utterly destroy*, etc. That we do not utterly perish is due only to the goodness of God, which has no end. Who has reason to fear the divine judgments? Not those who are

like wheat, but those who resemble chaff. Hence the grave question to each one; whom do you resemble? Although it often seems as if even the wheat fell to the ground, yet in the end it is shown to be otherwise. Much seems to be wheat, and is not. In the sifting power of God's judgments lies their chief significance.

Ver. 10. *Who say, The evil shall not*, etc. [In both destructions of Jerusalem, the people perished the more miserably being buoyed up by the false confidence that they should not perish. So too now, none are so likely to perish forever as they who say, The evil shall not overtake us. "I will repent hereafter." "There is time enough yet." "God will forgive the errors of youth, the heat of passion." "God is merciful." Thus Satan deludes thousands upon thousands to their destruction. — Pusey.]

Ver. 11. As the prophet here declares that a redeemer would come and renew the whole state of the kingdom, we see that the faith of the fathers was ever fixed on Christ; for in the whole world it is He alone who has reconciled us to God. Nor could the fallen Church have been restored otherwise than under one head. If then at this day we desire to raise up our minds to God, Christ must immediately become a mediator between us; for when He is taken away, despair will overwhelm us. Our confidence will come to nothing unless it be founded on Christ alone. — Calvin. *The fallen hut*. Strange comment on human greatness, that the royal line was not to be employed in the salvation of the world until it was fallen! The royal palace had to become the hut of Nazareth, ere the Redeemer of the world could be born, whose glory and kingdom were not of this world, who came to take from us nothing but our nature that He might sanctify it, our misery that He might bear it for us. Yet flesh and blood could not foresee it ere it came, as flesh and blood could not believe it when He came. — Pusey.]

Ver. 12. *That they may possess*, etc. No gifts of God end in the immediate object of his bounty and love. Israel was restored in order that they, the first objects of God's mercies, might win others to God, not Edom only, but all nations upon whom his name is called. — Pusey.]

Ver. 13. The mountains and hills of Judæa, with their terraced sides clad with the vine, were a natural symbol of fruitfulness to the Jews; but they themselves could not think that natural fruitfulness was meant under this imagery. It would have been a hyperbole as to things of nature, but what in natural things is a hyperbole, is but a faint shadow of the joys and delights and glad fruitfulness of grace. — Id.]

Ver. 14. *And they build cities*, etc. This needs no exposition, since throughout the world, amid the desert of Heathendom, which was before deserted by God, churches of Christ have arisen which for firmness of faith may be called *cities*, and for gladness of hope, *vineyards*, and for sweetness of charity, *gardens*; wherein they dwell who have builded them through the Word, whence they drink the wine of gladness who formed them by precepts, whence they eat fruits who advanced them by counsels. — Rupertus.]

Ver. 15. It is a promise of perpetuity like that of our Lord, Lo, I am with you alway, etc. As Jerome says, the Church may be shaken by persecutions, she cannot be uprooted; she may be tempted, she cannot be overcome. For the Lord God Almighty hath promised that He will do it, whose promise is the law to nature. — Pusey.]

Often in our time the Church of Christ seems like David's fallen hut, but only when we look at its outward condition and the many who shun it; so far as regards the power which goes out from Christ and the blessing which He procures, it is not a fallen but a restored hut. For his blessings are not small. Happy are all who believe in Him.

But a day is coming when the Church shall triumph in the face of the world, and stand forth great and noble outwardly as well as inwardly.

"Amen, Lord, all thy Word is true!
Amen, Lord, come, complete it all!"

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