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WESTMINSTER COMMENTARIES

EDITED BY WALTER LOCK D.D.

IRELAND PROFESSOR OF THE EXEGESIS  
OF HOLY SCRIPTURE

# THE BOOK OF AMOS

# THE BOOK OF AMOS

WITH NOTES

BY

ERNEST ARTHUR EDGHILL, B.D.

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

G. A. COOKE, D.D.

SECOND EDITION



METHUEN & CO. LTD.  
36 ESSEX STREET W.C.  
LONDON

*First Published* . . . *May 14th 1914*  
*Second Edition* . . . *1926*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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## PREFATORY NOTE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR.

**T**HE primary object of these Commentaries is to be exegetical, to interpret the meaning of each book of the Bible in the light of modern knowledge to English readers. The Editors will not deal, except subordinately, with questions of textual criticism or philology; but taking the English text in the Revised Version as their basis, they will aim at combining a hearty acceptance of critical principles with loyalty to the Catholic Faith.

The series will be less elementary than the Cambridge Bible for Schools, less critical than the International Critical Commentary, less didactic than the Expositor's Bible; and it is hoped that it may be of use both to theological students and to the clergy, as well as to the growing number of educated laymen and laywomen who wish to read the Bible intelligently and reverently.

Each commentary will therefore have

(i) An Introduction, stating the bearing of modern criticism and research upon the historical character of the book, and drawing out the contribution which the book, as a whole, makes to the body of religious truth.

(ii) A careful paraphrase of the text with notes on the more difficult passages and, if need be, excursuses on any points of special importance either for doctrine, or ecclesiastical organization, or spiritual life.

But the books of the Bible are so varied in character that considerable latitude is needed, as to the proportion which the

various parts should hold to each other. The General Editor will therefore only endeavour to secure a general uniformity in scope and character : but the exact method adopted in each case and the final responsibility for the statements made will rest with the individual contributors.

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The sad and, to human eyes, the premature death on Aug. 20, 1912, of the writer of this Commentary raised a difficult problem about the present volume. It had been left unfinished : ought it to be published? Mr Edghill had been at work on it for some years : he had shown in his earlier volume *The Evidential Value of Prophecy* wide knowledge of and keen enthusiasm for the Hebrew prophets : the prophet Amos had especially appealed to him with his fervent belief in social righteousness ; and as a matter of fact he had completed all the notes and his own re-translation of the book : but no Introduction could be found among his papers, although he is known to have been at work on one. Under these circumstances the MSS were submitted to Dr Driver, the Regius Professor of Hebrew, and to Dr G. A. Cooke, Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture, and with their approval it has been decided to publish the work. But Dr Cooke has done much more than give advice : he has revised the notes, written an Introduction, and seen the whole through the press. The reader's debt to him is second only to that which he owes to Mr Edghill.

WALTER LOCK

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## INTRODUCTION

i. *The historical setting of the prophet's message.* The opening words of the Book date the ministry of Amos by the reigns of Uzziah king of Judah and Jeroboam king of Israel, and place the beginning of it "two years before the earthquake." No doubt the post-exilic editor who composed the heading meant to speak with precision, but we have no means of fixing the exact dates to which he refers. The chronology of the two kings is embarrassed by inconsistencies (contrast 2 K. xiv. 2, 23 with xv. 1, 8); while as to the earthquake the historical books are silent, though there may be an allusion to it in iv. 11, and Zech. xiv. 5 shews how long it lived in popular memory. The period, however, which the heading indicates is sufficiently clear, and agrees with the evidence furnished by the Book itself. Jeroboam II. is mentioned by name in vii. 10, 11; we may gather from vi. 14 that his conquests have been won; the earlier part of his reign is over, and Israel has settled down to the enjoyment of its prosperity. If we take c. 786 B.C. as the beginning of the reign of Jeroboam II., then the first year in which he and Uzziah were contemporaneous will be c. 760, according to 2 K. xv. 1; but if we alter the text of the latter verse, reading *fifteenth* for *twenty and seventh*, to be consistent with 2 K. xiv. 2, 23, then c. 772 will be the earliest date at which the ministry of Amos can be placed (Amos i. 1 *in the days of Uzziah...and in the days of Jeroboam*). It will depend, therefore, upon the chronology we adopt, whether we date the prophet's activity between c. 760 and 750, or between c. 772 and 762.

After many years of humiliation at the hands of the Syrians Israel began to recover itself, first under Jehoash (2 Kings xiii. 14—19, 20 f.), and still more under Jeroboam II., whose long and brilliant reign raised the fortunes of the Northern Kingdom to a height unknown before. Damascus and the neighbouring states had been crippled by repeated attacks of the Assyrians under Shalmaneser III. (782—772 B.C.) and Asshurdan III. (772—754 B.C.); and there can be little doubt that it was the weakness of Syria which gave Jeroboam an opportunity

to push his conquests in the north, and recover the boundaries of the kingdom once ruled by Solomon (1 K. viii. 65). These successes inaugurated a spell of peace; wealth flowed into the country from the tribute of conquered states; and the tide of misfortune seemed to have turned at last. The Book of Kings gives only a brief and colourless record of the age of Jeroboam (2 K. xiv. 23—29), but Amos and Hosea supplement it with ample details. Secure and at ease, confident in its prowess (Am. vi. 13), Israel abandoned itself to the unwonted experience of good fortune. No signs of danger threatened from the distant north, for at the moment the Assyrian was occupied elsewhere. On the surface Israel had never appeared more prosperous; but the prophet enables us to look below the surface. The newly-gotten wealth went mainly to enrich the upper classes, and gave them the means to indulge in unheard-of luxuries and careless living (ii. 6—8, iii. 9—11, 12, 15, iv. 1, v. 11, vi. 1, 4—7, viii. 4, 10). As so often happens in Eastern society, the splendour of the few was wrung from the misery of the many; oppression of the poor, bribery, perversion of justice, dishonesty in trade, formed the dark background of this prosperous epoch (ii. 6, v. 10, 12, vi. 12, viii. 5, 6). At the same time, so far as outward observance went, religion lacked nothing in devotion; the sanctuaries were thronged with worshippers, the altars smoked with lavish sacrifices, the feast-days drew their crowds (iv. 4, 5, v. 21—23, viii. 14). Perhaps we may detect in this religious enthusiasm an uneasy sense that Jahveh's favour was not so certain as the people wished to believe. Warnings indeed had been given in visitations of earthquake, famine, locusts, pestilence (i. 1, iv. 6—11); but human nature is always ready to turn with easy forgetfulness to the brighter side of things. The temper of the nation rose to a high pitch of self-satisfaction; they consoled themselves with the reflexion "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" (iii. 2); they looked forward to the near approach of "the day of the LORD," of Jahveh's triumph and Israel's assured preeminence.

Into the midst of this heedless, confident society Amos hurls his message. It is one of unqualified denunciation. With burning words he exposes the immorality and injustice which no glitter of prosperity can hide, and the shallow motives of a worship which knows nothing of the essence of religion. Over against the corruptions of the age he proclaims the righteousness of Jahveh and the divine claim of morality upon the individual and the state. Written prophecy in Israel thus opens with the assertion of two principles which must have been

cherished continuously by the higher type of minds, however little they were realized by the mass of the people<sup>1</sup>: that the religion of Jahveh, as distinct from all other religions, involves a moral claim, and that it is especially in ethical character, as a God of righteousness, that Jahveh knows neither rival nor superior.

But this is not the whole of the message. In consequence of its crimes and irreligion Israel is doomed to punishment, and must expect nothing but overthrow, in fact, annihilation. We can imagine the shock which such an announcement caused at a time when the nation appeared to have reached the zenith of its fortunes. "Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus" (v. 27, vi. 14, vii. 17). Amos does not name the power which was to carry out the divine decree, but his hearers understood the allusion well enough. It was not long before the prophecy received fulfilment. In the next generation Samaria was captured by Sargon king of Assyria (722 B.C.); the country was depopulated, and the kingdom of Israel came to an end. Again we notice a characteristic feature of written prophecy: the proclamation of national disaster as a punishment of national sin.

How the message of Amos was received is told in a few verses of biography, vii. 10—17. His conception of religion lay quite beyond the range of established views; his prophecy of imminent ruin could only be regarded as treason against the state. With contempt he was chased away from Bethel by the indignant priest who had charge of the sanctuary.

It may cause some surprise that Amos, a native of Judah, should have prophesied, not in his own country but in Israel, not at Jerusalem but at Bethel. The reason is that the true centre of the national life lay in the Northern Kingdom (cf. Is. ix. 8 f.). The historical books, indeed, give the impression that the reverse was the case; but they have been edited from the point of view of a later age when Israel had disappeared, and Judah alone maintained the central sanctuary and a Davidic king. In the prophetic books, however, we have a series of writings contemporary with the two Kingdoms for a considerable time, and they give us a truer insight into the situation.

ii. *Amos as prophet.* Though he was the first of the literary prophets, Amos was not the first to exercise the prophetic gift; he alludes to the prophets that were before him as men raised up and inspired by God for the religious training of the people (ii. 11 f., iii. 7). Among the great predecessors of Amos were such men as Samuel,

<sup>1</sup> See Hamilton, *The People of God* (1912), i. pp. 127, 134.

Nathan, Ahijah of Shiloh, Elijah, Elisha, Micaiah son of Imlah, champions of the higher principles of Jahveh's religion. And along with these, though not as a rule in any close connexion with them, we hear of "the prophets<sup>1</sup>" or "the sons of the prophets<sup>2</sup>," i.e. members of prophetic guilds, who represented a lower type of prophecy: they practised divination for a small fee (1 Sam. ix. 5—10, x. 16); their utterances were delivered in frenzied exercises. On the one hand, prophets of this type, so far from being peculiar to Israel, had much in common with the prophets of the heathen (1 K. xviii.); on the other hand, at their best, they probably did much to stir up enthusiasm for the cause of Jahveh, and formed part of the religious ministry of Israel. They belonged to a professional class, recognized and sanctioned by popular opinion, and they survived at any rate down to the Captivity<sup>3</sup>. With this professional class Amos disclaims all connexion; "I am no prophet, nor prophet's son" (vii. 14); though in externals he resembled them, for the priest of Bethel took him to be only one more of those "seers," who earned a living by their art (vii. 12). What distinguished Amos from them, as he himself asserted, was a direct call: "Jahveh took me from following the flock, and Jahveh said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (vii. 15). And he emphasizes his call in order to defend and authenticate his message. It was no delirious oracle uttered in frenzy, nothing which owed its origin to the diviner's art, but the outcome of a profound religious experience.

Amos is the earliest of the literary prophets; and we may believe that it was his consciousness of a direct inspiration which induced him to commit his words to writing—they were Jahveh's words—or to allow them to be written. Prophecy of this kind was meant to endure; it must be made to reach a wider circle than the spoken word. It was just the kind of message which the people would like to forget; the prophet took care that they should not forget it. The written word would remain as a witness against a corrupt and heedless generation.

Moreover, with Amos we mark an extension in the range of prophecy. It deals with the crisis of the moment, as prophecy always does, but on broader and more permanent principles than before, namely, the righteousness of Jahveh and His unique Godhead. These principles

<sup>1</sup> 1 Sam. x. 5, 10—13, xix. 20—24.

<sup>2</sup> 1 K. xx. 35; 2 K. ii. 3, 5, 7, 15; iv. 1, 38, v. 22, vi. 1, ix. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Deut. xiii. 1—5, xviii. 20—22; Jer. v. 31, vi. 13, xiv. 14, 18, xxiii. 9—40 etc.; Ezek. vii. 26, xiii. 1—16.

may have been implied by the actions and brief oracles of the earlier prophets (e.g. 1 Sam. xv. 22 ; 1 K. xi. 31, xxi. 19, xxii. 17—23, 28), but it is the canonical prophets who develop them in new directions. At the same time the horizon begins to widen out. Not that the earlier prophets confined their interests to Israel, for Elijah and Elisha, at any rate, followed closely the movements of the Syrian kingdom, which in their day was the standing menace ; but now a much more formidable power loomed in the distance, and, as the keen-eyed prophets in Israel saw, it was bound to have a disastrous effect upon their country. As yet Amos could not give any details, he could only state the certainty that Israel, with the other small states of Palestine, would be submerged in the current when Assyria began to pour its armies into the south. Time was needed to bring about the fulfilment of the prophet's words ; men must be able to read them, and take warning, and be prepared for the worst. It can hardly be accidental that the beginning of written prophecy dates from the emergence of Assyria upon the Israelite horizon.

Yet Amos does not write like a beginner. The instrument which he wields with such effect must have been fashioned by his predecessors ; only in this way can we account for the finished technique of his style. The prophetic idiom appears with him in full maturity : the balanced rhythm and elevation of language (e.g. iv. 4, v. 21—24, viii. 9, 10), the imaginative use of figures (e.g. ii. 13, iii. 3—8, 12, iv. 11, v. 19, vi. 12, viii. 8, ix. 2, 3), the telling repetitions (e.g. i. 3 ff., ii. 1 ff., iv. 6, 8, 9—11), the occasional lyric outburst (e.g. iii. 3—7, v. 2), the play upon words (v. 5, viii. 2). Again, the phrases *'tis the oracle of Jahveh* (נאם יהוה), *thus saith Jahveh* (כה אמר יהוה), *hear ye this word* (in other prophets, *hear ye the word or words of Jahveh*), *I saw, Jahveh caused me to see, behold the days are coming, and it shall come to pass*, belong to the vocabulary of prophecy which Amos found current and established by long usage. To his predecessors, then, he owed the manner of his utterances ; but the message was all his own. How did he acquire it ? What was the nature of his inspiration ?

Of course a natural aptitude for the prophetic calling must be presupposed. A recent writer has said that "Amos exhibits the traits of a strongly marked psychic temperament<sup>1</sup>," and there is a heat and a nervous tension in his language which justifies the inference. In addition to the gifts of nature, his habits of life probably contributed to prepare him for the work of a prophet. He was one of the sheep-

<sup>1</sup> Joyce, *Inspiration of Prophecy*, p. 82.

breeders of Tekoa and a dresser of sycamore trees (see on vii. 14), a humble and solitary occupation, but it gave him opportunities for silent communing with God while he watched his sheep in the wilderness of Judah, where Tekoa stands, or dressed the sycomores in the sheltered valleys which descend from the Judaean highlands to the Dead Sea. At a later day John the Baptist underwent a similar preparation in much the same region.

Thus both by temperament and by habit Amos was predisposed for the spiritual crisis which started him on his career as a prophet. The overwhelming experience found him engaged in his ordinary pursuit: "Jahveh took me from following the flock, and Jahveh said to me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel" (vii. 15). Nothing is told about the message which he was to deliver (contrast Is. vi. 9 ff.; Jer. i. 9—19; Ezek. i. 1—iii. 11); but we may infer from his written words that he felt driven by a divine impulse to announce the truth which had been borne in upon him, that Jahveh was the true and only God, different from the gods of other nations as being essentially a God of righteousness, who demanded righteousness of His people. The lofty creed of ethical monotheism determines everything that Amos taught. He did not arrive at it by discovery, nor by study, nor by any process of reasoning; he became convinced of it at his call; "the Lord Jahveh will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets" (iii. 7).

And not only in the spiritual crisis which constituted his call did he receive a divine revelation. He tells us of five visions (vii. 1—3, 4—6, 7—9, viii. 1—3, ix. 1—4); these, though they occur in the last three chapters of the Book, probably ought to come at the beginning, like the visions in Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. Now the vision, as a method of conveying the divine will, was common both to the canonical prophets and to the diviners or seers whose inspiration moved on a different level; but it is to be noticed that after Amos the vision seems to have become less frequent. Isaiah and Jeremiah describe their inaugural visions, but they lay no stress on this feature of their experience (see however Is. xxi. 2 ff.); the other pre-exilic prophets hardly mention the subject (Hab. ii. 1 f. is an exception); not until Ezekiel and Zechariah in the exilic and post-exilic age does the vision become prominent in prophetic writings; and in the case of Zechariah the "visions" appear to be merely a literary device. Thus, as Giesebrecht points out<sup>1</sup>, of the pre-exilic prophets only Amos, who

<sup>1</sup> *Die Berufsbegabung der A.T. Propheten* (1897), p. 39.

stood nearest in point of time to the older type of ecstatic prophecy, records a series of visions.

What are we to understand by the prophetic visions? No doubt the prophets saw what their capacity and training and faith enabled them to see. In a psychic experience of this kind we cannot draw the line sharply between the subjective and the objective, the natural and the supernatural, for both elements meet in combination. There is a real sense in which the visions were the products of the prophetic mind. To quote the weighty remarks of A. B. Davidson, "the mind did not see what was projected before it; it projected the visions by its own operation"; "at the same time, the prophets regard their dreams and visions as something objective, in the sense that they were inspired by God (Am. vii. 1 ff.)<sup>1</sup>." The seer during the vision is engaged in rapt communion with God; so far from his mental faculties being suspended or reduced to passivity, they are intensified to the utmost<sup>2</sup>. Thus Amos, while he gazes, can intercede earnestly on behalf of his people (vii. 2, 5); and Isaiah, in the most impressive of all the prophetic visions, feels it impossible to remain a mere spectator; his natural ardour is quickened into an eager response; he is overwhelmed by a sense of sin and unfitness for his task (Is. vi. 5 ff.). Some hold that the vision was seen in a trance. If a state of trance is consistent with that intensification of the faculties just noticed, the word may be allowed; certainty on such a subject lies beyond our reach. At any rate, the vision is a spiritual experience which at all times has been "to saints accorded in their mortal hour"; it is still vouchsafed to the pure heart and watchful eye. What is peculiar to the prophets is not the way in which the divine communication was made, but the contents of their message, the truth which they were thus enabled to apprehend and declare to their times<sup>3</sup>.

More frequently, however, the revelation came to the prophet through what he heard than through what he saw. He prefaces his utterance with a formula which asserts the divine authority with which he spoke. In the Book of Amos the expressions *thus saith Jahveh* [or *the Lord Jahveh*], *saith Jahveh* [or *the Lord Jahveh*], and *'tis the oracle of Jahveh* [or *of the Lord Jahveh*] occur with unusual frequency, the former 23, the latter 21 times. These asseverations are used more sparingly by the other prophets of the 8th century; but

<sup>1</sup> *O.T. Prophecy*, p. 161, and Hastings, *D.B.*, iv. p. 115.

<sup>2</sup> Contrast Plato, *Timæus* 71, "God has given the art of divination not to the wisdom, but to the foolishness of man."

<sup>3</sup> Joyce, *op. cit.* pp. 79, 97; Emmet, *Exp. T.* xxiv. (1913), p. 348.

from Jeremiah onwards they become frequent again, as though the later prophets found it necessary to emphasize the divine authority of their words; it was the circumstances of the time, rather than any peculiarity of mystical experience, which called for the reiteration of *thus saith Jahveh*.

What is implied by the formula? Obviously it affirms that the prophet's message came from God and was God's own utterance; its origin lay not in himself but in God; it was put into his lips by supernatural agency. Thus a spiritual experience is presupposed by the use of such language: in a trance or ecstasy the prophet heard Jahveh speaking to him, and what he heard he repeated to the people. As in the case of the vision, there is nothing unique in an experience of this kind; again and again it has happened to the saints that, at moments of high communion with God, spiritual voices have reached the ear. But we must carry our enquiry a stage further. Divine in authority and origin as the prophetic oracle claims to be, yet not merely the language in which it is clothed, but the contents of the message itself have passed through the medium of the prophet's own individuality. The words of Amos, though prefaced with *thus saith the Lord*, bear the stamp of his style, which is different from that of Hosea or Isaiah. Similarly his teaching reveals his own austere characteristics; the particular aspect of the truth which he emphasizes is determined by the prophet's training and disposition. Uplifted in ecstasy, certain convictions as to the unseen realities laid hold of him—the awful claims of the divine righteousness, national punishment for national sin; voices seemed to convey them to the ear; he felt sure that God was speaking to him, with *the sound of a light whisper*, as we are told in one famous instance (1 K. xix. 12; cf. 4 Ezz. xiv. 38f.). Again we are led to conclude, as before, that the voices which the prophet heard were the products of his own mind. What, then, becomes of his inspiration? The answer is given in the fact that the entire experience, including all that predisposed him to religious impressions and created his special sympathies, as well as the psychological crisis of the vision or ecstasy, was under the controlling influence of Jahveh, or the spirit of Jahveh<sup>1</sup>.

In a true sense, therefore, the prophet's message came to him from God; it was no invention of his own; when he asserts *thus saith the Lord* we may believe that he is announcing a truth which he was inspired to utter. But the repetition of the formula need not imply so many separate revelations. A momentous encounter with God formed the premiss of the entire prophetic teaching; it is not necessary to suppose that a fresh one occurred before each utterance. The phrase

<sup>1</sup> Joyce, *op. cit.* pp. 68 f.



had acquired a conventional meaning as part of the vocabulary of prophecy. Moreover, it was used by the professional and false prophets, as well as by Amos and his successors. How, then, were the people to distinguish between the merely popular or false oracle and the true? The distinction lay, not in the manner, but in the matter of the utterance. This is significantly drawn out by Micah: "Therefore the night shall be to you without vision, and it shall grow dark to you without divination; and the sun shall go in over the prophets, and the day shall turn black over them. And the seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners disappointed, and they shall all of them cover the moustache, for there is no divine response. But *I* am full of power [the spirit of Jahveh] and of judgement and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin" (Mic. iii. 6—8). This was the message: no pleasing oracle of peace when there was no peace, but stern denunciation and a forecast of punishment. It was this that differentiated the truly inspired prophecy from the false; and it was the outcome of a spiritual experience, to which both Amos and Micah appeal as a proof that their words were God's words and uttered by His authority.

iii. *The pre-suppositions of Amos' teaching.* While the prophets, as we have seen, speak with the responsibility of a special commission, it is important to notice that they do not claim to be innovators. They take their stand on the common ground of the national religion and the national traditions. Thus the fundamental principles upon which Amos insists were really implicit in the national religion; he takes it for granted that the hearers will recognize the force of them; and his argument turns on the fact that Israel has sinned against the light, not against some unfamiliar standard of truth and morality. At the same time what was implicit in the earlier faith Amos makes explicit. The ethical monotheism which he, like Hosea, proclaims had never been stated so emphatically before. Because God had chosen Israel out of all the nations to stand in a special relation to Himself, any unfaithfulness to this relation involves the utmost punishment. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: *therefore* will I visit upon you all your iniquities" (iii. 2). Jahveh differs from other Gods in moral character, and consequently deals with His people in a different way<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, His interest is not limited to Israel. If He brought up Israel out of Egypt, He also brought up the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir (ix. 7), and it is His power which will raise up the nation who is to afflict His guilty people (vi. 14).

<sup>1</sup> See Hamilton, *op. cit.* i. pp. 68—70.

And He deals with Israel's neighbours on the same principle as He deals with Israel itself; they have violated the universal laws of morality, and they will be punished equally with Israel. This may be described as the new element in Amos' teaching; but it is found in the conclusions which he draws from recognized and admitted truths. And beside these were the national traditions, the common inheritance of prophet and people. Amos appeals most frequently to the exodus and to the conquest of Canaan, as evidence of Jahveh's special control of Israel's history (ii. 9 f., iii. 1, v. 25, ix. 7). He assumes that his hearers are familiar with the reputation of David (vi. 5), and with the way in which the prophets and Nazirites had been treated in the past (ii. 11, 12).

Common, again, to both was the religious practice of the day. We hear of pilgrimages to famous shrines, and of solemn assemblies in the local sanctuaries, where music and singing accompanied the acts of worship. The sacrifices included most of those mentioned in the later law books, the burnt offering, the meal offering, the free-will offering, the thanksgiving offering (v. 21—23, iv. 5). The new moons and sabbaths were observed by the cessation of labour (viii. 5). Amos knows of a law prohibiting the use of leaven with sacrifices (iv. 5, cf. Ex. xxiii. 18), and distinguishing between clean and unclean foods (vii. 17, cf. Hos. ix. 3).

Further it must not be forgotten that a certain amount of literature was current at the time, such as the older elements incorporated in the Book of Judges, and the popular collections, to which the ancient songs, Gen. xlix., Ex. xv. (in its original form), Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii., including the fragments of sayings and traditions embedded in the Pentateuch, probably owed their preservation. And when we remember that, of the great Pentateuchal documents, the narrative of the Jahvist had been composed before the time of Amos, we realize that the appearance of written prophecy was not so much a new departure as the continuation of a process which had already begun. For prophetic in the broader sense the Jahvist's narrative may truly be styled, when we mark the emphasis laid by this writer, or school of writers, upon such subjects as the following: the conception of Jahveh as controlling all human affairs from the beginning, as essentially merciful, long-suffering, and faithful to His promise (Gen. vi. 8, viii. 21 f., xviii. 23 ff.; Ex. xxxii. 9—14 JE; xxxiii. 12 ff. JE); the problem of sin, its origin and consequences (Gen. ii.—iv., vi. 1—8, viii. 21, xi. 1 ff., xix. 1 ff., 31 ff.; Ex. xvi. 4—5, 25—30 J, xxxiii. 12—xxxiv. 28 JE;

Num. xi. 4—15, 18—23, xiv. 11—25 JE, xxv. 1—5 JE); the delineation of the patriarchs as noble representatives of the national calling and character (Gen. xii. 1—3, xviii. 18 f., xxiv. 7 J; Num. xi. 29 f JE); the significance of Israel's place among the nations (Gen. xii. 2 f., xxii. 18, xxvi. 4, xxvii. 29; Ex. iv. 22 f. J, xix. 5 f. JE; Num. xxiv. 9 JE)<sup>1</sup>. Here are laid down the main principles of the religion of Jahveh which the prophets develope and apply. It is not unlikely that Amos was acquainted with the narrative of J; iii. 2 seems to contain a reminiscence of Gen. xviii. 19, and iv. 11 of Gen. xviii. 20—xix. 28. A more direct allusion occurs in ii. 8, which refers to the law in Ex. xxii. 25 f. (from the Book of the Covenant). Moreover, as Dr Driver points out<sup>2</sup>, the prophet's denunciations of bribery, the perversion of justice, and oppression of the poor (ii. 6, 7, iv. 1, v. 7, 10 ff., vi. 12), are thoroughly in the spirit of Ex. xxii. 21—24, xxiii. 6, 8, 9. Commercial dishonesty is condemned in viii. 5 and in Lev. xix. 35 f., Deut. xxv. 13—15, but we cannot be sure that any law on the subject existed in the time of Amos. At any rate the principles of the Ten Words and of the ancient Code in Ex. xxxiv. were the common property of the prophet and his hearers. The standard of religion and morals had been set up before the new age of prophecy began, and it is to this that the prophets, from Amos onward, make their appeal.

iv. *The Book of Amos*. In what sense may we consider it to be the actual work of the prophet? That it represents the substance of his teaching there can be no doubt, but the form in which we have it is due to others. The title may be assigned without hesitation to an editor of the post-exilic age, the age from which the entire Book of the Twelve Minor Prophets has come to us; perhaps it was the same editor who collected and arranged the discourses. And further the words of Amos have received additions here and there, made long after the 8th century; these, like similar insertions in other books, have a value and an interest of their own. To the editor, then, we may reasonably ascribe the existing arrangement of the Book, which falls into three divisions:—

Chs. i.—ii., *the Judgements* upon neighbouring nations, leading up to the threat of a more severe judgement upon Israel.

Chs. iii.—vi., *the Discourses*, three in number, each introduced with "Hear ye this word" (iii. 1, iv. 1, v. 1). The prophet gives

<sup>1</sup> See further Dillmann, *Num., Deut. und Jos.* (1886), p. 629 f.; Driver, *Introd. to Lit. of O.T.*, p. 120; Skinner, *Genesis*, p. li f.

<sup>2</sup> *Joel and Amos*, p. 115.

warning of the destruction of Samaria (iii. 9—iv. 3) and of Israel (v. 1—6); captivity is to be their fate.

Chs. vii.—ix., *the Visions*, five in number, all prophetic of the coming disaster. A biographical episode intervenes in vii. 10—17.

In these three sections we have all that is essential in Amos' teaching, much reduced, of course, from the form in which it was actually delivered. Then, probably after the Book had appeared in a collected shape, it was enriched with additions which witness to the esteem in which it was held. A list of these is all that need be given here, as the commentary explains the reasons for regarding them as later insertions:—

- (1) i. 1, 2. Cf. Joel iii. [Heb. iv.] 16 *a*.
- (2) ii. 4, 5 (?).
- (3) iv. 13, v. 8, 9, ix. 5, 6.
- (4) ix. 8 *b*, 9 *c*, 10.
- (5) ix. 11—15. Cf. Joel iii. [Heb. iv.] 18 *a*; Lev. xxvi. 5 *a*.

Beside these are certain expressions which seem to come from a later hand than that of Amos: iii. 14 *b*, v. 13—15, 25, vi. 2.

On various grounds the prophet's authorship of the following passages has been questioned: i. 9, 10, 11, 12, viii. 8, 11, 12.

A word may be added here on the subject of Amos' style. St Jerome's description of the prophet as *imperitus sermone sed non scientia* (*Introd. to Amos*) is based on the assumption that an unlettered peasant could not produce fine literature. As a matter of fact, however humble his occupation may have been, there is nothing rude or uncultivated about the style of Amos; on the contrary, it exhibits that combination of ease with vigour, that directness and imaginative power, which mark the golden age of Hebrew letters. How are we to account for this? The explanation cannot be given better than in the words of Robertson Smith: "To associate inferior culture with the simplicity and poverty of pastoral life is totally to mistake the conditions of Eastern society. At the courts of the Caliphs and their Emirs the rude Arabs of the desert were wont to appear without any feeling of awkwardness, and to surprise the courtiers by the finish of their impromptu verses, the fluent eloquence of their oratory, and the range of subjects on which they could speak with knowledge and discrimination. Among the Hebrews, as in the Arabian desert, knowledge and oratory were not affairs of professional education, or dependent for their cultivation on wealth or social status. The sum of book-learning was small; men of

all ranks mingled with that Oriental freedom which is so foreign to our habits; shrewd observation, a memory retentive of traditional lore, and the faculty of original reflection took the place of laborious study as the ground of acknowledged intellectual preeminence. In Hebrew, as in Arabic, the best writing is the unaffected transcript of the best speaking...and the prophecies of Amos, though evidently arranged for publication, and probably shortened from their original spoken form, are excellent writing, because the prophet writes as he spoke, preserving all the effects of pointed and dramatic delivery, with that breath of lyrical fervour which lends a special charm to the highest Hebrew oratory" (*Prophets of Israel*, p. 126 f.).

v. *The literary influence of the Book of Amos*<sup>1</sup>. There is abundant evidence that the prophet's writings were studied by the generations which followed him. But caution must be used in weighing parallel passages. In the case of writers who, if not contemporary, belong to the same general period, we cannot be sure that one borrowed from the other, for the circumstances of both were alike; moreover, a certain type of expression was common to the whole prophetic school, and not characteristic of any particular writer. Accordingly the parallels between Amos on the one hand and Hosea and Isaiah on the other do not necessarily imply that the two last are borrowing from their predecessor; they are dealing with the same problems in the same manner:—

Amos ii. 5.	Hosea viii. 14.
ii. 10 (the exodus).	xii. 9.
ii. 11 (the prophets).	xii. 10 (the combination of these two subjects is suggestive).
vi. 8, viii. 7.	v. 5, vii. 10.
vii. 17 (captivity, unclean food).	ix. 3.
viii. 5.	xii. 7.
viii. 8, ix. 5.	iv. 3.
ii. 12.	Isaiah xxx. 10.
iv. 1 ff. (luxurious women).	iii. 16 ff.
iv. 4—13 (a series of indictments, each ending with a refrain).	ix. 8—x. 4, v. 25.
vi. 1 ( <i>them that are at ease</i> ).	xxxii. 9, 11, 18.

<sup>1</sup> See Harper, *Amos and Hosea* (Int. Critical Comment.), pp. cxxxvi. ff.

In the following parallels between Amos and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and the prophetic literature of the post-exilic period, it is reasonable to suppose that the later prophets have been influenced directly by the writings of Amos :—

Amos i. 2.	Jeremiah xxv. 30.
i. 4, 10, 12, 14, ii. 2, 5.	xvii. 27, xxi. 14, xliii. 12, xlix. 27, l. 32.
i. 12, ii. 2 (Bozrah, Kerioth).	xlvi. 24, xlix. 13, 22.
i. 15.	xlvi. 7, xlix. 3.
ii. 14.	xlvi. 6.
v. 2 ( <i>the virgin of Israel</i> ).	xviii. 13, xxxi. 4, 21.
viii. 8.	xlvi. 7.
viii. 11 ( <i>Behold, the days come</i> ).	vii. 32, ix. 25, xvi. 14, xix. 6, xlviii. 12, xlix. 2; Is. xxxix. 6=2K. xx. 17.
ix. 4.	xxi. 10.
i. 4 etc.	Ezekiel xxviii. 18.
v. 1 ( <i>take up a lamentation</i> ).	xxvii. 2, xxviii. 12, xxxii. 2.
viii. 2.	vii. 2, 6.
ix. 14.	xxviii. 26.

Reference has been made above (p. xvii f.) to the frequency with which Amos uses the phrase *thus saith Jahveh*; it occurs frequently again in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, especially before the prophecies on foreign nations (e.g. Jer. xlvii. 2, xlviii. 1, xlix. 1, 7, 28, 35; Ezek. xxv. 6, 8, 12, 15, xxvi. 3, 7).

The parallels with Joel are particularly noticeable :—

Amos i. 2.	Joel iii. [Heb. iv.] 16 a.
i. 9, 10.	iii. [iv.] 4—6.
i. 11, 12.	iii. [iv.] 19.
ix. 13.	iii. [iv.] 18 a.

The authorship of all these passages in Amos has been questioned; with regard to i. 2, ix. 13 it may be considered almost certain that they are later or editorial additions.

It is probable that in Zechariah (both parts) and in Haggai we have reminiscences of Amos, thus :—

Amos i. 3—5, 6—8, 9, 10	Zechariah ix. 1—7 (Damascus, Phoenicians, Philistines, Philistines).
iv. 11 ( <i>brand plucked from the burning</i> ).	iii. 2.
vii. 14.	xiii. 5.
iv. 9 ( <i>blasting and mil-dew</i> ).	Haggai ii. 17.

In Tobit ii. 6 we find the first quotation of Amos by name, *and I remembered the prophecy of Amos, as he said, Your feasts* etc. (viii. 10). In the New Testament Am. v. 25—27 is quoted in Acts vii. 42 f., and Am. ix. 11 f. in Acts xv. 16 f. The latter quotation is specially interesting because it illustrates the free way in which the New Testament writers adapted the ancient Scriptures to their purpose. The quotation is taken from the LXX., and not from the Hebrew original. The LXX. gives a sense entirely different from that intended by the prophet, who declares that when the fallen tent of David is raised up, and the ruins of the Davidic kingdom restored, then Israel will come to its own again; it will *inherit* or *possess* the lands won by David, *the remnant of Edom* and all the lands which, by conquest, had become part of Jahveh's territory. The LXX. misreads the Hebr. *that they may inherit the remnant of Edom* (למען יירשו את שארית אדום) and substitutes (cod. B) *that the remnant of men may seek* (reading the Hebr. as למען ידרשו שארית אדם), and in Acts *the Lord* is inserted to provide an object for *seek*; this insertion is found in cod. A of the LXX., and there can be little doubt that cod. A here has been influenced by the quotation in Acts, just as elsewhere New Testament quotations have affected the text of the LXX. Thus the argument of St James, that the restoration of Israel is to have the effect of bringing the Gentiles to a knowledge of the true God, is not directly supported by the passage of Amos which he quotes, though other prophets declare that this shall happen.

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THE PRECINCT  
ROCHESTER  
August 1913

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# AMOS

## A. THE PUNISHMENT OF REBELLION I. 3—II. 16

### I. JUDGEMENT ON THE NATIONS I. 3—II. 3

### II. JUDGEMENT ON JUDAH AND ISRAEL II. 4—16

Why does Amos leave to the last his own people that have sinned most deeply, and occupy so much time and energy in first denouncing the crimes of foreign countries? His clear call is to go and preach to Israel: why then these words of woe and doom upon the neighbouring nations?

Of course it is more than possible that not this oracle, but the words recorded in ch. vii. formed the first prophecy actually delivered. And yet it well may be that these national oracles reveal the original order of Amos' reflections, if not of the prophecies themselves. For just as Hosea saw in a domestic trial a parable and a prophecy of the divine dealings with an ungrateful people, so Amos, reflecting upon the political circumstances of his time, came to the clear conclusion that a voice—the voice of God—was making itself heard amid the universal clamour, and that the voice spake just one message for all mankind. The judge is at the doors, and judgement must begin.

At whatever time they may have been spoken, we may be quite clear that these first two chapters (with one possible exception) form a homogeneous and artistic whole: and the problem still remains, why should one whose real mission is to awaken the conscience of his own country begin by denouncing these heathen people? The reason is not far to seek. "It is more difficult to rouse a torpid people to their sins than to lead a roused one against their enemies, and harder to face a whole people with the support only of conscience than to defy many nations if you have but your own at your back<sup>1</sup>." The prophets, however, did not disdain to use the less, if thereby they might accomplish the greater; and so it is that conciliation continually precedes denunciation. Isaiah appeals to the men of Judah and Jerusalem to give judgement against the stubborn and fruitless vine, before they realize that they themselves are the vine, and the vine-dresser none other than the Lord of Hosts who will take the vengeance, by themselves demanded on themselves, for the wild grapes of Judah. So, also, Isaiah's predecessor enlists the sympathy and interest of his audience by his forceful predictions as to the fate of these cruel but kindred peoples. And readily would all true Israelites admit the

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<sup>1</sup> G. A. Smith, *The Book of Isaiah*, I. p. 40.

justice of Jehovah's sentence against these adversaries of His. How altogether fitting that punishment proportionate to the offence should tarry no longer, but descend on those who thought so little of their crimes, of three transgressions, yea of four! As the oracles proceeded, we may imagine, assent became more and more enthusiastic. The more distant crowd began to shout their agreement before they caught the name of the particular tribe against whom the denunciation was directed. The oracle on Moab had ended in a frenzy of applause. Ere it subsided the prophet had taken up his tale. The less discriminating began at once with their cheers and cries. What did the name of the nation signify against whom the prophet hurled his dark predictions? But trouble seized those in the foremost ranks. What is that the prophet said? What was the name that he introduced into the usual formula *Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions, yea, for four?* But whose transgressions? It had sounded like Judah, but surely they must be mistaken. They turned angrily to suppress this clamour: fitfully the shouting died away, and a sombre silence fell upon the throng. *And I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.*

The thrust had come perilously near home, for Judah was always a brother, and now an ally; the long peace had allayed the ancient enmity. An anxious stillness brooded over the assembly. Enthusiasm gave way to intense and painful excitement, and once more the prophet took up his tale. And all ears were strained to catch the message which conscience already heard. *Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof.* Yet in what manner had the same Lord delivered Israel, guided and governed them, trained and taught them! Could they deny it? *Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel?* But with sinful deliberation they had rejected and rebelled. Spellbound, they could make no defence against the prophet's charge, nor find any word to justify their conduct. *Therefore he that is courageous among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day.* Amos has more to say concerning *that day*, and he will say it hereafter. In the meantime let this last word suffice: these be no words of mine, nor threats of my imagining, but *Jehovah hath said it.*

The position, therefore, of Israel after the nations is not merely a device to win the sympathy of the audience before pronouncing their doom, but also due to the desire of a finely conceived climax. The judgement that shall surely come on all nations is irrevocable; shall Israel escape? And another question, more insistent. If punishment shall overtake these *nations who have no knowledge of his laws*, what shall be the fate of Israel with its history of divine deliverances, and its ministry of inspired prophets? Surely she shall suffer if last of all, yet most of all. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth*, he cries at the commencement of a later oracle, *therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities.*

## I. JUDGEMENT ON THE NATIONS

*a. Against Syria, i. 3—5*

At this period Syria was greatly weakened; but the atrocities of which the Syrians had been guilty in the former years were yet remembered with loathing and terror. The Syrians or Aramaeans were closely connected with the Hebrews, and the connexion was well known and recognized in the national legends (Gen. xi. 31, xxiv. 3 f., xxvii. 43; Hos. xii. 12); see especially Dt. xxvi. 5. Aram was a general term including the whole country between the Taurus range in the north and the Arabian desert in the south, and extending from the Tigris in the east to the Mediterranean in the west. The coastlands of the Phoenicians and the Philistines preserved their independence; as also did the states of Israel and Judah, Edom, Moab, and Ammon. These countries were continually at war with one another, and Amos deals with them all in turn, for none are without their share of responsibility and crime.

Syria, or Aram, is first chosen for many reasons: she was Israel's most persistent and dangerous foe. There were many different branches of Aram; but under Hadadezer, king of Zobah, they were united and made common cause against David, king of Israel (2 Sam. viii., x.). Zobah became the capital of the kingdom; and the Syrian dominion extended to Hamath and Damascus, and even beyond the Euphrates. David's Syrian wars, however, resulted in the defeat of Hadadezer and the break up of the Syrian confederacy. A certain captain of the defeated king usurped the throne and established himself in Damascus, which thenceforward became the capital of Aram. This Rezon became an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon (1 K. xi. 23 ff.): and after the disruption of the Israelite kingdom it was the policy of the Syrian kings to play off one kingdom against the other with large promises of occasional assistance. The accession of Ahab altered this state of things; for Ahab, than whom perhaps no more successful statesman or intrepid warrior ever sat on the throne of Israel, made an alliance with Judah, and inflicted a series of decisive defeats upon Ben-hadad II., who was at this time king of Syria. Ahab, despite his victories, seems to have treated his defeated enemies with consideration, doubtless because of the advancing tide of Assyrian aggression and the necessity of keeping a strong buffer state between his own kingdom and the mighty inland empire with its designs to westward. When in B.C. 854 Shalmaneser marched into Syria, Ahab and most of the neighbouring kings came to Ben-hadad's assistance, but suffered complete defeat at the great battle of Karkar. Ahab, anxious to snatch what he could from the spoil, now turned against Syria and met his death as foretold by Micaiah (1 K. xxii. 1—40). Ben-hadad was meanwhile murdered by Hazael. This unscrupulous and cruel monarch succeeded in redressing the balance of power. Marching into Gilead, he conquered all the land east of Jordan (2 K. x. 32 ff., xiii. 3—22), and it is the memory of the terrible cruelties practised on this occasion that moves Amos to wrath and prediction of vengeance. As a matter of fact, vengeance had to a large extent been already taken; for Joash, Jehu's son, encouraged by Elisha, had defeated the Syrians thrice, and Jeroboam II. seems to have captured Hamath, and even Damascus itself (2 K. xiii. 25, xiv. 25—28). To

complete the Syrian discomfiture, the Assyrians besieged Damascus, and only departed after the exaction of a heavy tribute. At the period of this prophecy, Syria, therefore, had ample lee-way to make up; but apparently she was already on the path of rapid recovery, and beginning once more to bestir herself. But it is all in vain, cries Amos. Crime and cruelty unrepented of shall not go unpunished; final collapse shall bring your schemes down about your ears.

I. 1 THE words of Amos, who was among the herdmen 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 <sup>1</sup>earthquake.

2 And he said, The Lord shall roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the <sup>2</sup>pastures of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

3 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of

<sup>1</sup> See Zech. xiv. 5.

<sup>2</sup> Or, habitations

I. On vv. 1 f. see pp. xi., xxi. f., xxiv., 97, 113 and the note on vii. 14.

3. Thus saith the LORD. The usual formula for introducing the utterance of the divine speaker. Though the tense in Hebr. is perfect, there is no reference to any previous revelation. The perfect denotes that Jahveh speaks once and for all. Somewhat similar is the *It is written*, lit. *It has been written*, by which citations of the O.T. are introduced in the New Testament (γράφεται: Es steht geschrieben, Luther). No less true is it of the Author of Scripture than of Pilate and the title on the Cross, *What I have written, I have written*. When God has spoken, the word remains irrevocable.

*For three transgressions...yea, for four.* This expression strikes us as strange, for it is its first appearance in the sacred writings. Homer, however, uses the same numbers for a somewhat similar purpose; *Od.* v. 306, τρὶς μάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις; and he is copied by Vergil, *Aen.* i. 94, O terque quaterque beati (cf. also Hor. *Od.* i. xxxi. 13). The Rabbis, and others of an equally literally minded disposition, have supposed that while three offences might be forgiven, the fourth made pardon impossible. The phrase however plainly indicates the idea of indefiniteness; there was no need to record the exact number of these continual and repeated transgressions. Other numbers are often employed in Scripture with the same sense: thus *one* and *two* Ps. lxxii. 11; *two* and *three* Amos iv. 8, Hosea vi. 2, Is. xvii. 6; *four* and *five* Is. xvii. 6; *five* and *six* 2 K. xiii. 19; *six* and *seven* Prov. vi. 16; *seven* and *eight* Mic. v. 5.

*transgressions.* The word (Hebr. *pésha'*) means usually rebellion, the capital sin against the King of Israel: *I have brought up sons, and they have rebelled against me*, Is. i. 2; *Woe unto them! for they have wandered from me; destruction unto them! for they have rebelled against me*, Hos. vii. 13. The noun is used far more frequently as indicating

Damascus, yea, for four, I will not <sup>1</sup>turn away <sup>2</sup>the punishment thereof; because they have threshed Gilead with threshing

<sup>1</sup> Or, revoke my word

<sup>2</sup> Heb. it (and so in vv. 6, 9, &c.).

revolt against God than an offence against any individual. And yet its earthly associations with the idea of rebellion emphasize the significance of this synonym for sin as a personal offence against a person. The word is used in Ps. li. 3 [5], and xxxii. 5, where the sinner recognizes and confesses his sin as rebellion against his Lord and King. The meaning of the word as used by Amos here, and in 6, 9, 11, 13, ii. 1, cannot mean anything less than in ii. 4, 6; it is therefore altogether perverse to interpret it here as having a different meaning, as the crime of nation against nation. It is part of Amos' message that crime against anybody or anything whatsoever is crime against God. Offences against righteousness are to him offences against religion. It is perhaps the most important feature of his teaching that every sort of wrongdoing is sin against God. He will have it that social injustice or national infidelity are crimes which God will judge, and not turn away the punishment thereof. He insists that conscience has a part to play in all the affairs of men, and that even on the field of battle and in the slave market God walks and watches and is greatly to be feared. Amos says nothing about ritual sins; what he does care for is social and national righteousness, and therefore he chooses a word to describe the crimes of the neighbouring nations which will at once make it clear that these things are sins in a religious sense. Concerned in their own petty wars, they have failed to realize that they have entered a far more fiery contest; their inhumanities and barbarities have provoked God to His face. They have perpetrated nothing less than a rebellion against the Source of all righteous, true and chivalrous dealing. And He will not let the challenge lie: for rebellion is the last thing that a king will tolerate: *the destruction of the rebels and the sinners shall be together* (Is. i. 28).

*I will not turn away the punishment thereof.* R.V. margin suggests as an alternative, *I will not revoke my word.* The Hebrew has simply "it," which R.V. paraphrases by *the punishment of it, or my word.* If the latter is the right translation, we may compare Is. lv. 11, *so shall my word be which shall go forth from my mouth: it shall not return unto me void.* Is. xiv. 27 gives us an interesting parallel so far as the words are concerned, and possibly in the matter of the construction also: *who shall turn it back?* but the *it* there refers in all probability to Jahveh's stretched out hand.

The word of Jahveh is however a word threatening punishment, and therefore both translations are equally correct; but it may be doubted whether with greater accuracy the revisers would not also have given a more impressive rendering if they had restored the solemn yet vaguely terrifying "it" of the original.

Two interesting suggestions have been made which deserve passing mention. Some think that the "it" refers to a former word of Jahveh,

instruments of iron: 4 but I will send a fire into the house

which the people imagined would not be fulfilled, but which Amos emphatically corroborates (cf. for this incorporation of an allusion to earlier prophecies, Is. ii. 2—4, xvi. 13, 14).

Another totally different interpretation ingeniously renders as follows: "For all the endless lesser crimes of which Syria is guilty, I will not repay her, (but) because she threshed Gilead."

*they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron.* This language, if not this actual practice, was quite in the manner of ancient warfare. Thus Tiglath-pileser, "The land Bit-Amukkani I threshed as with a threshing instrument; all its people and its possessions I brought to Assyria<sup>1</sup>." David seems himself to have been guilty of the same atrocity against the Ammonites, 2 Sam. xii. 31, *And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron...and made them pass through the brickkiln (where, however, with a slight change, we should probably read: he set them to saws etc., and made them labour at the brickmould).* It may be asked why, if David was guilty of such outrages, Syria should be singled out for punishment for the same offence. Why are not these same brutalities brought up against Israel? To this pertinent question the answer must be delayed until we come to deal with Israel's own iniquities.

*Gilead* is here used for all the land east of Jordan, where the cruelties connected with the Syrians under Hazael (*circa* 842—802) had become a terrible tradition, if they were no longer a haunting memory.

*threshing instruments (i.e. drags or boards) of iron.* Niebuhr describes two threshing instruments which he had seen: one, a great stone which two oxen drew over the grain; the other, a kind of sledge, the planks of which were studded underneath with flints and iron. It is not to be denied that it is quite reasonable to take the whole expression metaphorically. Tiglath-pileser certainly seems to speak in metaphors, though we may be fairly sure that in his case the thing signified differed but slightly from the sign. These "iron" threshing sledges, writes Dr George Adam Smith, are really "curved slabs drawn rapidly by horses over the heaped corn, and are studded with sharp basalt teeth that not only thresh out the grain, but chop the straw into little pieces. So cruelly had Gilead been chopped by Hazael and his son Ben-Hadad" (*The Twelve Prophets*, I. p. 124).

4. *I will send a fire.* A vague yet vivid phrase borrowed by Hosea (viii. 14) and by Jeremiah (xvii. 27, xxi. 14) and by others also. It may mean war of men or wrath of God. For the former cf. Judges ix. 15—20, *Let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon...let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem...let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and devour Abimelech.* For the latter cf. Deut. xxxii. 22, *For a fire is kindled in*

<sup>1</sup> See *Keilinschr. Biblioth.*, II. p. 4 f.

of Hazael, and it shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad. 5 And I will break the bar of Damascus, and cut off <sup>1</sup>the inhabitant from the valley of <sup>2</sup>Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from

<sup>1</sup> Or, him that sitteth on the throne (and so in ver. 8)

<sup>2</sup> That is, Vanity. The Sept. reads, On.

*mine anger, and burneth unto the lowest pit, and devoureth the earth with her increase, and setteth on fire the foundations of the mountains.*

But perhaps the best illustration is from a heathen poet. Just as Amos pictures Jahveh sending a fire into the house of Hazael which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad, so Euripides (*Bacchae*, 8, 594—599) represents Dionysus; the god himself "lights the lurid levin torch; wraps in flame the palaces of Pentheus."

*Hazael...Ben-hadad* were certainly the two kings from whom Israel in recent times had had most to fear, and having mentioned Hazael it was natural to mention his successor and his son. But it is more likely that the reference is quite general, and that these two names, familiar to every Israelite, are used as typical of the dynasty at Damascus.

*palaces* move Amos to special wrath. The word itself does not occur before the royal period, and may have been borrowed from Assyria. Both the word and that which it signified were altogether alien to the old and stern simplicity of Israel's earlier days. These grand houses are a new and sinister feature of a more civilized age. For the amassing of great riches in the hands of the few has not been come by save through extortion and oppression of the poor, and these palaces are the symbols of the wealth that grows from and leads to woe; Jahveh, when He destroys the people, will deal severely with palaces and princes.

5. *the bar of Damascus.* The bar or the bolt was an important part of the defences of an ancient city. The attempted insurrection at Plataea, which was the beginning of the Peloponnesian war, was frustrated by a spear point being used to secure the bar or bolt which kept the gates of the city closed (Thuc. II. 4). *The bar* is thus used as the symbol of a city's safety; cf. Ps. cxlvii. 13, *He hath made fast the bars of thy gates*, and contrast Ps. cvii. 16, where Jahveh saves His own from the city of oppression, *For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.*

*the inhabitant*, or as the R.V. margin suggests, *him that sitteth*, i.e. on the throne. The common people are not introduced until the princes have been visited. For this absolute use of "him that sitteth" cf. Ps. ii. 4, xxii. 3; see also Is. x. 13.

*the valley of Aven.* Aven, or *vanity*, often used in reference to the false gods of heathen worship. The LXX. however, without altering the consonants, gives the pronunciation *On*. On was the Egyptian name for Heliopolis, the centre of sun-worship; and Heliopolis was the name given to Baalbek in the valley (cf. Jos. xi. 17) between the Lebanons. Baalbek may be referred to here, and called *Aven* on

<sup>1</sup>the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD.

<sup>1</sup> Or, Beth-eden

account of its *idolatry*; but there is no evidence that it was ever called On.

*him that holdeth the sceptre.* A baton or sceptre was carried by men of rank or authority, such as a king or the marshal of an army. Here the reference is to an independent ruler. Homer uses the same phrase of the great men of his day; they were "sceptre-bearing kings" (*Il.* II. 86; *Od.* II. 231).

*the house of Eden.* "Some royal paradise in that region of Damascus, which is still the paradise of the Arab world" (G. A. Smith). There was a certain Aramaic kingdom of Bit-Adini (Assyrian for Beth-Eden) on the banks of the Euphrates, which seems to have been the object of much attention on the part of the Assyrian kings. It is often mentioned in inscriptions, but its identification with the place here spoken of seems very doubtful.

*the people...shall go into captivity.* Here for the first time we come across the word (*galak*) used for a whole nation going into captivity. The transportation of whole nations was part of the settled policy of Assyria, and though in a manner it answered their designs for a while, it ultimately made for the weakness and not for the strength of the huge heterogeneous empire, and led to its rapid downfall.

Amos here prophesies deportation for Syria. How would it come to pass? Who would accomplish it? Doubtless Jahveh Himself would accomplish it; but through what instruments? Amos had not watched the eastern horizon in vain. There was but one nation capable of putting in hand these wholesale deportations: and Amos knew its name. Assyria only could accomplish such a task; having deported Syria, they would not halt at Hamath, but irresistibly move on to the destruction and deportation of Israel also, cf. vi. 14; also iv. 12, v. 27. The advancing host of Assyria forms the unnamed but appalling background of the prophet's picture of universal woe; *I will raise up a nation against you* vi. 14, *and I will not turn it back* i. 3, 6, 9, 11, 13, ii. 1, 4, 6.

*unto Kir.* This was the original home of the Syrians, cf. ix. 7, and the Assyrians certainly would not have taken a people and planted them on the land that had been their own. Some therefore have felt that these words are an interpolation. But Amos was a poet and a prophet, and though unlike some poets and prophets he was intensely practical, we need not suppose that he was prosaic also. Kir is no geographical detail, but a poetic allusion. From Kir they had come, to Kir they should go (cf. Is. xxxvii. 34), back to the unknown lands of the north from which, for Jahveh's purposes, they had originally migrated.



*b. Against Philistia, i. 6—8*

Philistia and Israel were hereditary foes. The two nations did not, as in the case of Israel and Syria, spring from the same stock: for the Philistines were in all probability non-Semitic pirates from Crete or the S.E. of Asia Minor (see ix. 7), who finally settled in Palestine (*circa* 1180 B.C.) almost at the same time as the Israelites migrated from Egypt. So formidable were these recent immigrants known to be, that the Israelites did not attempt to enter Palestine by the most obvious and direct route. In the early days of the settlement in Canaan, and during the period of the Judges, the Philistines held their own in the Shephelah (S.W. of Palestine) and down to the coast; they were looked upon by the Hebrew settlers as natural enemies (Jud. iii. 2 ff., xiii.—xvi.); but we do not hear of any aggressions into Israelite territory until the days of Samuel and Saul. For some reason or other, which is not very clear, the Philistines do not appear to have followed up their victories in any adequate manner. At any rate they seemed to have occasioned little difficulty in the times of David or Solomon, and it is supposed that they were utterly subjugated by some Egyptian king.

Both the religion and system of government among the Philistines are of great interest, but since a discussion of these topics would carry us too far afield, it will be sufficient to refer to the article on the subject in Hastings' Bible Dictionary. More to the point is it to notice that, though the political power of the Philistines seems to have declined considerably before the date of Amos, their commercial activities suffered no abatement. Situated as they were along the line of the great caravan routes, opportunities for trading enterprise abounded: and the Philistines, we may suppose, were not too particular, provided that their immediate end could be profitably secured. Like many others, they succumbed to the temptation to put commerce above conscience. Even the dictates of humanity were disregarded. But God did not make man to be inhuman. He too has His scales and measures: and with the same measure as they measured withal, shall it be measured unto them again.

6 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Gaza, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof;

6. *Gaza*, singled out not merely because of its importance, but for its special activity in this cruel business. Damascus is the only Syrian city mentioned, and thus stands as typical for the whole of Aram. But in dealing with Philistia Amos mentions four of the five confederate cities, and prophesies that all will be involved in the common ruin. But as Gaza has been preeminent in dishonour, so on Gaza's wall God's fire will fall first. Gaza was the southernmost and most important of the Philistine cities; it has been described as the southern counterpart of Damascus. The city lies on the very edge of the desert (cf. Acts viii. 26), and but three miles from the Mediterranean. It is a harbour alike for the wilderness and the sea.

because they carried away captive <sup>1</sup>the whole people, to deliver them up to Edom : 7 but I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, and it shall devour the palaces thereof : 8 and I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod, and him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon ; and I will turn mine hand against Ekron, and the remnant of the Philistines shall perish, saith the Lord God.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. an entire captivity.

The nomads found there a profitable market : and from Gaza the great trade routes branched in all directions.

*they carried away captive the whole people*, lit. they carried captive a whole captivity ; cf. Jer. xiii. 19. Among the ancients, as among the wildest nomads of more recent times, the entire extermination of a tribe or a people was felt to be a fearful and wicked thing, unless it was sanctioned by religion. This depopulation had not even the excuse of war. It was simply a commercial affair : the capture of slaves by craft, and the heartless extinction of a nation's life.

*to deliver them up to Edom*. There was no sort of scruple felt against selling prisoners of war in this fashion. *Vae victis* was the motto of the ancient world. But when it came to the exportation of an entire people for the sake of gain, even the hard conscience of antiquity was shocked.

In this oracle, together with that on Tyre, we seem to have a reference to some historical occurrence which left a deep impression ; what the circumstances were we do not know. An interesting suggestion has been made by Nowack that the words *to deliver them up* have found their way into the text from verse 9 ; and that *to Edom* means *belonging to Edom*, the verse thus describing an outrage of Gaza upon the Edomites. As Jahveh, the righteous God of Israel, punishes the crimes of Moab against Edom (ii. 1), so also He will not let go unvisited the Philistines who carried away captive the whole captivity of Edom. For Jahveh, God of Israel, is God of righteousness also, and far greater than these little states imagine : all crimes by whomsoever and against whomsoever committed are His concern.

8. *Ashdod*, about 20 miles N.E. of Gaza, and half way between the latter and Joppa. It was chiefly associated with the worship of Dagon (1 Sam. v.), and was apparently of considerable importance at this time (iii. 9).

*Ekron*, the most northern of the cities and the nearest to Judah, famous for the oracle of Baal-zebub (2 K. i. 2), lay slightly off the main trade route, and is thus mentioned but rarely in inscriptions.

*Ashkelon*, in an isolated situation on the coast, but one of the oldest of all the cities. It figures largely in the Tell el-Amarna tablets (c. 1400 B.C.).

*the Lord GOD*, lit. the Lord (Adonai) Jahveh ; occurs fifteen times in the book of Amos.

c. *Against Tyre*, i. 9, 10

Tyre was originally a colony of the Sidonians, who are mentioned by Homer as men of fame upon the sea. At first the city was founded on the mainland<sup>1</sup>, and this is probably referred to in Jos. xix. 29, 2 Sam. xxiv. 7, which speak of the fortress of Tyre. It was not however this ancient town (cf. Is. xxiii. and Strabo xvi. p. 758) which achieved renown. The Tyrians of the mainland founded a new city on a rocky island some half a mile distant from the coast. This town, with its harbours and its natural protection against enemies, soon rose to influence and importance. Tyre was ruled by powerful kings who greatly increased the prestige of their country by foreign alliances. In the time of Solomon a treaty seems to have been established between Tyre and Israel; while after the division of the kingdom, Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal king of Tyre, became queen of Israel, and his granddaughter Athaliah made herself queen of Judah. Possibly owing to the character and despotic designs of these two women, certainly also owing to the patriotic revival associated with the ministries of Elijah and Elisha, an anti-Phoenician reaction set in, and the prophets, so keenly alive to the evils of civilization and commerce, predict the fall of Tyre, *the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth* (Is. xxiii. 8; see Ezek. xxvi. and xxvii.). The extent and influence of Tyrian trade cannot be measured. As instances of Tyrian enterprise may be mentioned the founding of Tarshish (about 1100 B.C.), of Carthage (about 400 years later), the discovery of the Canary and the Scilly Isles, and the circumnavigation of Africa (in 600 B.C.) "2000 years before Vasco da Gama" (G. A. Smith, *Hist. Geog. Holy Land*, p. 25). The story of the assault of Tyre by the troops of Alexander (332 B.C.) along the great causeway of his construction is well known. Six thousand perished by the sword in the seven months' siege, two thousand were impaled, and thirty thousand slaves, women and children were sold. Yet within thirty years Tyre was re-peopled and re-fortified. After various vicissitudes it passed quietly under Roman rule and sank to insignificance. "After having been the mother of colonies and the mistress of the seas, bearing her merchandise into otherwise unvisited lands, and adjusting the supply and demand of the world, Tyre is now content at the close of her career to be a stagnant village in stagnant Turkey" (Hastings' D.B., art. 'Tyre').

9 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Tyre, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof;

9. *Thus saith the LORD, etc.* Many critics suspect the genuineness of this passage. Their reasons do not seem conclusive. Surprise is expressed that only one of the Phoenician towns is mentioned, that the offence brought against Tyre is identical with that brought against Philistia, and that the concluding formula is absent. To this it may be replied that the absence of the concluding *saith the LORD* is rather an argument in favour of the originality of the passage, than an

<sup>1</sup> See, however, art. 'Tyre,' *Encycl. Brit.*, eleventh edn.

because they delivered up <sup>1</sup>the whole people to Edom, and remembered not <sup>2</sup>the brotherly covenant: 10 but I will send a fire on the wall of Tyre, and it shall devour the palaces thereof.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. an entire captivity.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. the covenant of brethren. See 1 Kings v. 1, ix. 11-14.

argument against it. For would not the copyist have done his best to make the insertion as unnoticeable as possible by particular care in reproducing the opening and closing formulæ correctly?

Moreover, if it causes surprise that Tyre alone of the Phœnician cities is mentioned, how infinitely more surprising would it be if Tyre and Phœnicia were not mentioned at all?

As to the same charge being brought against Tyre as is brought against Philistia, the explanation may be found in some definite historical transaction, the details of which are lost to us. But we must not forget the possibility that the oracle against Philistia deals with a crime in which the Edomites were victims not accomplices.

*the brotherly covenant.* The obvious reference is to 1 K. v. 1-12, which describes the friendly relations between Hiram king of Tyre and Solomon king of Israel. These relations took practical form in a commercial treaty, which may not seem a very brotherly affair, but the account shews that it was accompanied with much cordiality (cf. 1 K. ix. 13). Perhaps *the league that they two made together* contained a clause prohibiting the sale of Hebrews as slaves.

*an entire captivity* (marg.). Whether Israelites or no, depends on the interpretation given to *the covenant of brethren*. There is nothing else in the context to suggest that they were Hebrew captives; and it is quite in the manner of Amos to prophesy God's punishment of such crimes as even a heathen conscience would condemn.

*the brotherly covenant* is a somewhat strong term to apply to two races who did not recognize a common origin (cf. Gen. x. 15, 20), although their respective kings had saluted each other as brethren more than two centuries previously. It has therefore been suggested with much plausibility that *the covenant of brethren* which the Tyrians broke was the tie of blood between them and other Phœnician towns. There is no record of any such raid made by the Tyrians upon her smaller sister states in the neighbourhood; but we do know that in the next century Tyre twice assisted Assyria to suppress Phœnician revolts<sup>1</sup>; while Tyre herself, long after, owed her downfall to a fleet mainly got together from old allies and subdued rivals.

On the other hand there is an honourable episode in Tyrian history which is worthy of record, when Tyre refused to break "the covenant of brothers." Cambyses was anxious to attack Carthage, and endeavoured to make use of the Phœnician fleet to transport his army to Africa: but the Tyrians refused on the very ground of blood relationship.

<sup>1</sup> See art., 'Phœnicia,' *Encycl. Brit.* edn. 11, pp. 452 a, 453 a.

*d. Against Edom, i. 11, 12*

The Edomites occupied Mount Seir, a region extending from the south-eastern shore of the Dead Sea to the Gulf of Akābah. They seem to have migrated from Mesopotamia along with the neighbouring Semitic races, and to have established themselves in this mountainous country, dispossessing the Horites who originally occupied the land. The national legends indicate how close from the very outset the relation between Israel and Edom was recognized to be. The children of Edom were the *brethren* of the children of Israel; on this account, after the Exodus, the Israelites were forbidden to attack them (Dt. ii. 4f.). Concerning the religion of the Edōmites little is known, though there seems some ground for supposing that they were sun-worshippers. Their political constitution has some curious and interesting features, notably the fact that their monarchy was elective. The hostility between the two countries, deepening into bitter and irreconcilable animosity, seems to have had its origin in the events of the reigns of Saul (1 Sam. xiv. 47) and David (2 Sam. viii. 14, a text which shews that *Edom* is to be read instead of *Aram* in the preceding verses). Various attempts at revolt and independence finally ended in the entire subjection of Edom's towns and territory by the kings of Judah. Uzziah completed the conquest by making himself master of the harbours on the Gulf of Akābah. At the final overthrow of Jerusalem long pent-up feelings found expression, and the Edomites shouted for joy at the ruin of their former mistress. Their rejoicings in the day of Jerusalem were never forgiven (Lam. iv. 21, 22; Ezek. xxxv. 3—15; Obad. 8—16; Ps. cxxxvii. 7). In the time of the Maccabees, the Jews for a brief while came to their own; but in the irony of history an Idumean sat on the throne of Solomon when at Bethlehem He was born King of the Jews whom the Jews rejected.

11 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Edom, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof;

11. *Edom.* This oracle of judgement upon Edom has been characterized as "evidently an interpolation from the exilic or post-exilic period." But no very strong argument can be drawn from the concluding formula; the author of later insertions would probably be careful to follow precedent in matters of form. Again, Sela (? = Petra), Edom's most important city, is omitted: but would it not be still more strange if the whole country were omitted from this catalogue of nations threatened by Assyria? Moreover the omission of Sela is easily explained; for Amaziah had taken and destroyed it, after a battle in which ten thousand fell (2 K. xiv. 7). For a similar reason Gath is omitted in the list of Philistine cities.

More to the point is the argument that up to this time Edom had been more sinned against than sinning. For two centuries Edom had been subject to Israel; and it was only after the lapse of almost two centuries more that the positions were in any sense reversed. On the other hand, there may have been all manner of incidents in those unsettled days of which no record remains; while the reference to Edom's part in the slave traffic both of Philistia and of Tyre makes it

because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and <sup>1</sup>did cast off all pity, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever : 12 but I will send a fire upon Teman, and it shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. corrupted his compassions.

more than likely that, if unable to meet Israel in open battle, the Edomites lost no opportunity of wreaking their spite in less honourable ways.

*he did pursue his brother with the sword.* So Obadiah denounces Edom, *for the violence done to thy brother Jacob* (Obad. 10). But had not Judah done the same? There surely must be here an allusion to some circumstance of which we have no other record.

*did cast off all pity*, lit. *destroyed his compassion*, or, as some render, *his brotherly feeling*, understanding an allusion to those born of the same *womb*. The meaning is that Edom simply set aside the most elementary dictates of natural feeling.

*his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his wrath for ever.* There are grammatical difficulties which make this rendering somewhat hazardous. With slight alterations we should probably read *and he retained his anger perpetually, and kept his wrath for ever*. This is supported by the parallelism, and by Jer. iii. 5, Ps. ciii. 9.

12. *Teman* is used by Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and Obadiah as a synonym for Edom. Teman had a great repute for wisdom (Jer. xlix. 7); it was the home of Eliphaz who came to comfort Job (Job ii. 11). There is no mention in this passage of any wall of Teman (contrast the wall of Gaza, 7; of Tyre, 9; of Rabbah, 14), from which we may conclude that a country, not a city, is intended. There is a similar absence of any mention of a wall in the case of Moab and Judah (ii. 2, 5).

*Bozrah* was Edom's chief city.

### e. *Against Ammon*, i. 13—15

It is probable that in the time of Amos the children of Ammon had achieved some kind of independence, though both Uzziah, whose reign coincided with the activity of Amos, and Jotham his successor compelled them to pay tribute (2 Chron. xxvi. 8, xxvii. 5). The national traditions, reflecting perhaps popular jealousy, give an unsavoury account of the origin of Moab and Ammon, at the same time recognizing the kinship of these people with Israel (Gen. xix. 30—38). The Ammonites and the Moabites dwelt on the east of Jordan, and had not only a common origin but to a large extent a common religion. Milcom god of Ammon, and Chemosh god of Moab, were fire-gods and man-eaters; and this hideous worship seems to have exercised a fatal fascination over the neighbouring Israelites. At the time of the Exodus Ammon was left undisturbed, but during the period of the Judges and of the monarchy there was continual warfare. David seems to have sanctioned the most awful atrocities, when Rabbah at last yielded to the Israelite armies (but cf. note on p. 6).

13 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have ripped up the women with child of Gilead, that they might enlarge their border: 14 but I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah, and it shall devour the palaces thereof, with shouting in the day of battle, with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind. 15 and their king shall go into captivity, he and his princes together, saith the LORD.

13. *Gilead* seems to have been simultaneously attacked by Aram in the north and by Ammon in the south. The cruelty here laid on the charge of the children of Ammon was no new thing in ancient warfare, e.g. 2 K. viii. 12.

*that they might enlarge their border.* To achieve such a purpose they were content to practise such horrors! The children of Ammon were constantly seeking to enlarge their borders at Israel's expense (Judg. xi. 12, and cf. 1 Sam. xi. 1-11).

14. *with a tempest in the day of the whirlwind.* The whirlwind was the hot storm wind sweeping up from the south. For a fine use of this metaphor of storm wind and tempest cf. Is. xxvii. 8 and xxviii. 2.

15. *their king.* Some would read Milcom, the name of the god of the Ammonites. There is some justification in the Versions for this correction; but it is to be noticed that in the parallel passages Amos denounces princes and palaces, not priests and temples; and further that the fault Amos finds in these heathen nations is not idolatry but inhumanity. He has no word against idolatry—save in the state and church of his own country.

### *f. Against Moab, ii. 1-3*

In their national and religious development, Moab and Israel furnish a significant contrast. The main thing that emerges from the Hebrew account of Moab's origin is Israel's conviction that kinship cannot be denied, and Israel's determination to discount this as much as might be.

The Moabites settled on the east of the Jordan, and occupied the tableland, some fifty miles long and thirty broad, which stretches eastward from the Dead Sea. In winter time the mountains of Moab present an exceedingly barren aspect, but the summer clothes them with verdure. The plateau has been described by travellers as "absolutely treeless, and broken only by deep, wide, warm valleys" (G. A. Smith). "Moab was a land of streams" (Conder), and of cities also. About fifty of these latter are mentioned at one time or another, whereas Rabbah is the only city of Ammon that is ever mentioned. Moab seems to have supported a population of about half a million. Their chief occupation was agriculture, to which the climate and the character of the land were unusually favourable. Their language was a Hebrew dialect; their

religion differed only slightly from the popular religion of Israel, though Chemosh took the place of Jahveh.

This introduces us to some interesting problems. While in Moab, as in Israel, more deities than one secured occasional recognition, yet in a special sense Chemosh was the national god. To him the vanquished were "devoted," i.e. massacred in his honour. To him (as Ahaz did to Moloch) did Mesha, king of Moab, sacrifice his firstborn. The Moabite Stone shows that in feeling as well as in fact Chemosh was to Moab exactly what Jahveh was to Israel.

How then are we to account for the fact that two nations so similar in speech, in religion, in all external conditions, should yet have achieved results which do not admit of the barest comparison?

The answer is certainly not to be found in the fortunes of war. At the time of the Exodus, the Moabites were already governed by a king. This, however, had not saved them from invasion. For Sihon, king of the Amorites, marched into their land and made himself master of the country. Thereupon the Moabites appealed for help to the Israelites, who at that time were encamped in the region of Kadesh. The Israelites marched to the relief of the Moabites, but after defeating Sihon, they themselves kept the land which they had been invited to deliver. The event was commemorated by a poem in the Book of the Wars of Jahveh (Numb. xxi. 14 f., 21—31). We cannot wonder that Balak, king of Moab, left no stone unturned to secure a divine curse upon his enemies; Josh. xxiv. 9 says that he fought against them; whatever the actual course of events may have been, there can be no doubt about the fierce struggle between the two nations which occurred early in the period of the Judges (Judg. iii. 12—30).

Towards the end of his reign David attacked the Moabites, and subjected them to unexampled severity (2 Sam. viii. 2). How long Moab remained tributary does not appear. But in 2 Kings iii. we read how Jehoram, king of Israel, having as his allies the king of Edom and Jehoshaphat of Judah, marched against Moab, and totally defeated Mesha, who commanded the Moabite forces. Mesha thereupon sacrificed his eldest son upon the city walls, *and there was great wrath against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land.* It is possible that defeat is here disguised as voluntary withdrawal; it is at least equally possible that the allies were "afraid to press the siege after what they believed to be an irresistible appeal to Chemosh" (Hastings' D.B. III. p. 411). The raising of the siege meant the break up of the coalition, and we know from the Moabite Stone that from this time Moab recovered its independence, which it seems never again to have lost, save, perhaps, for a few years to Jeroboam II.

Very likely the retreat of the three kings was attended with disaster. We can see from the story of the siege that the king of Edom was an object of special hatred to the Moabites, doubtless because of his defection to the common enemy (2 K. iii. 26). From this time the prosperity of Moab seems to have increased, until it was suddenly arrested by some irretrievable calamity. This much transpires from the oracles of Isaiah and Jeremiah: but we know nothing further as to its nature or occasion. All that can be said is that after the exile there is no further mention of Moab, save as a geographical term, or as a synonym for the enemies of the people of God. So completely had they perished.



We come back to the question why Moab was wiped off the earth leaving no legacy to mankind, while Israel has given us things of unmeasured value. And the answer is to be found in a sentence already used in a different connexion. Chemosh was to Moab exactly what Jahveh was to Israel. So it was in the beginning when both were tribal deities, but so it did not remain. For one religion by means of prophetic and also priestly ministries shewed moral power and capacity for progress, while the other proved itself incapable of advance. Wherefore the question may thus be answered: What Jahveh was to Chemosh, that Israel was to Moab. The prophets seized upon those historical and ethical features of Israel's religion which furnished them with an exhaustless argument, and provided the possibilities of progress, and these things were made so fundamental that in the end they were recognized as differentiating the righteous God of Israel from the deities of the surrounding tribes. So the religion of Chemosh perished with Moab: but the religion of Jahveh saved Israel, not once nor twice, and itself endureth for ever.

There is a further question and a deeper one. How came the prophets to apprehend the truth? Would it not be truer to say that they were themselves apprehended? At any rate, there is but one explanation of the insight which enabled the Hebrew prophets to penetrate to the truth of the nature and will of God. And this explanation we know as the fact of inspiration. No other hypothesis will serve, save that which recognizes in Israel the special working of that Spirit of God leading men to light and truth, and dividing to every man severally as He will.

**II. 1** Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Moab, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into

**II. 1.** *because he* (i.e. Moab) *burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime.* The meaning and the allusion are both doubtful. The Versions are probably right in regarding the phrase *into lime* as equivalent to *to dust*. This made burial of any kind absolutely impossible. We may compare 1 Sam. xxxi. 11—13, a passage which deserves quoting, because of the striking contrast it offers to the conduct described in the text: *when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard concerning him that which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan; and they came to Jabesh and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days.* The Moabites determined on this occasion that there should be no burning of the bodies and burying of the bones. Accordingly they dealt with Edom's royal corpse in such a way as to make it impossible for the mourners to honour the remains with any funeral rites, and for the soul of the king to find any rest or peace. The eastern nations readily identified the grave with Hades, the resting place of the body with the abode of the soul; and if the body could not rest in peace, the soul was also doomed to wander, seeking rest and finding none. Wherefore cremation was

lime: 2 but I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth; and Moab shall die with tumult, with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet: 3 and I will cut off the judge from the midst thereof, and will slay all the princes thereof with him, saith the LORD.

condemned, while embalming was a common practice, at least among such as could afford it. But such cremation as this was a piece of brutality towards a fallen enemy, which the conscience of Moab might have been expected to condemn.

The occasion of this burning is a matter of conjecture. An interesting but unlikely suggestion identifies the *king of Edom* with the *eldest son* whom Mesha sacrificed upon the wall (2 K. iii. 27), the son being not the king of Moab's, but the king of Edom's, captured perhaps before the beginning of the battle. It is, however, far more probable that Mesha slew his own son, and that this sacrifice, demanded of him for his country's saving, inflamed him more than ever against the king of Edom, who even without this additional incentive was the object of his special vengeance; and that, finding the king of Edom no longer in the land of the living, he did not hesitate to desecrate the dead.

2. *the palaces of Kerioth.* Either another name for Kir-Moab, a city of Judah conquered by Moab, or a synonym for Ar. LXX. translates Kerioth *the cities*; but it is better to treat the word as a place-name.

*Moab shall die with tumult.* Cf. Jer. xviii. 45. For *tumult* cf. also Hos. x. 14, Ps. lxxiv. 23.

*the trumpet,* lit. *the horn* (Heb. *shōphār*), "the oldest form of wind instrument in the world still in use." It was used in war (Judg. iii. 27), and to sound the alarm (Amos iii. 6). At a later stage it was used almost exclusively by the priests, and practically served the purpose of a church bell.

3. *I will cut off the judge.* *The judge* (*shōphēt*) refers to the chief officer of state, whether to the king, one of whose main functions was judicial, or to his deputy. In the Phœnician colonies, e.g. at Carthage, the government was in the hands of *suffetes* = *shōphētīm*.

## II. JUDGEMENT ON JUDAH AND ISRAEL II. 4—16

### a. *Against Judah, ii. 4, 5*

These verses are rejected by many critics as an interpolation due to the influence of the Deuteronomic School; in fact, many doubt the originality of all the references to Judah in the Book of Amos. The prophet, they contend, confined himself to preaching among the northern tribes. To a later editor, the omission of Judah seemed unaccountable; therefore he proceeded to fill in the gap by allusions betraying a later hand, both by their obvious intrusion into a context complete without them, and by their meagre and conventional style.

But surely the total omission of Judah is inconceivable; and further, even if Amos did not preach in Judah, it was there that he first heard Jahveh's call (i. 2), and it was there that he finally committed his prophecies to writing (cf. vii. 12); so that Amos may have himself inserted these references to Judah in reducing his oracles to literary form.

It is, however, impossible to feel sure that these verses are genuine<sup>1</sup>. Their coldness and conventionality are in marked contrast with the fervour of Amos, and his pungent denunciations. It may be allowed that Judah would not have been omitted altogether, but it is at least possible that Amos intended to include Judah in that which he said of Israel. At any rate in v. 10 he speaks of *bringing you up out of the land of Egypt, and leading you forty years in the wilderness*, which plainly includes Judah as well as Israel—a fact made still more clear (if need be) by the opening words of the following chapter, *Hear this word which Jahveh hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, even against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt*. Amos here makes it abundantly plain that *the children of Israel* are not co-extensive with the northern kingdom. It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the omission of these two verses would not necessarily imply that Judah was omitted altogether, but rather that it was included in Israel, i.e. the whole family which Jahveh brought up from Egypt.

4 Thus saith the LORD: For three transgressions of Judah, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have rejected the law of the LORD, and have not kept his statutes, and their lies have caused them to err, after

4. *they have rejected the law of the LORD*. This has a Deuteronomic sound; but it is quite consistent with an earlier date. The phrase is used by Isaiah, *they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel* (v. 24). Hosea also employs similar language, *thou hast rejected knowledge...thou hast forgotten the law of thy God* (iv. 6).

The *Tōrāh* (rendered *law*) of Jahveh was not a written code of laws, but *direction* or *instruction* given by God through the priests (see Ex. xviii. 17—26; Mic. iii. 11; Jer. ii. 8, xviii. 18) and through the prophets (Is. i. 10, viii. 16). Gradually these *directions* became codified, and then *Tōrāh* was used of a collection of such directions, summarizing the general duty of an Israelite to God and to his neighbour. Finally, the word was reserved, though never exclusively, for the laws formulated in the Pentateuch, and so for the Pentateuch itself. *The law of the LORD* which the men of Judah have rejected is not therefore any code of ceremonial observances, nor even a system of religious institutions; the reference is to the ordinances of civil righteousness.

*their lies have caused them to err*. *Their lies* are the false pretences put forward to excuse their idolatry, or the false prophets, or the false

<sup>1</sup> Cf. W. R. Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 399, and Cheyne's comments.

the which their fathers did walk : 5 but I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

gods, the authors of all deceitful superstitions. If we are right in taking *the law of the LORD* to denote civil and social righteousness, it is possible that these words in condemnation of idolatry are a later insertion. And yet not merely the history of Judah, but the history of religion shews that certain superstitions are "directly connected with peculiar systems of social ethic, and particularly with such practices as are condemned in Lev. xviii. or were still common in the time of Ezekiel (xxii. 10, 11)."

### b. *Against Israel*, ii. 6—16

At last Amos comes to his own country. They have sinned as Aram and Ammon have sinned, and *for three transgressions, yea, for four, I will not turn it back*. Israel has sinned as the heathen, very differently, but not less deeply. For wild as are the horrors of war, selfishness and sensuality may turn peace into a curse, and merit a yet more dreadful doom at the hands of the Judge of all the earth.

Israel had doubtless been guilty at some time or another of atrocities such as are laid to the charge of her neighbours. Why are these not mentioned in the catalogue of Israel's crimes? The reason is a striking one. To Amos the atrocities of war are not worthy to be compared with the abominations of peace: and the crimes of civilization are infinitely more cruel, more deliberate, more wicked than the outrages of barbarism. All these terrible massacres and wholesale deportations are an offence against Jahveh, which He will not let go unpunished; but there are things against which the hot anger of Jahveh rises with more burning fury: the oppression of the poor, the corruption of justice, the luxury, drunkenness and immorality; the profaning of holy things and the silencing of the prophets. These things stand as a climax of all sins against the Most High, and cry continually into the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth. *I will not turn it back, saith Jahveh.*

The oracle against Israel may be divided into three parts: (1) injustice and oppression have plunged the nation in sin (*vs.* 6—8), (2) although Jahveh has left nothing undone to teach His people and to train them in the ways of truth (*vs.* 9—12), (3) but all has been without result: and the nation must die, not even the swiftest or strongest escaping in that day (*vs.* 13—16).

6 Thus saith the LORD : For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they have sold the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes : 7 that pant after the dust of the earth on

6. *they have sold...the needy for a pair of shoes* (cf. viii. 6). A pair of shoes seems to have been a proverbial expression for something of

<sup>1</sup> W. R. Smith, *op. cit.* pp. 399—400.

the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek : and a man and his father will go unto the *same* <sup>1</sup>maid, to profane my holy name : 8 and they lay themselves down beside every

<sup>1</sup> Or, young woman

the smallest value. An interesting parallel is to be found in the LXX. text of 1 Sam. xii. 3, *from whose hand have I taken a bribe, even a sandal?* Answer me (ἐξίλασμα καὶ ὑπόδημα; ἀποκρίθητε κατ' ἐμοῦ, i.e. כֶּפֶר וְאַנְשֵׁי בֵּי כֶּפֶר וְאַנְשֵׁי בֵּי כֶּפֶר), a reading which is supported by Sir. xlvi. 19. Another suggestion is that we should refer to Ruth iv. 7; when property was transferred, to take off the sandal and hand it to the person in whose favour the transfer is made, gave a symbolic attestation to the act and invested it with legal validity (Driver, *Deuteronomy*, p. 283). If we adopt this interpretation, Amos is here denouncing the cheating of the poor out of their land: parallels readily occur, in Ahab's coveting of Naboth's vineyard and Isaiah's *Woe to them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room* (v. 8).

7. *that pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor.* The LXX. gives a double translation, and the Hebrew text is almost certainly corrupt. If we make no alteration we may interpret somewhat as follows: "who long for the dust of the earth, at the price of the head (? = lives) of the poor." The Assyrians used to speak of *the dust of the earth* as a somewhat unfeeling witticism for the gold and spoils of an enemy's country; and there is abundant authority for translating the Hebrew אַ as equivalent to "at the price of." The phrase however remains so peculiar as to make the text suspicious. A very slight emendation would give "who crush to the dust of the earth the head of the poor" (see Gen. iii. 15), while by omitting the words "to the dust of the earth" we simplify matters still further, and attain quite tolerable sense, "who crush the head of the poor." That is at any rate the best we can make of an extremely difficult passage; cf. viii. 4.

*a man and his father will go unto the same maid.* The point of this passage is not the condemnation of an exaggerated form of adultery, but the denunciation of heathenish practices in connexion with the worship of Jahveh; v. 7 b is thus continued naturally by v. 8. The addition of the clause *to profane my holy name* shews that the *maid* is one of the temple-prostitutes, who constituted a repulsive feature of Canaanite worship. They were known as *the holy women* or *consecrated ones*; for holiness in early religion had a ceremonial, not a moral, significance. The Deuteronomic Code legislates against this religious prostitution (Deut. xxiii. 17, 18), which was practised at the chief Canaanite sanctuaries, and had a degrading influence upon the Israelites. Cf. 1 K. xiv. 24; Hos. iv. 14.

*to profane my holy name.* The inevitable consequence of the action just mentioned is ironically represented as the purpose for which it was taken in hand. Cf. 1 Thess. ii. 16, "to fill up their sins alway."

altar upon clothes <sup>1</sup>taken in pledge, and in the house of their God they drink the wine of such as have been fined. 9 Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.

<sup>1</sup> See Ex. xxii. 26.

*The name of God* means nothing less than God as He reveals Himself to men. Any act which contravenes His character of holiness is a profaning of His holy Name. The words are specially significant in this context. "To profane my name," not "to profane me," because it is in His sanctuary that Jahveh reveals Himself, and it is His *holy name* that these *holy women* have defiled. Amos has a different standard of divine holiness from that which was currently accepted.

8. *and they lay themselves down beside every altar upon clothes taken in pledge.* The reference is to the law recorded in Ex. xxii. 26, 27, *If thou at all take thy neighbour's garment to pledge, thou shalt restore it to him by that the sun goeth down: for that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? and it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me that I will hear; for I am merciful.* Jahveh is merciful: but these worshippers of Jahveh are merciless. In Jahveh's very temple, and at His sacred feasts, these men, who possess plenty themselves, cruelly and illegally make the necessities of the poor serve their heartless luxury.

*beside every altar.* The reference is to the feasts following the sacrifice; cf. Hos. x. 1, *according to the multitude of his fruit he hath multiplied his altars.*

*in the house of their God.* Amos says *their God*; for though they call Him by His name Jahveh, they are not really worshipping the righteous God of Israel, but a God of their own, like themselves.

*the wine of such as have been fined,* i.e. the wine purchased by the fines they have unjustly inflicted on the poor and needy.

9. *Yet destroyed I.* The order of the Hebrew lends peculiar emphasis to the contrast between Jahveh's protection of His people and the ingratitude of the people for whom so much has been done. *And I—it was I who destroyed the Amorite,* cf. Ps. ii. 6, *And I—I have set my king* ("Stürmend bricht die Gottesrede ein").

*destroyed I the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks.* "What a contrast to the previous picture of the temple filled with fumes of wine, and hot with lust. We are out on open history: God's gales blow and the forests crash before them" (G. A. Smith).

*the Amorite* here stands (as always in the Elohist tradition) for the entire Canaanite population previous to the Israelite occupation.

*I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.* A metaphor by no means uncommon, signifying utter destruction;

10 Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite.

11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young

cf. Is. xxxvii. 31 and the Phœnician inscription of Eshmun-azar, lines 11, 12<sup>1</sup>, "may they have no fruit downwards nor fruit upwards!"

As a matter of fact the destruction of the Amorite is here described with a certain amount of poetic exaggeration. At first it was recognized as being a far more gradual affair (e.g. Judg. i. 19, 21, 27, 31), but as the Canaanite element slowly disappeared the representations of the conquest changed their character, and the destruction of the Amorite came to be regarded as having been complete from the beginning.

10. *I brought you up out of...Egypt.* This verse gives the positive, as the previous verse gave the negative, side of God's gracious dealings. To this logical order the chronological order has been sacrificed. Some critics, not without reason, suggest the transposition of the two verses.

The deliverance from Egypt was that to which Israel's greatest teachers looked back as to the beginning of the nation and of the national religion. Not in the courts of the temple with its unhallowed union of wickedness and worship could true religion flourish; but on the broad fields of a nation's history where the ploughers had ploughed and made long furrows, where also God had with His own hand cast the golden grain and given the increase of it. There men can learn best to know God and His purposes.

11. *I raised up of your sons for prophets.* In treating of a nation's history, spiritual facts must not be left out of account. On the contrary, it is on the stage of history, and under the shelter of national life, that religious truths can claim the attention which is their due.

*prophets.* It was precisely this prophetic ministry that distinguished Israel from the neighbouring tribes. The author of Deuteronomy recognized this fact; *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I command him* (Deut. xviii. 18); a passage which, taken in connexion with its context, does not admit of a personal interpretation, but is rather a promise that, after the settlement in Canaan, Israel's permanent need of divine direction will be met by a prophetic ministry. "The prophet is to be to Israel what the diviners are to heathen nations. The latter profess to supply a continually recurring need: and it is a similar need that the prophet is designed to satisfy in Israel<sup>2</sup>." It is therefore to prophecy as a permanent channel of revelation, rather than to any individual prophets however great, that Amos here alludes. Hosea teaches no other lesson; *By a prophet the LORD brought Israel up out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved* (Hos. xii. 13).

<sup>1</sup> Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Edghill, *Evidential Value of Prophecy*, p. 231; cf. also Driver, *Deut.*, p. 229.

men for Nazirites. Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel? saith the LORD. 12 But ye gave the Nazirites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not. 13 Behold,<sup>1</sup> I will

<sup>1</sup> Or, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves

*Nazirites.* The word *Nazirite* is derived from a stem signifying *separation*, and hence complete consecration to God. In old Israel the Nazirite was no doubt a familiar figure, but besides Samson (Judg. xiii.), the only other and not quite certain example is Samuel (1 Sam. i. 11). From the story of Samson we learn that (1) the consecration took effect from birth; (2) it was lifelong and not temporary; (3) the distinguishing mark of it was the unshorn hair; (4) the task of a person so devoted was to wage war. There was nothing ascetic about a Nazirite in the early days (Judg. xiv. 10); but by the time of Amos abstinence from wine had become the sign of this type of devotee, and then most likely as a protest against Canaanite habits; cf. the Rechabites, Jer. xxxv. 9 ff. The detailed law of the Nazirite in the Priestly Code (Numb. vi.) represents what was probably a still later development<sup>1</sup>.

It may be inferred from this passage that the Nazirites played a considerably greater part in the religious and social life of Israel than we should have supposed from the scanty notices of them surviving in the Old Testament. After the exile, the institution seems to have flourished to such an extent as to need being brought under restriction (i.e. in Numb. vi.). From this time forward, lifelong vows seem to have been altogether the exception. As a result, the institution naturally became more popular. We hear of three hundred Nazirites being on one occasion assembled together<sup>2</sup>. The vow became, in fact, a kind of private devotion and temporary asceticism, assumed until some divine favour had been granted. Even among Jewish Christians this custom was not unknown, as we see from Acts xxi. 23 ff.; while John the Baptist, and James the Lord's brother (if Eusebius is to be trusted), appear to have revived in their own persons the lifelong consecration characteristic of earlier enthusiasm.

*saith the LORD*, lit. ('Tis the) oracle of Jahveh.

The word for *oracle* is used nearly 400 times in the O.T., and occurs outside prophetic literature only thrice. With barely ten exceptions it is followed by the name of Jahveh. The root in Arabic signifies to *groan* or *sigh*, and points probably to the various mysterious means by which a primitive people believed divine communications to be made (cf. the talking oak at Dodona). We may compare the vivid description given by Eliphaz of the vision and the voice that came to him, Job iv. 12—16.

12. *and commanded the prophets, saying, Prophecy not.* Better *ye shall not prophesy.* The rebellious people command the prophets to

<sup>1</sup> See further, Cooke, *Judges and Ruth*, p. 132 f.

<sup>2</sup> Midrash *Ereashith R.* § 91; Schürer, *Gesch. d. Jüd. Volkes*<sup>3</sup>, i. p. 279 f.



press *you* in your place, as a cart presseth that is full of sheaves. 14 And <sup>1</sup>flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver <sup>2</sup>himself: 15 neither shall he stand that handleth the bow; and he that is swift of foot shall not deliver *himself*: neither shall he that rideth the horse deliver <sup>2</sup>himself: 16 and he that is courageous

<sup>1</sup> Or, refuge shall fail the swift

<sup>2</sup> Heb. his soul, or, life.

cease from prophesying in a phrase which parodies the divine commandments of the Ten Words. They feel themselves quite equal to Jahveh. If He commands, so will they. The best illustration of this conduct is drawn from the experience of Amos himself at Bethel. Jahveh had said to him, *Go, prophesy unto my people Israel*. And Amaziah, Jahveh's priest, insisted, *Prophesy not against Israel* (vii. 15f.). Another famous instance is that of Micaiah-ben-Imlah (1 K. xxii. 8, 26-28).

13-16. Amos has charged the people with their crimes (8-10), and has told the tale of Jahveh's goodness and vain forbearance (11, 12); nothing now remains but judgement. And as for this judgement, Jahveh will Himself bring it to pass (13), and not a soul shall escape it (14-16).

13. *I will press you in your place, as a cart presseth that is full of sheaves*. The text is obscure. Most renderings are based on the idea that the allusion is to an earthquake, perhaps to the earthquake mentioned in i. 1; we must then read, with a slight change of text, *I will make it* (i.e. the ground) *totter under you, as a waggon totters that is full of sheaves*. At first sight Hoffmann's rendering seems to suit the context better: *I will make you groan in your places*, as the waggon groans that is filled with sheaves; similarly Aquila (τριζήσω) and Jerome (*stridebo*); but the translation is not really supported by the use of the Arabic root to which appeal is made.

*a cart...full of sheaves*. Apparently such harvest waggons neither are, nor were, used in Palestine; but Amos must at some time or another have seen some such waggon, perhaps beyond the limits of his own country. Wellhausen reminds us that such waggons were not in use among the Arabs, and yet an Arabian poet could compare the rolling of the thunder to the rumbling of a heavily loaded waggon of the north country.

14, 15. Again and again Amos pictures the impossibility of escape, of set purpose using the same words, in order to convey by their vivid monotony the hopelessness of the situation. The words *he that rideth the horse, the mighty man*, etc. make it clear that the destruction will come by war. And this war is not as the ebb and flow of the Syrian border battles. It is utterly overwhelming. Amos knows the name of the irresistible enemy, but he will not make mention of it yet.

among the mighty shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD.

16. *in that day.* The day of Jahveh, concerning which the prophet has much more to say in v. 18 ff.

## B. THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE COMING JUDGEMENT III.—VI.

Amos has announced the certainty of coming judgement; he now proceeds to set out in detail those transgressions both in the Church and in the State which made the judgement certain.

These four chapters, therefore, give us a collection of oracles, which may not have been spoken all at one time, but are conveniently grouped together by the recurrence of two formulae: *Hear this word*, which stands at the head of chs. iii, iv, and v., and *Woe unto...*, at v. 18 and vi. 1.

There are no doubt a number of interruptions and dislocations in the text as it now stands: but it is very rash to insist on a rigid sequence, or to reject a passage because its connexion with the context is not apparent to ourselves.

Part of ch. viii. (4—12) may very likely belong to this earlier group of oracles; at any rate it seems to be out of place in its present position, while it is introduced by a very similar phrase to that employed in iii. 1, iv. 1, v. 1. Thus we may hazard a provisional reconstruction of part of the prophecy as follows:

- (1) My word is the word of God: so hear, all ye children of Israel (iii. 1—8).
- (2) God has sworn (iv. 2, viii. 7): therefore hear (viii. 4).
  - a. Ye proud and thoughtless women (iv. 1—3).
  - b. Ye violent and unjust men (viii. 4—9).
- (3) Hear then what God has sworn (viii. 9—12).

But in the present state of the text conjecture is no sure refuge, and we must be content with somewhat artificial divisions.

## I. THE ROAR OF THE LION. THE CERTAINTY OF DOOM III. 1—8

The third chapter opens with one of the finest prophecies in the O.T., but there is much divergence as to its right interpretation. It is generally supposed to be "a noble digression," explaining the prophet's mission as due to Jahveh constraining him to speak, or the prophet's close connexion with the events of his time. We shall have reason to see that another interpretation is not only possible, but far more illuminating, and consonant with the whole context of Amos' thought and message.

**III. 1—8.** Amos has delivered his prophecy of judgement on Israel; but there are many who deny and depreciate his words. Politically all is prosperous; religiously the people are full of fervour. Jahveh will not desert His own nation, and there is no cause of fear. The political and religious leaders of Israel are at one in their fancied security; they

are blind to actual facts. And the first fundamental fact is that *two cannot walk together unless they be agreed*. A covenant implies a reciprocity of obligations. Israel has not fulfilled her part, and therefore, as far as she is able to do so, has made the covenant of no effect. Nay rather, having been chosen by God for a particular purpose, she must answer for frustrating that purpose by her deliberate wickedness. Her failure to rise to the level of her responsibilities only increases the measure of her punishment. *You only have I known, (taking you) from all the families of the earth: therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities*. For between a nation and its God there must be agreement.

But what agreement is there now between Jahveh and Israel? They have no longer anything in common; and the remembrance of past mercies, so frequently, so contemptuously rejected, makes cooperation in the future a hopeless dream. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* And of these two, Amos has already shewn how Israel has forsaken Jahveh (ii. 6—13), and how Jahveh is planning Israel's punishment, terrible and irretrievable.

Theories may convince but rarely convert, the more so if they seem to involve unwelcome inferences. Princes, priests and people, reluctant to be convinced, refusing to be converted, obstinately oppose to the prophet's warnings the actual facts of the situation. *What sign sheweth thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?* Plenty and prosperity cast no shadow of coming disaster upon the smooth surface of the national security. What can the prophet say to an argument so incontrovertible? Facts are the most radical critics; and in this case the facts themselves disprove the prophet's forebodings. But Amos will not thus be silenced. The appeal is to facts: to facts they shall go. Amos sees further than these blind politicians, and he knows that there is a whole series of facts which they have ignored. Not merely in the spiritual sphere where facts are no less real, and involve no less real consequences for being dismissed by superior persons as fancies, but, in that very sphere of national politics which they claim to have made their own, they are blind to the greatest fact of all. The rise of Assyria has no message, no meaning for them. They have lost all thought of cause and effect; they have lost all sight of any divine purposes in the earth; they have dismissed all ideas of righteousness and true religion as a practical force in this world's ways. Thus it happened then, as it has often happened since, that the leaders of a nation, who have lost the sense of spiritual things, became blind also to things pertaining to the secular sphere: while the prophet who is awake to unseen realities is the best interpreter of those things also which are seen, yet scarcely heeded.

4, 5. Amos therefore accepts the appeal to facts, reminding his hearers that there is no such thing as a mere fact in isolation. Every fact springs from a certain cause, and works itself out to a clear result. Even now the roar of the enemy can be heard, and Israel is already in the hunter's toils. The prophet portrays in a double figure the real situation into which Israel has unconsciously but

irretrievably come. If the lion roars, he will shortly spring! If the hunter goes hunting, let the bird beware! Let Israel be warned in time! The roar of the lion may be unintelligible to the unheeding beast, and the hunter may be invisible to the thoughtless bird, but the prophet sees that his people are doomed to be devoured, that they are entrapped beyond possibility of escape.

"The situation is the result of the separation of Israel from Jahveh. The difficulty lies in the fact that Israel as a nation has long been deaf to the roaring of the lion, and blind to the hunter and his snare. Only the prophet hears and sees<sup>1</sup>."

But though the people be blind, Amos labours to open their eyes. He heaps figure upon figure that they may shake themselves free from deathly slumber, and look at facts which it is perilous to ignore.

First (*vv.* 1—3) he has explained that agreement between Israel and Jahveh is at an end, and nothing remains but a fearful punishment.

Then (*vv.* 4, 5) he tells of a nation implacable as a lion, heartless as a hunter, ready to pounce upon its prey.

Now (*vv.* 6, 7) he asks why, when the servants of Jahveh have at His command sounded the alarm, the people do not tremble at the calamity which He is sending upon them.

Finally (*v.* 8) comes the climax. These things are not theories. The enemy has shewn himself, the lion has roared. Jahveh has warned and the prophets have spoken. Who so blind as not to see? Who so deaf as not to hear? Jahveh Himself is both author and announcer of the calamity that shall surely come.

Such, in general, is the sense of this magnificent oracle. Some particular passages require further annotation.

**III. 1** Hear this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will visit

1. *against the whole family.* Judah, then, is not excluded from this special judgement, nor from the universal doom.

2. *You only have I known of all the families,* lit. known from all the families, i.e. chosen from, distinguished from.

A strikingly similar thought is found in Gen. xviii. 19, *For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgement.*

The belief that Israel was specially chosen by Jahveh lies at the root of St Paul's doctrine of election. The Apostle realized what the prophets realized, though the average Israelite did not, that election is *according to purpose*, and that the divine choice shall only stand so long as the divine purpose is carried out. Israel was chosen by

<sup>1</sup> Harper, *Amos and Hosea*, p. 68.

upon you all your iniquities. 3 Shall two walk together, except they have <sup>1</sup>agreed? 4 Will a lion roar in the forest, when he

<sup>1</sup> Or, made an appointment

Jahveh, that through Israel Jahveh's name might be glorified throughout the world. It was for service and for sacrifice that Israel was taken hold of by the electing love of God. So there grew up in Israel a double thought, first a sense of special election, and then a sense of mission to the world. Unfortunately the former was far more acceptable to the mass of men than the latter; and so it came to pass that this truth, being but half the truth, became the basis of a superstition so gross and selfish, that it took all the efforts of the prophets to shake the people out of their pious complacency. The choice they declared was not unconditional. And when those who were chosen gave themselves up to complacent self-satisfaction (cf. the assurance in Ps. cxlvii. 19, 20) instead of girding themselves to the work of witness laid on them by their peculiar position, then the prophets declared that the punishment would be the greater for the misused privilege. *You only have I known, therefore I will visit upon you...* (not *my loving kindnesses*, but) *all your iniquities*.

"Religion is no insurance against judgement, no mere atonement and escape from consequences. Religion is only opportunity—the greatest moral opportunity which men have, and which if they violate nothing remains for them, but a certain fearful looking forward unto judgement. You only have I known; and because you did not take the moral advantage of My intercourse, because you felt it only as privilege and pride, pardon for the past and security for the future, therefore doom the more inexorable awaits you<sup>1</sup>."

*all the families of the earth*, lit. *of the ground*, a word purposely chosen "to stamp the meanness and mortality of them all" (G. A. Smith, *in loc.*).

3. *Shall two walk together, except they have agreed?* And between Israel and Jahveh there is no agreement possible.

This seems to be the simplest interpretation, but two other explanations of the passage have been given which deserve mention.

(1) The words are connected with what follows, instead of with that which precedes. The phrase will then be one more figure of cause and invariable effect. On the black mountain land of Tekoa you will not see two men walking together unless they have made an appointment so to meet (cf. Jos. xi. 5, Job ii. 11). The climax does not refer to Israel and Jahveh, but to Jahveh and Amos. Here the prophet stands forth against his will, but Jahveh has sent him to announce the dread plans He is preparing against His people. Amos has no alternative save to speak that which is put into his mouth. The whole passage is thus regarded as "a noble digression" on prophecy. Nothing, it is true, can rob this passage of its nobility, but

<sup>1</sup> G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 144 f.

hath no prey? will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing? 5 Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for him? shall a snare spring up from the ground, and have taken nothing at all? 6 Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid? shall evil befall a city, and the LORD hath not done it? 7 Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his

such an interpretation makes havoc of the context; and "digression" is too mild a word for so violent an interruption.

(2) Another view would take the "agreement" as referring to the agreement of all the prophets among themselves, thus testifying to the divine authority of their message, a testimony all the more necessary in view of the fact that they had been forbidden to speak in the name of Jahveh (ii. 12). This view again makes havoc of the context, and labours under special difficulties of its own.

5. *Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is set for him? shall a snare spring up from the ground, and have taken nothing at all?* We should have expected the opposite order, first the snare springing up from the ground, and then the falling bird. But Amos reverses the logical order, for he perceives that the bird has already fallen, and that the people are already in the toils of destruction.

6. *Shall the trumpet be blown in a city, and the people not be afraid?* as an alarm against the enemy's advance, cf. Jer. vi. 1; Ezek. xxxiii. 3 ff.

*shall evil befall a city, and the LORD hath not done it?* Words yet more startlingly bold occur in Is. xlv. 7, *I make peace, and create evil; I am the LORD, that doeth all these things.*

It is the consistent doctrine of the O.T. that Jahveh is the author of evil as well as of good. This doctrine, however, has no point of contact with any philosophical speculations as to the origin of evil, for the evil which the O.T. attributes to the power of Jahveh always means *physical, and never moral evil*. The Hebrews, however much they were perplexed at the incidence of misfortune, held unwaveringly to this double doctrine concerning evil: that moral evil proceeds from man, acting freely in opposition to the will of God, and that physical evil comes from God, who sends it as the punishment for sin.

7. *Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.* Not a very satisfactory rendering. We should translate *For* (so far from evil happening, and Jahveh not doing it) *the Lord Jahveh doeth nothing except he have revealed his secret*. Amos is not referring to any future revelation on Jahveh's part, but to His present and invariable principles of action.

It must be admitted that this fine verse (the bearing of which upon prophecy is discussed in the Introduction) somewhat disturbs the connexion, and several critics have been disposed to regard it as a wrongly interpolated explanation of 8b, *who can but prophesy?*

servants the prophets. 8 The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord GOD hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

However, the reasons given for its rejection are unconvincing; and on the whole the verse fits fairly smoothly into its context. All disaster comes from Jahveh; but it never comes without warning, why then are the people not penitent and afraid?

8. *who can but prophesy?* Wellhausen would emend the text, and read *Who can but tremble?* which makes excellent sense, but has no textual justification. The words do not allude to the constraint that Amos felt laid on him to speak in Jahveh's name, but have a far wider reference. When all things are so plain, is there anyone who cannot see? When the lion leaps roaring on his prey, is there anyone so senseless as not to fly? When the Lord Jahveh speaks, is there anyone so destitute of imagination as not to be able to interpret? For in the tramp of the armies of Assyria Jahveh calls to the nation's conscience in trumpet tones. Who cannot tell the end thereof if the call is unheeded? *Who is there that cannot prophesy?* It needs no special inspiration to foretell so plain an issue; the meanest may see and read the signs. On one and all is laid the burden of prophesying that Israel may turn to penitence, and Jahveh may "repent him of the evil."

## II. THE SHAME OF SAMARIA III. 9—IV. 3

- (a) The very heathen are astonished to see Samaria sin, 9—10.
- (b) But an adversary will sweep away the couches and the cushions; the altars also and all the houses, 11—15.
- (c) The fate of Samaria's womenkind, iv. 1—3.

9 Publish ye <sup>1</sup>in the palaces at Ashdod, and <sup>1</sup>in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the

<sup>1</sup> Or, upon

### (a) *Samaria's sin*, 9, 10

9. *Ashdod.* The LXX. reads ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις, *among the Assyrians*, but Amos never mentions the name of the dreaded nation that is always in his thoughts.

*Ashdod...Egypt.* This is quite in the manner of Amos. Righteousness, according to the prophet's idea, is no exclusively Palestinian product. He appeals to the common conscience of humanity. As in the first chapter he gave emphatic expression to this universal conception of right and justice, so now he represents the very heathen as amazed at the greatness of the crimes of the chosen people. Later prophets repeated and reinforced this idea, and One greater than Amos brought the same charge against His own, who received Him not.

mountains of Samaria, and behold what great tumults are therein, and what oppressions in the midst thereof. 10 For they know not to do right, saith the LORD, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces. 11 Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD: An adversary *there shall be*, even round about the land: and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled. 12 Thus saith the LORD: As the shepherd

*the mountains of Samaria.* Samaria was surrounded on three sides by mountains. It was founded by Omri and fortified by Ahab so successfully that for three years it defied the armies of Assyria. On these mountains the princes of Philistia and Egypt are now summoned to stand and see Samaria's shame.

9, 10. Certain textual alterations are suggested to make sense and rhythm smoother, notably the omission of *and say* (which may well belong to the clause *in the palaces of Egypt*), and *what oppressions in the midst thereof* (a curious phrase really signifying *and the oppressed* etc.) and *saith the LORD*.

10. *they know not.* The ignorance which both breeds, and is bred by, indifference. The wealthy Samaritans have lost all sense of right.

*store up violence and robbery in their palaces.* A fine phrase combining two lines of thought. (1) Amos passes a moral judgement on the possessions which the princes of Samaria have accumulated by all manner of unjust means. Their treasures are wrung out of the poor, they are the result of nothing but robbery and violence. (2) As other men heap up money, so the nobles heap up oppression, and as treasure is hoarded in a miser's hovel, so are these palatial mansions crammed with violence, calling down the instant judgement of Heaven.

For (1) cf. Is. iii. 14 f., *the spoil of the poor is in your houses: what mean ye that ye crush my people, and grind the face of the poor?*

For (2) cf. what St James has to say concerning the rich of his day, *ye have laid up your treasure in the last days*, v. 3.

### (b) *Samaria's judgement*, 11-15

11. *An adversary there shall be, even round about the land.* This is, perhaps, the best that can be made of the Hebrew text as it stands; but a very slight alteration, which is supported by the Syriac Version, would yield better grammar and better sense: *An enemy shall surround the land.* The word translated *an enemy* is often used to signify *distress*; it is quite possible that Amos has no particular adversary in view, and that he is personifying distress.

15. This verse follows most naturally after v. 11. Amos prophesies the spoiling of the palaces (11 b), and then proceeds to give a more detailed description of the disaster that is encircling the land.

*The winter house and the summer house* were probably not two distinct though contiguous houses, but different parts of one building,



the upper storey or roof being arranged for use in summer, while the ground floor served for all winter requirements. An Aramaic inscription from Zenjirli, almost contemporaneous with Amos, tells how the king of Sam'al decorated his palace in honour of his royal ancestors, and "it is for them a summer house and a winter house," i.e. it may be used without interruption both in summer and in winter<sup>1</sup>.

*houses of ivory.* Cf. Ps. xlv. 8, *out of ivory palaces stringed instruments have made thee glad*; also 1 K. xxii. 39, which tells of *the ivory house* which Ahab built. In vi. 4 we hear of *divans of ivory*. *the great houses* should more probably be translated *many houses*, as in Is. v. 9.

It will be noticed how four times in this one verse the indignation of Amos bursts out against *the houses* of the capital. Other prophets hated *horses* (cf. the interpretation in iv. 10) as a sign of a luxurious generation, and as part of the pomp of an Oriental court. But Amos, son of the desert, goes further. Accustomed to the tent or the open sky, he wages war against civilization altogether, and protests against the very houses which seem in their solidity to defy change. The spirit which animated the builders was that of an utterly careless and godless prosperity. *The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stone: the sycomores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars* (Is. ix. 10). The houses are the symbols of this prosperous materialism; and the wanderer of the desert smites them again and again. *Ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them* (v. 11); and because this spirit is abroad in the whole nation, and because it is only want of opportunity that prevents the poor being as the rich, therefore all houses whether great or small shall be overthrown. *The great house shall be smitten with breaches, and the little house with clefts* (vi. 11).

What is the meaning of this outburst? Is it merely the fury of the desert-dweller against all culture, all civilization? For it must be observed that Amos threatens not the advanced complexities, but the elementary necessities, of any form of civilization. That is, in fact, just the point. It is not merely the excrescences which he condemns, but the very structure of the nation's life. It has been built on an utterly false foundation, and the entire fabric is doomed to perish. Amos foresees the terrible catastrophe which awaits the boasted civilization of his country. And he knows that the disaster is Jahveh's work. The axe is laid to the root of the tree: and because it bears corrupt fruit, it must be hewn down and cast into the fire.

The unparalleled boldness of the prophet is worth considering. We, no less than ancient Israel, are far too much inclined to accept the sins of civilization as the normal state of affairs. After the feeblest of protests, we acquiesce in social conditions irreconcilable with any Christian standard; we regard them as inevitable, as a regrettable necessity. We need a prophet like Amos to come forward, and call these things by their proper names; and in answer to our plausible pretexts to declare that, if these things are an essential part of our

<sup>1</sup> See Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 181.

rescueth out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a piece of an ear; so shall the children of Israel be rescued that sit in Samaria in the corner of a couch, and <sup>1</sup>on the silken cushions of a bed.

<sup>1</sup> According to some ancient versions and MSS., in Damascus on a bed.

social system, then God will Himself deal with the whole matter in such a way that the downfall of the system will be irretrievable. It is the prophet's task to *challenge contemporary civilization in the name of God*; to insist, as Amos insisted, that no price is too high to pay for social righteousness; to warn that judgement may be executed by rude and savage men, and be brought about even by criminal methods; but that in these things God is Himself working out His purpose, which is the establishment of righteousness upon earth. Righteousness exalteth a nation; but where any form of civilization or commercialism, instead of reforming such things in the social system as offend the Christian conscience, counts rather upon maintaining cruel conditions of life and labour as essential to its own prosperity, there arises to the ears of the Lord God of Sabaoth the cry for judgement; and judgement when it comes will sweep away much that in itself may be innocent, because it is tainted by its connexion with an unrighteous civilization. There are times when the whole fabric must come down, despite its architectural embellishments or the innocence of the inmates. The men and methods employed in its demolition may appear violent; but God is His own interpreter, and in His own good time we shall see how an age of catastrophe prepared the way for a new order of things in the working out of man's salvation.

12. *the mouth of the lion.* Amos alludes to lions more than once: cf. *vv.* 4, 8; v. 19. The shepherds of Palestine had to be prepared to encounter lions both before and after Amos: cf. 1 Sam. xvii. 34, 35, Is. xxxi. 4. The last passage is particularly noticeable. Amos in this grim parable pictures Assyria as the lion; in Isaiah Jahveh Himself is the assailant roaring over Israel His prey, and utterly undismayed by Israel's multitude of craven shepherds. Is it not possible that Isaiah took from Amos this parable of the lion-like providence of God?

*two legs, or a piece of an ear.* Why should the shepherd rescue these fragments? The answer is supplied by Ex. xxii. 10—13; if the shepherd can produce evidence of his watchfulness, he need make no compensation for the loss of any animals under his charge which have been torn by wild beasts.

*that sit in Samaria in the corner of a couch.* Perhaps the corner was more thickly cushioned than other parts: perhaps it was the seat of honour: perhaps, as Hoffmann suggests, there is a sarcastic reference to some new court fashion of sitting on these divans, instead of lying on them.

*and on the silken cushions of a bed, R.V.; and in Damascus in a couch, A.V.* Of these words it may almost be said—*Quot interpretet tot sententiae.*

(1) *Damascus* seems best to correspond with *Samaria*, but the

13 Hear ye, and testify against the house of Jacob, saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts. 14 For in the day that I shall

introduction of Damascus seems inexplicable. Jeroboam II. is, indeed, said to have *recovered Damascus* (2 K. xiv. 28), but the text of that passage is in a confused state, and by a slight alteration it would read *how he fought with Damascus, and turned away Jahveh's wrath from Israel*. At any rate Amos always regards Damascus as an Aramaean city, which makes it the less likely that he should suddenly mention it in this connexion.

(2) A different series of translations arises from treating the word as though it were equivalent to silky stuffs, manufactured in Damascus. But it is more than doubtful whether there is any real connexion between "damask" and the town from which it seems to derive its name. Moreover there is no kind of evidence to shew that Damascus was as yet celebrated for this kind of manufacture.

\* Rearrangements of the text have not been sufficiently successful to detain us. Whatever the obscure phrase may mean, it must clearly stand for something parallel to *the corner of the couch*, in the preceding clause.

Amos, the shepherd, whose bed has been the hard earth, is moved to indignation at the sight of these voluptuous nobles of Samaria, sprawling on couches; but that does not seem an adequate explanation of the introduction of the verse into this context. The real reason, which seems to have escaped the notice of commentators, is connected with the previous parable—the two legs and an ear. This gruesome picture suggested to Amos the attack of the Assyrian upon Samaria, and the coward nobles seeking shelter in the corner of couches and under the coverlets of the ivory beds. That has been the place where they could most often be found; they may be said to *dwell* there; and when the rude soldier enters their habitation, their luxury has made them too lazy even to attempt any effectual concealment. There they lie on their couches, *a piece of an ear and two legs* still shewing from the mass of *silken stuffs* which they hoped would have hidden their craven carcasses.

13. *saith the Lord GOD, the God of hosts*. The stately recapitulation of the divine titles is entirely in harmony with the solemn announcement of judgement which closes this section. Professor Harper (*Int. Crit. Com.*) regards these words as either wholly or in part a gloss; while others still more emphatically reject them as disturbing the rhythm of the passage. The majority of commentators, however, recognize a fine appropriateness in the majestic accumulation of the names.

The four words expressive of the divine dignity occur together and in this order only here in the O.T. Of the fuller forms, Amos generally uses *Jahveh, the God of hosts* (iv. 13, v. 14, 15, 27, vi. 8, 14; cf. v. 16, ix. 5; not common elsewhere); he does not use the title *Jahveh of hosts* (LXX. ὁ παντοκράτωρ), which occurs regularly in the prophets, and in the prophetic histories, and in six prophetic psalms.

visit the transgressions of Israel upon him, I will also visit the altars of Beth-el, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground. 15 And I will smite <sup>1</sup>the winter house with

<sup>1</sup> See Jer. xxxvi. 22.

It is clear why Amos prefers to speak of Jahveh as *the God of hosts* rather than as the *God of Israel*. Never once does he use the latter name, because to him Jahveh is something more than the God of His people: the God of righteousness all the world over.

*Jahveh of hosts.* What is the exact meaning of this title?

(a) 1 Sam. xvii. 45 seems to shew that the reference is primarily to the armies of Israel: *Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear...but I come to thee in the name of Jahveh of hosts (the God of the armies of Israel)*. But that passage, while illustrating the sense attached to the title by the author, cannot be regarded as in any way decisive of its origin. Moreover it is by no means improbable that the words in brackets may themselves be a later explanation. Further, the word *hosts* is hardly ever used for the armies of Israel, save in the Priestly Code, which is a comparatively late source, while the books which use the title *Jahveh of hosts* very rarely speak of Israel's armies at all. Finally, the title is often used where a martial sense would be particularly inappropriate.

(b) Smend suggests that the title was first employed by Amos to denote the armies of heaven, all the elements and forces of nature, such as are mentioned in ix. 2—6. He appeals to Gen. ii. 1, *all the host of them*; Ps. ciii. 21, cxlviii. 2, *all his hosts*. But these passages occur in what is very distinctly the later literature. Amos, moreover, does not use the term in such a way as to give the impression that he has coined a new phrase to express the sovereignty of God, and is introducing it for the first time to an unfamiliar audience. Finally, "such a sense is too abstract to stand as the origin of the expression."

(c) The third view is that *the hosts* were intended originally to stand for the armies of angels. There is no doubt that Jahveh was continually pictured as a King holding high state in heaven's halls, and attended by thousands of celestial beings. For this conception we may refer to Is. vi., 1 K. xxii., Ps. xxiv.; cf. also Jer. xlv. 18, cxlviii. 15. Ewald suggests that the title was "born in the shout of victory," when in some great battle it seemed as if Jahveh and His angels had descended to fight for Israel; cf. Judg. v. 4, 5, and 20, *They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera*. The title, thus referring to Jahveh as Commander and King, was used by the prophets as the most significant designation of the exalted sovereignty of God.

14. *I will also visit the altars of Beth-el...to the ground.* As the text stands the words disturb the connexion of thought, v. 15 being the clear conclusion to this judgement on the proud nobles. *Their* punishment is the destruction of all their fine palaces, not the demolition of Bethel's altars. We may therefore regard this verse as an insertion by

<sup>1</sup> the summer house ; and the houses of ivory shall perish, and  
<sup>2</sup> the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.

**IV. 1** Hear this word, ye kine of Bashan, that are in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say unto their lords, Bring, and let us drink.

<sup>1</sup> See Judg. iii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Or, many

some reader or editor who felt that no prophecy of judgement could be complete without a reference to the idolatrous worship of the northern province.

The objection to this verse, however, on the score of its unsuitability to the context, falls if we place *v.* 15 (as we have suggested) immediately after *v.* 11. In this case the verse under discussion forms a fitting climax. Bethel was a place of peculiar sacredness and special importance. Abraham (Gen. xii. 8) and Jacob (Gen. xxxv. 7) had erected altars there ; and there sacrifice had been continually offered. At the division of the kingdom, Bethel became the centre of Israelite worship. We know, also, from Amos that it was a royal residence and a royal sanctuary (vii. 13). The destruction of the altars of Bethel would signify the abolition of Israel's worship and independence, the humiliation of the royal house, the overthrow of the last refuge of the people, neither *the horns of the altar* nor those clinging to them being spared.

(c) *Samaria's women*, iv. 1—3

**IV. 1.** *Hear this word* seems to connect this passage with iii. 1 (see note there).

Isaiah has also something to say against the women of Jerusalem in his day, with all their finery, Is. iii. 16 ff.

*ye kine of Bashan.* Bashan was the most northern region on the east of the Jordan ; it was noted for the fertility of its pasture-lands (Mic. vii. 14), its forests of oak (Is. ii. 13 ; Zech. xi. 2), and its well-nourished cattle (Dt. xxxii. 14 ; Ps. xxii. 12 ; Ez. xxxix. 18). These high-born ladies have no kind of care save for their own food and pleasure. "A cowherd's rough picture of women : a troop of kine—heavy, heedless animals trampling in their anxiety for food upon every frail and lovely object in the way."

*say unto their lords*, i.e. their husbands, who are driven to oppress the poor in order to provide material for their wives' pleasures. The ladies of Samaria (as of many another country) never troubled to think what their luxurious self-indulgence cost their poorer sisters.

2, 3. The gratification of all their tastes, the utter inconsiderateness as to the means employed in the process, have made these gentle women brutes. Jahveh's indignation is roused against them. As brutes they have lived for their own sensual pleasure, treating the poor as mere cattle, as though they had as little feeling as themselves.

2 The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that they shall take you away with hooks, and your residue with fish hooks. 3 And ye shall go out at the breaches, every one straight before her; <sup>1</sup>and ye shall cast yourselves into Harmon, saith the LORD.

<sup>1</sup> The ancient versions vary in their rendering of this clause. The text is probably corrupt.

An eye for an eye. They are the real cattle: and as cattle shall they be driven forth from their pastures and palaces.

2. *The Lord GOD hath sworn.* Cf. vi. 8, viii. 7.

*by his holiness.* The holiness of Jahveh is Amos' designation for His majesty, which, to the prophet's mind, has an essentially moral character and is bound to react against all this selfishness.

*the days shall come.* "The sad and serious forecast of gloom and wretchedness so common in prophecy" (Harper), especially in Jeremiah: though sometimes used also of the bright future.

*your residue*, i.e. the last of you (not as A.V. *your posterity*). Amos adds this further clause to disabuse all minds of any idea of the possibility of escape.

*fish hooks.* Strange and even amusing interpretations of this phrase have been given. Some suggest that the allusion is to sharp-pointed poles to rescue the women from fishponds into which they had fallen. G. A. Smith thinks that so many were taken captive that the supply of hooks (such as were commonly placed in the nostrils of unruly cattle) had run short and that consequently *for the last of them fishhooks must be used*.

But Amos is not to be tied down to a single metaphor when the fire kindles. The sight of these women being led captive one by one through the breaches of the stormed city by ropes fastened to rings in their lips (cf. Rawlinson, *Anc. Mon.*, I. p. 243) made the picture of the fish in the angler's hand the most appropriate symbol of their utter helplessness; cf. Hab. i. 14, 15.

3. *and ye shall cast yourselves into Harmon.* The text is corrupt beyond hope of recovery. The verb must mean *ye shall cast*; while no place corresponding with *Harmon* has yet been discovered. It only requires a very slight textual alteration to obtain a passive sense for the verb, *ye shall be cast*; *Harmon* would then be the place of exile and disgrace where the women would be cast, perhaps as corpses. Some of the versions took *Harmon* as equivalent to Armenia (so Targ., Pesh., Symm., and Jerome), cf. v. 27, *beyond Damascus*.

The most plausible emendation is that of Hitzig, who with a slight alteration reads, *ye shall be cast out to Hadad-Rimmon*, i.e. to serve as "holy women" in the immoralities connected with a pagan temple; but it is uncertain whether such a deity, or combination of deities, as Hadad-Rimmon (supposed to = Hadad-Tammuz), was ever known.

## III. MAN'S IDEA OF RELIGION, AND GOD'S.

## EXTERNALS AND ESSENTIALS IV. 4—13

There was no decay of religion in Amos' day. The places of worship were thronged by devout and enthusiastic pilgrims; sacrifices were offered with exemplary punctiliousness; and all the ordinances of religion were strictly observed.

The strange thing was that, despite all this religious enthusiasm, the country should be visited by a succession of calamities which seemed to indicate the divine displeasure.

The rich and careless paid no heed to these disasters, for they were themselves only remotely affected. Those, however, who laid such things to heart, saw in them a call to redouble their efforts to secure Jahveh's favour. Solemn assembly and festival, almsgiving and holy sacrifice, were pressed upon the people's conscience, and they responded readily. Amos echoes the priestly appeal, begging the people to use to the full their religious opportunities and privileges—for, by so doing, they shall but increase their damnation.

That is the startling message of Amos to the Church of his day. Your religion is rotten to the core: and your worship is very wickedness.

The most remarkable feature of this indictment is that the prophet is in no sense attacking the loose morality, too often to be detected in the professors of an orthodox religion, but he is attacking the religion itself. He is not, as in ch. ii., denouncing the unhallowed alliance of wickedness with worship, but declares that the worship is in itself wicked. He is not condemning those who, while careful to conform to all religious observances, yet in their lives set all religious restraints at defiance. He goes further than this. He singles out not the bad things of religious people for his scorn, but the good things of religion. "Tithe is transgression, sacrifice is sin. If that is your idea of religion," says Amos, "then God will have none of it; and the more you multiply your services, the more do you displease the very God whom you are seeking to please." What does Amos mean by this indiscriminating denunciation? Let him first tell us what is his own idea of religion. It may be summed up in one phrase—Religion means returning to God. And that is precisely what the popular religion failed to understand. No doubt, there were the conventional confessions of sin accompanying sacrifice; but when once the offering had been made, all was right once more between the worshipper and his God. People never realized that "it cost more to redeem their souls," and the priests were not particularly anxious that they should. Religion, in fact, meant the correct performance of ritual. Every stage of life had its appropriate stage of hallowing, every sin its proper sacrifice; and the important thing was to attend these services, and offer these sacrifices. No doubt the priests inculcated a kind of morality, but they did not put righteousness first. We may perhaps compare the contention that "a life of very average morality with frequent sacraments is more pleasing to God than a life of heroic morality without sacraments" (Tyrrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, p. 72).

It is precisely this point of view which Amos attacks with all the severity

at his command. For a doctrine of this kind (however innocent in the hands of an ingenious apologist) might lead to many wickednesses sheltering themselves under the cloak of orthodox conformity, and the priests of ancient Israel were not dialecticians enough to draw the sting from such a statement, or to adjust the balance between ritual and righteousness with nice precision. The result was seen in the popular idea that the service of God consisted of ceremonies, tithes and sacrifices, repetitions of prayers and pronouncings of blessings, holy words and sacred symbols. On these things, therefore, Amos makes an uncompromising onslaught. So far from helping people to "return to God," such a conception of religion keeps them from Him; for it encourages the illusion that men and women cannot possibly be far from God if only they will persevere in these ways. Thus they are blinded, and thus they cannot hear when God calls. And God does call; not through ecclesiastical pronouncements, but through the facts of everyday life. For God is alive, and refuses to be kept a prisoner of the priests. He leaves the temple and walks through the land. And men may see His footsteps if their eyes are not dull with the smoke of sacrifice; and His warning may be heard in "a thousand voices which shout to the saints but to the deaf are dumb"—drought and famine and failure of crops, pestilence and war and earthquake; but there is not one that understandeth. So God calls them from their vain rites to stern preparation. Preparation for what? That is not disclosed, but it must be a visitation so appalling that it cannot be even named alongside the other calamities that have come crowding in on the unfortunate country.

Does Amos go too far in his sweeping denunciations? We shall not think so, if we remember how readily men seek some substitute for true conversion. "Idolatries die everywhere; but everywhere a superstitious ritualism survives. It continues with philosophies that have ceased to believe in the gods who enforced it. Upon ethical movements which have gained their freedom by breaking away from it, in the course of time it lays its paralysing weight. With offers of help it flatters religions the most spiritual in theory and intention.... There is an irreducible minimum of rite and routine in worship; there is an invaluable loyalty to traditional habits; there are holy and spiritual uses in symbol and sacrament. But these are all dispensable; and because they are all constantly abused, the voice of the prophet is ever needed which tells us that God will have none of them; but let justice roll on like water, and righteousness like an unfailing stream" (G. A. Smith, *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, I. pp. 158, 159). If Amos inveighs against worship, Isaiah even denounces prayer when hearts are unclean and hands are full of blood, Is. i. 10—17.

The conclusion of the oracle as it stands needs rearrangement. It is widely held that the two parts of iv. 12 hardly fit together, and that v. 13 is a later addition. The first three verses of ch. v. do not stand in any clear connexion either with what follows or with what precedes. On the other hand v. 4—6 make an admirable conclusion to iv. 12 *a*, while iv. 12 *b* refers to the warning in v. 4—6. All attempts at rearrangement must of course be highly conjectural, but they are not to be condemned on that account.



4 Come to Beth-el, and transgress; to Gilgal, *and* multiply transgression; and bring your sacrifices every morning, *and* your tithes every three days; 5 and <sup>1</sup>offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving of that which is leavened, and proclaim freewill offerings

<sup>1</sup> Heb. offer by burning.

4. *Come to Beth-el, and—worship*, is what we should expect. But the prophet lets his heart out in ironical invitation to come to Bethel and—*transgress*.

The transgression does not consist in the worship at the high places as violating the law of the one sanctuary, for Amos knows nothing of any such law, and it was not promulgated for more than another century; nor in the turning of the glory of God *into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay*; nor even in the immoral characters of those engaged in worship; but in imagining that Jahveh can be propitiated by any ceremonial means whatever.

*to Gilgal*, cf. v. 5, Hos. iv. 15, ix. 15, xii. 11; an important place, and the first camping ground of the Israelites when they had crossed the Jordan. It is plain from these allusions in Amos and Hosea that it must have rivalled Bethel itself as the seat of the idolatrous worship of the northern kingdom.

*bring your sacrifices every morning, and your tithes every three days*. Amos exaggerates and caricatures their mistaken zeal. *Bring your sacrifices* not every year, according to usage (cf. 1 Sam. i. 7, 21), but *every day: bring your tithes*, not once in three years in accordance with ancient custom (cf. Dt. xiv. 28, xxvi. 12), but *once in three days*.

This explanation is however open to grammatical difficulties, and it seems better to take the passage as a description of the actual procedure at Bethel. On the day after arrival the worshipper offered his sacrifice, and on the following day (the third day including the arrival at the sanctuary) paid his tithes. We should therefore translate, "Bring your sacrifices *in the morning*, and your tithes *on the third day*."

5. *a sacrifice...of that which is leavened*. The ancient custom was to exclude leaven from the cultus of Jahveh (Ex. xxxiv. 25 J, xxiii. 18 E), and this was enforced by the later law (Lev. ii. 11, vi. 17). But at Bethel, in Amos' day, the Israelites with mistaken zeal thought to make their thanksgiving-offerings more acceptable by using *leaven*, i.e. yeast or grape-honey (Lev. ii. 11), in the preparation of them (Driver, *Amos*, p. 167). Perhaps the practice was borrowed from the worship of the Canaanite Baal, as the reference to *raisin cakes* in Hos. iii. 1 seems to imply. Amos is here ironically urging the worshippers to prepare the most luscious sacrifices possible. To *proclaim and publish freewill offerings* is of course an absolute contradiction of the spirit of what should be spontaneous devotion. Our Lord, likewise, had to warn His own disciples against the trumpets which the hypocrites sounded whenever they did an alms in the synagogues or in the streets (Matt. vi. 2).

and publish them : for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord GOD. 6 And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 7 And I also have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet

*this liketh you*, i.e. pleaseth you, lit. *for so ye love to do*.

The Israelites were only too ready to follow the prophet's ironical suggestions. Their error lay not in making incorrect offerings, or making correct offerings in the wrong place, *but in confusing the externals with the essentials of religion*.

We may note in passing, how full, even at this early period, is the terminology of religious worship : sacrifices, tithes, thank-offerings, free-will offerings, offerings made by burning, leaven. It may be inferred from the scope of this vocabulary (introduced quite incidentally) that a full and systematic cultus was already established, and that in the coming antagonism between priestly and prophetic ideals the former would undoubtedly catch the popular suffrage.

6. Wherein then does true religion consist ? Amos speaks boldly in Jahveh's name. Jahveh Himself shall tell them. *Return unto me* is God's conception of man's religious duties. And He is always claiming this return of man to his Maker, and pressing this claim upon the conscience by mighty movements, by calamities, by fearful expectations. If men would only cease to engross themselves in ceremonial and ecclesiastical matters, they could not fail to note in the things taking place all round them the evident tokens of God's presence and designs. So we are taken from the temple with its exaggerated and artificial devotion, and are bidden to be still while Jahveh speaks in famine and drought, blasting, pestilence, and earthquake.

**And I, on my part.** What a contrast between men's treatment of God, and God's treatment of men ! They lavish on Him fat sacrifices : He starves and destroys. "That is, they regard Him as a being only to be flattered and fed. He regards them as creatures with characters to discipline... Their views of Him, if religious, are sensuous and gross ; His views of them, if austere, are moral and ennobling" (G. A. Smith, *loc. cit.* p. 163).

*cleanness of teeth*, for in the famine they could find nothing to eat. Some of the Versions read *bluntness*, or perhaps *decay*.

*in all your cities*. Famines in Palestine were frequent and dreaded ; during the time of Amos may be mentioned those which took place in the reign of Ahab (1 K. xvii. 12), and under Jehoram (2 K. iv. 38, viii. 1) ; but the reference here is more probably to some unrecorded famine in the lifetime of the prophet.

*yet have ye not returned unto me*. This form of expression is by no means uncommon in the O.T., and prepared the way for the Christian idea of conversion.

**7. And I, on my part.** Again the emphatic contrast.

three months to the harvest : and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city : one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. 8 So two or three cities wandered unto one city to drink water, and were not satisfied : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 9 I have smitten you with blasting and mildew :

7, 8. The rains which were due, when (by a rough and ready computation) *there are yet three months to harvest*, must of course be "the latter rain," which falls in the spring time. But if these rains were withholden till three months before harvest and then fell, they would have fallen at exactly the best possible moment, which is plainly the direct opposite of what the prophet intends us to understand. The rains therefore, for which people waited in vain, and which, when at last they fell, proved local only, and utterly inadequate, must mean "the former rain" which continues from October to February; and this is supported by the Hebrew word *geshem*, which is used of the heavy rain of winter, rather than of the refreshing showers of spring. But then the clause about *three months to harvest* becomes meaningless. Most probably it should be regarded as a gloss, added by someone anxious to give details (possibly gleaned from his own experience) of the great drought.

The whole description seems needlessly involved; and many critics regard most of what follows as an interpolation. An easy rearrangement, however, quickly suggests itself and removes at least some of the difficulties.

"And I, even I, have withholden the rain from you : one piece of land was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not, withered. Yet have ye not returned unto me.

"And I would cause it to rain upon one city, and on another city I would cause it not to rain; so that two or three cities would wander unto one city to drink water, but would not be satisfied. Yet have ye not returned unto me."

*one piece was rained upon*, etc. Jahveh shews His power of sending rain where He will, and withholding where He will also.

8. *wandered*. The word here used means to *stagger*; it is used of blind (Lam. iv. 14), or drunken men (Is. xxiv. 20; Ps. cvii. 27); in Ps. lix. 15 of men famished for lack of food, seeking but not finding. Here it describes the unsteady gait of wretched people exhausted by drought, staggering from city to city, only to be once more disappointed by finding the supply hardly sufficient for the needs of the city to which they had wandered for help. The tenses in this passage describe frequentative action.

9. *blasting and mildew*. The *blasting* describes the destruction wrought by the scorching east wind (cf. Gen. xli. 6, 23, 27). The *mildew* is caused by the warm damp winds of November. It can be traced by the *pale yellow ears* of corn, incapable of forming any grain (cf. Jer. xxx. 6, *paleness*).

the multitude of your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees hath the palmerworm devoured : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 10 I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt : your young men have I slain with the sword, <sup>1</sup>and have carried away your horses ; and I have made the stink of your camp to come

<sup>1</sup> Heb. with the captivity of your horses.

*the multitude of your gardens...hath the palmerworm devoured.* Grammatically this translation is doubtful, but it is the best that can be done with the text in its present condition. Wellhausen, however, has suggested a slight but brilliant emendation (הורבותי וזרבות) which removes all difficulties, and restores the parallelism of the passage.

Accepting this alteration, we read :

I have smitten you with blasting and mildew ;  
*I have laid waste* your gardens and vineyards ;  
 And your fig trees and olive trees hath the locust devoured.

How terribly destructive were these visitations of locusts may be gathered from Joel i. 4—12.

10. *the pestilence...the sword.* It is by no means clear that *the sword* must be taken literally, though the later writer who inserted the words *with the captivity of your horses* (marg.) plainly gave it this meaning. Pestilence was itself Jahveh's sword, cf. 1 Chr. xxi. 16, 27, 30, and Is. xxxi. 8, *Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of man ; and the sword, not of man, shall devour him*, with Is. xxxvii. 36, *the angel of the LORD went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand.* War with the dreaded nation is the last chastisement when all else has failed, for it means inexorable doom. Jahveh has however not yet exhausted His efforts to bring His obdurate people to repentance. We conclude therefore that Amos speaks here not of battle and murder, but of pestilence and sudden death.

*after the manner of Egypt.* The same phrase occurs in Is. x. 24, 26, where the reference is to the historical circumstances attending the Exodus. It is possible that Amos intends this passage to have the same reference here and to allude to the plagues of Egypt. The reference may however be more general. In Deut. xxviii. 27, Jahveh threatens that He will visit the infidelity of the people *with the boil of Egypt* and other incurable diseases.

It is possible that the simplest translation is the best : *by the way of Egypt.* The insalubrious climate was the nursery of pestilences ; and the plague would march up in the wake of the invading armies.

*and have carried away your horses*, literally *with the captivity of your horses.* The peculiar use of these words, their interruption of the context, and the anticlimax they suggest, all point to the expression being an insertion by a later hand.

up even into your nostrils : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 11 I have overthrown *some* among you, as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a brand plucked out of the burning : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. 12 Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel :

*I have made the stink of your camp, etc.* The mortality was so great that the dead lay in heaps awaiting burial.

11. *I have overthrown some among you, i.e. some of your cities.* Amos is describing the divine visitation, dreaded most of all in antiquity—the earthquake. Perhaps the reference is to the earthquake mentioned in the title (i. 1) which must have been very terrible to account for its subsequent chronological use. The word *overthrow* is always used in connexion with the divine judgement on the Cities of the Plain.

*as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.* A somewhat strange expression in the mouth of the divine speaker : but it had become an almost stereotyped phrase ; cf. Is. xiii. 19 ; Jer. l. 40.

*a brand plucked out of the burning, cf. Zech. iii. 2, where Jahveh calls Joshua, high priest of Jerusalem, a brand plucked out of the fire.*

12. Nothing remains but to declare the sentence that their sin has made irrevocable.

But the text as it stands offers quite a different conclusion from that which we might have expected. Instead of predicting a punishment more terrible than any of the preceding visitations, we have one last appeal, *prepare to meet thy God*. Even so, we should not be justified in saying that Amos might not have ended with a final call to repentance, rather than with an announcement of final doom. Or it might perhaps be possible to take *prepare to meet thy God* as such an announcement—vague and terrifying. But the context seems to demand a different conclusion. Amos has told of God's discipline of His people. All has failed. Nothing remains but utter destruction. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee.* *Thus* cannot refer to anything but to the overwhelming judgement which is yet to be pronounced. But in the present text we are not told what God will do *thus* with Israel. The judgement would have been as specific as those which Amos has already detailed ; but the later editor has substituted a fine phrase of a more general character. In later days the original reference may have largely lost its meaning, and the editors of the prophets cared more for the appropriateness of the message than for its authorship. Their concern was that the prophet being dead should yet speak : to have kept the words exactly as they were written to the detriment of their intelligibility and force, to have shrunk from the task of adapting the prophet's message to modern conditions, would have seemed to them to ensure that the prophet having spoken should be yet dead. They had thus no scruple about making additions and adaptations ; and nowhere is the process to be more clearly recognized than in these closing sections of the prophetic discourse.

*and* because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel. 13 For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth ; the LORD, the God of hosts, is his name.

*Therefore thus will I do unto thee.* The form recalls the familiar Hebrew oath "God do so to me and more also."

*because I will do this.* This refers back to *thus* ; but the present text gives no indication as to the meaning of the reference in either case.

*prepare to meet thy God.* So Amos may have written ; but, in that case, a verse or two must have fallen out between *thus will I do* and *because I will do this*. At present we are not told what Jahveh will do, nor what are the grounds on which Israel is to prepare to meet her God.

*prepare to meet thy God* cannot mean prepare for the worst ; the LXX., followed by Pesh., points to the true interpretation (perhaps reading לקרא ליהוה לקראת) τοῦ ἐπικαλεῖσθαι. The purpose of all prophecy, however unconditional, is to drive men back to God (cf. esp. Jer. xviii. 7—11). There is always hope in repentance.

13. The first of the three great doxologies in Amos ; the others are v. 8, 9, ix. 5, 6.

The grammatical and logical connexion is far from clear ; but the difficulties would largely be removed if we could transfer the words which form the conclusion of this verse to its beginning, and read, *Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel—Jahveh, God of hosts, is his name. For lo ! he that formeth the mountains, etc.*

This passage raises the whole question as to the genuineness of the doxologies. Against ascribing them to Amos it is urged :

(a) Ejaculations of this kind in praise of Jahveh's creative power do not otherwise occur in Hebrew prophecy until the exilic period, when they became fairly common.

(b) In no case are these verses indispensable to the argument, while in one case (v. 8, 9) they are plainly an interruption.

(c) The language seems at times later than Amos, e.g. ברא for *create*, שמו for *his thought* (but vid. infra), and the whole phrase *Jahveh (of hosts) is his name*, which, though it occurs in v. 27 where most critics suspect its genuineness, is not otherwise met with until the exilic and post-exilic periods. It is surely more than a coincidence that this late expression should elsewhere be found only in these suspected verses of Amos.

(d) That there was a tendency to insert such passages may be seen by the fact that a doxology has actually been inserted into the Greek text of Hos. xiii. 4, "Who made firm the heavens and founded the earth, whose hands founded all the hosts of heaven ; and I did not display them unto thee that thou shouldest walk after them." This is of course immeasurably inferior to what we have in Amos, but it

illustrates the tendency to introduce doxologies into the prophetic writings.

On the other side it is argued that:

(a) Amos believes that all nature is at God's command (vii. 4, ix. 2 etc.), and serves His moral purpose. That such an appeal to the God of nature should "take an ejaculatory form is not surprising under the general conditions of prophetic oratory" (W. R. Smith, *Prophets of Israel*, p. 399).

(b) Though these verses certainly are not closely connected with the detailed argument, yet they are "thoroughly appropriate to its general purport," and are quite in the spirit and style of Amos.

(c) The use of the divine titles is too uncertain a foundation for any dogmatic pronouncement as to the dates of the passages in which they occur.

Whatever view may be taken as to the genuineness or otherwise of these verses, it is well to be reminded that the question is one of authorship, not of authenticity, and that no one would venture to question either that "greater Authenticity" which guarantees them the place which some unknown prophet gave them in this book, or their pure vision and eternal truth (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* I. p. 206).

*he that formeth the mountains.* The LXX. reads *thunder for mountains* (הררים for הרעם), which seems to make a better parallel to *the wind* in the next clause.

*what is his thought.* A strange phrase in a verse which deals with God's power over nature.

The LXX. reads *ὁ δὲ ἀποστόμα αὐτοῦ*, "his Anointed" (משחיו for מה שחיו); Syr. has *how great his glory*, and Targum *what are his works*, i.e. מעשרו.

Some interpret as though God told man what is *His* thought; which has led to an ingenious conjecture—"He declareth to man His judgement" (משפטו).

Perhaps the words are a gloss inserted in explanation of the previous words, *createth the wind*, by one who took *wind* to mean *the spirit of man*.

*maketh the morning darkness.* Not "through all its changes guiding the day to eventide," but bringing on the thunder-clouds, and striking the sunshine out of the sky at the approach of the storm. Cf. the majestic description of the approach of God amidst the thunder in Ps. xviii. esp. 9, *He bowed the heavens also, and came down; and thick darkness was under his feet.*

*treadeth (better marcheth) upon the high places of the earth*, as the thunder sweeps over the hills. Cf. Mic. i. 3; Dt. xxxii. 13; Job ix. 8 (*high places of the sea*).

## IV. "WAILING IN ALL THE WAYS" v. 1-17

This group of oracles begins with a dirge of woe (v. 1-3), and ends by calling on all who are skilful in dirges to re-echo the cry (v. 16, 17). Why? Because God called Israel to give the service of a life, and Israel has responded with the service of the lips.

**V. 1** Hear ye this word which I take up for a lamentation over you, O house of Israel. **2** The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she <sup>1</sup>is cast down upon her land; there is none to raise her up. **3** For thus saith the Lord God: The city that went forth a thousand shall have an hundred left, and that which went forth an hundred shall have ten left, to the house

<sup>1</sup> Or, lieth forsaken

**V. 1.** *a lamentation.* Heb. *kinah*, a dirge. It is a death-song that the prophet sings, for he sees the nation fallen and flung lifeless to the ground, never to rise again.

The *kinah* was not merely a spontaneous cry of mourning, but a form of poetical composition. In all Hebrew poetry, the second of two parallel members, whether synonymous or antithetical, balances the first; but in the *kinah* the second clause is always shorter than the first. The *dirge*, therefore, represents the Hebrew form of elegiac measure, in which the second or shorter line, artistically constructed to re-echo imperfectly the first, produces a "plaintive, melancholy cadence" (Driver).

Other examples of this dirge are to be found in the book of Lamentations, and Is. xiv. 4b-21; Jer. ix. 9b, 10, 18, 20, 21, xxii. 6, 7, 21-23; Ezek. xix. 1-14, xxvi. 17, 18, xxxii. 2-16.

*Fallen, to rise no more is  
The Virgin of Israel!  
Forsaken upon her own land,  
None to upraise her.*

**2.** *The virgin of Israel*, i.e. the virgin, Israel. This is the earliest instance of that personification of cities and countries, afterwards so common in Hebrew poetry. Israel's *virginity* is of course to be found in her hitherto happy, unconquered condition.

*is fallen*, i.e. *shall surely fall*. We have here an excellent example of the "prophetic perfect"; the prophet is so absolutely certain of the event that he regards it as having already taken place. Already he sees Israel prostrate on the ground.

*cast down*. She lies forsaken where she has fallen; cf. Ezek. xxxii. 4, and *I will leave thee forsaken upon the land, I will throw thee forth upon the face of the field*.



of Israel. 4 For thus saith the LORD unto the house of Israel, Seek ye me, and ye shall live: 5 but seek not Beth-el, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beer-sheba: for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Beth-el shall <sup>1</sup>come to nought. 6 Seek

<sup>1</sup> Or, become vanity (Heb. Aven)

4-6. The connexion between these verses and the dirge which has just preceded is not very clear. Some have seen in these verses a continuation of iv. 4, 5. On the other hand, we may regard them as furnishing the justification for the elegy. This logical connexion is made still clearer if we regard the verb in *For thus saith the LORD* as a historical perfect, and translate *For thus hath Jahveh said*. In other words "Israel shall fall (1-3) because she has disobeyed the divine command given in the past to seek Jahveh alone" (Harper, *op. cit.* p. 109).

4. *Seek ye me, and ye shall live*, lit. *Seek me and live*. To seek God (a phrase used indifferently of both Jahveh and heathen gods) signifies religious desire, and implies effort, obedience and worship. *and live*, i.e. that ye may live. Life is, of course, national life, prosperity and escape from the threatened ruin. There is no reference to spiritual life or to any future existence.

5. *seek not Beth-el*. How easy to confound God as He is with God as we imagine Him to be! The worshippers at Bethel never tried to get beyond their prescribed ritual to a glimpse of God Himself. And so their cultus simply blinded them to the one indispensable condition of seeking God—righteousness and truth.

*pass not to Beer-sheba*. Beer-sheba is also mentioned in viii. 14, where the text is by no means free from suspicion. The words here seem undoubtedly an intrusion. There is no corresponding clause in the second half of the verse, predicting its ruin as in the case of Bethel and Gilgal.

If the text is sound, we must suppose that the religious zeal of the Israelites was so excessive that they were not satisfied with visiting the northern sanctuaries, but organized pilgrimages to Beer-sheba in the extreme south of Judah. To reach Beer-sheba they would have to cross the frontier, hence *pass* (lit. *cross*) *over to Beer-sheba*. Beer-sheba seems to have been the centre of a peculiar form of Jahveh worship (cf. viii. 14), and was famous for its patriarchal associations.

*Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Beth-el shall come to nought*. There is a play upon words here which it is impossible to reproduce, *Gilgal gāloh yigleh*.

Bethel, the house of God, shall become Beth-aven, the house of trouble. Hosea seizes on this epigram of Amos, and calls the sanctuary Beth-aven more frequently than he gives to it its proper name (Hos. iv. 15 etc.). *Aven* signifies *idolatry* as well as *worthlessness, iniquity, trouble*; hence the translation of Wellhausen, "Gilgal wird zum Galgen gehen und Bethel wird des Teufels werden."

the LORD, and ye shall live ; lest he break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and it devour and there be none to quench it in Beth-el : 7 ye who turn judgement to wormwood, and cast down righteousness to the earth ; 8 seek him that maketh the

6. The prophet once more renews the offer of reconciliation. Perhaps a few words are lost, e.g. *And now, O house of Israel, seek Jahveh and live* ; once more Jahveh repeats His promise which you disregarded of old.

*lest he break out like fire (in) the house of Joseph, and it devour.* There is a two-fold grammatical difficulty : the absence of any preposition before *house of Joseph*, and the sudden change of subject from God, *he break out* (masc.) to *it* (i.e. fire) *devour* (fem.).

A simple emendation removes both difficulties : *lest he set on fire the house of Joseph*, etc., reading יצוה באש for יצלה באש. This suggestion is amply supported by 2 Sam. xiv. 30, 31, where the expression is thrice used.

*in Beth-el.* For Bethel we should perhaps read with LXX. Beth-Israel, *House of Israel*.

7. This verse is to be connected with v. 10. The doxology in vv. 8 and 9 makes havoc both of grammar and sense in its present position, and is obviously out of place. The LXX. tries to get over the difficulty by referring the whole of this verse to Jahveh, a course only possible by mistranslation, ὁ ποιῶν εἰς ὑψος (reading למעלה for ללענה) κρίμα καὶ δικαιοσύνην εἰς γῆν ἔθηκεν.

*wormwood*, a bitter plant, Vulg. absinthium. The very institutions of justice have, by a cruel irony, become the means of oppression.

*cast down righteousness to the earth.* Righteousness (*justitia civilis*) is almost personified ; she is dethroned and contemptuously laid on the ground. The meaning of the phrase is made clearer by studying its opposite. In v. 15 the nobles are told to "establish judgement in the gate" ; this should be *set her erect* in a standing position, and thus maintain her.

8. seek him. The insertion is demanded by the sense, but has no kind of textual justification.

It is possible that vv. 8 and 9 originally (or at any rate, at a very early date) followed v. 6. In that case we might with greater reason supply the words *seek him*. By further transferring the words *the LORD is his name* to the beginning of the doxology, we restore the grammatical as well as logical order. The oracle would then read :

6. Seek ye Jahveh and live,  
Lest he consume the house of Joseph in fire,  
And it devour, and there be none to quench it in Israel's  
house.

8, 9. Whose name is Jahveh,  
(Maker of the stars, and controller of the seas,  
Preparing destruction for the mighty).

Pleiades and Orion, and turneth <sup>1</sup>the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night; that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; the LORD is his name; 9 that <sup>2</sup>bringeth sudden destruction upon the strong, so that destruction cometh upon

<sup>1</sup> Or, deep darkness

<sup>2</sup> Or, causeth destruction to flash forth

7. They that turn judgement to wormwood,  
And cast righteousness upon the ground,  
10. They hate him that rebuketh in the gate,  
And him that speaketh sincerely do they abhor.

8. *the Pleiades and Orion.* The prophet selects two of the most conspicuous constellations as examples of the grandeur and power of Him who created all the heavenly bodies.

They are named, together with the Great Bear, in Job ix. 9, xxxviii. 31 f.:

Canst thou bind the cluster of the Pleiades,  
Or loose the bands of Orion?

This reminds us of Homer, *Il.* xviii. 486—7:

Πληιάδας θ' Ὑάδας τε τό τε σθένος Ὀρίωνος,  
Ἄρκτον θ', ἣν καὶ ἄμαξαν ἐπικλήσῃν καλέουσιν.

*Pleiades.* Hebr. *kîmah*, which may be connected with the Arabic root *kum* = 'accumulate,' hence a *group* or *flock* of stars, or with the Assyrian *kamu* = 'bind.' A.V. has *the seven stars*; Shakespeare also speaks thus of the same constellation, 1 *Henry IV.* i. 2, "we that take curses go by the moon and the seven stars."

*Orion.* The Hebrew *kēsîl* signifies *fool*, and may point to some mythological notion that the star was once a foolhardy giant, chained for his impiety in the heavens which he strove to capture (cf. Job xxxviii. 31, quoted above).

*the shadow of death.* This traditional translation is based on a doubtful derivation of the Hebrew word. It is safer to adopt the rendering of the R.V. margin, *deep darkness*. The meaning of the word can be seen in such a passage as Ps. xxiii. 4, where the shepherd leads his sheep into the darkest valley to avoid the glare of the noonday sun.

*that calleth for the waters of the sea, etc.* A fine phrase; the waves are represented as hearing Jahveh's voice when He calls *to* (not *for*) them, and rushing to answer His behest.

But what is the exact meaning of the passage? There may be a reference to some destructive inundation, or we may have here an illustration of the idea that the rains are originally drawn up from the sea. Cf. Job xxxvi. 27, 28, 30 (R.V.M.).

9. *that bringeth sudden [destruction].* The word used is a rare one, occurring elsewhere only in Job ix. 27, x. 20, Ps. xxxix. 13 [Heb. 14],

the fortress. 10 They hate him that reproveth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. 11 Forasmuch therefore as ye trample upon the poor, and take exactions from him of wheat: ye have built houses of hewn stone, but ye shall not dwell in them; ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof. 12 For I know how manifold are your transgressions and how mighty are your sins; ye that afflict the just, that take a bribe, and that turn aside the needy in the gate *from their right*. 13 Therefore he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time; for it is an evil time.

while a cognate form is found in Jer. viii. 18. It is most likely to be connected with an Arabic root signifying *brightness*, and hence *gladness and joy*, which is the meaning of the Hebrew word in the other passages where it occurs. The R.V. marg. gives the true translation, *he causeth destruction to flash forth*.

*so that destruction cometh upon the fortress.* The repetition of the word *destruction* in the second clause is suspicious. The LXX. employs different words in the two clauses, *σύντριμμον, ταλαιπωρίαν*, both of which sometimes stand for שבר (*ruin*), which should accordingly be read in one of the two clauses. This, with only a change in the vocalization of the verb as originally written (נִבֵּן for נִבֵּן), gives the sense, *and he bringeth ruin upon the fortress*.

10. Resumes the discourse interrupted by the doxology.

*the gate*, i.e. the place of the administration of justice and of popular council. *The gate* is really *the gateway*. Its size was, of course, conditioned by the thickness of the city wall in which it was constructed. Along each side seats would be cut in the stone, and here the "elders" would sit to hold counsel or to dispense justice (Gen. xxiii. 10, xxxiv. 20; Dt. xxv. 7; Ruth iii. 11, iv. 1, 11 etc.).

11. *take exactions from him of wheat.* Amos has no care for vague denunciations; he is precise and practical. The rich are wealthy landowners, and they make their money by exacting as rent an excessive amount of the produce which the country folk have won by their labour on the soil.

12. *For I know, better Surely I know.* With fine effect Jahveh Himself takes up the tale. These oppressive nobles forget that however much they may keep secret from men, Jahveh *knows*. For the attitude of the goddess and the wealthy cf. Ps. lxxiii. 11, *And they say, How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?* And for the prophet's answer to their blasphemous questionings, cf. Ps. x. 14, *Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite.* Cf. also the searching *I know* in Rev. ii. 2, 9, 13, 19, iii. 1, 8, 15.

13. *he that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time.* This verse does not refer to the future, but to the present; nor does the silence of the prudent allude to the patient endurance of injustice, or to the

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live : and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye say. 15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgement in the gate it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph. 16 Therefore thus saith the LORD, the God of hosts, the Lord : Wailing shall be in all the broad ways ;

cessation of all murmuring against God, or to the silencing of prophecy. "The prudent" would be a very strange synonym for "the prophet," all the more so in Amos' mouth, who refused to keep silence; but rather felt that *such a time* (just because it was *an evil time*) constituted a call to speak, at however great danger to himself. We must take the words as having quite a general significance. But this makes the verse the less intelligible in its present position. Instead of v. 12 being followed, as we actually find in v. 16, by an announcement of God's answer to all this injustice and oppression, we have a series of rather commonplace and disconnected sentences, which not only interrupt the connexion between vv. 12 and 16, but repeat other passages in Amos. For vv. 14 and 15 are really not less out of place in their present context than v. 13. This can be seen most plainly by omitting these two verses; then the threat of v. 16 at once stands in intelligible connexion with that which precedes; while, as the verses stand at present, the "therefore" is inexplicable.

The language of these verses supports the theory that they are a later insertion into the text. The phrase *remnant of Joseph*, v. 15, while not impossible in the mouth of Amos, is yet strange, for Joseph was not reduced to a remnant until 722 B.C., when Sargon captured Samaria. Of course Amos may be referring to a future calamity from which only a remnant would escape, but in that case the context would demand the phrase to be taken as referring to the rich and oppressive aristocrats, the one class with which Amos will have no truce. It certainly seems much simpler to regard the last half of v. 15 as a gloss inserted at a later time, when the calamity had actually fallen, and Israel had become merely a *remnant*.

The contents of the verses do not suggest their originality. 14 *a* goes back to vv. 4, 6, while 15 *a* is practically a doublet of 14 *a*, and 15 *b* is an evident antithesis to 7 *b*. Moreover, the grammatical construction of *that ye may live*, though quite common in other writers, does not elsewhere occur in Amos.

But the real reason for suspecting these verses lies in their obvious interruption of the context. Remove them, and the initial "therefore" of v. 16, which has no meaning in its present place, becomes altogether appropriate and significant.

16. *in all the broad ways*, i.e. the "squares" and market places; cf. Is. xv. 3.

*Wailing*, i.e. a lamentation for the dead. *The wailers go about the streets*, Eccl. xii. 5.

and they shall say in all the streets, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, <sup>1</sup>and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. 17 And in all vineyards shall be wailing: for I will pass through the midst of thee, saith the LORD.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. and proclaim wailing to such as are skilful of lamentation.

*they shall say...Alas! alas!* in Hebrew *Ho! Ho!* We might render *Ah! Ah!* the common cry as the mourners marched in funeral procession through the streets and squares; cf. 1 Kings xiii. 30, *And they wailed over him, Ah, my brother!*; Jer. xxii. 18, *They shall not wail over him, Ah, my brother! or Ah, sister! They shall not wail for him, Ah, Lord! or Ah, his glory!* also Jer. xxxiv. 5; Ezek. xxx. 2.

*they shall call the husbandman to mourning.* *They* is quite general, the verb, in accordance with a well known Hebrew idiom, supplying its own subject. Who call the husbandman? They that call him. It is a way of stating actively, what we should state passively, *the husbandman shall be called to mourning.* Cf. Luke xii. 20, *they require thy soul* = thy soul is required.

*and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing.* The R.V. gives the sense, and the margin gives the only possible translation. A very slight alteration of the text removes the difficulty and we can translate as above (taking לֹא from before יָדְעוּ and placing it before מְסַפְּרִים; so Vulg. and Syr.).

The *skilful in lamentation* were professional mourners, cf. Matt. ix. 23 and Jer. ix. 17—20. "Rustic and artist alike" will be summoned.

17. *in all vineyards.* Where the songs of joy are wont to be greatest, there shall be heard nought but the dirge of death. Cf. for a striking parallel the early prophecies against Moab embedded in Is. xv.—xvi., esp. xvi. 10.

*I will pass through the midst of thee, saith the LORD,* the phrase intentionally recalling the great Passover, when Jahveh with unsheathed sword smote the Egyptians with their firstborn, Ex. xii. 23 J.

## V. THE DAY OF THE LORD v. 18—27

"The day of the Lord," which fills so marked a place in the teaching of the prophets from the time of Amos onwards, was in its origin a popular and not a prophetic notion. It sprang from the conviction that Israel was Jahveh's favoured people, and that sooner or later He must intervene victoriously to *restore the kingdom unto Israel.* The nation had hitherto been engaged in perpetual hostilities to achieve and maintain their independence. The race was not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Other nations and strange religions at times proved themselves more powerful than Jahveh's people. This of course could not be the final issue of events. A day would come when Jahveh would arise and assert Himself. He would not fail those that trusted in Him; He must protect them for His own sake; for from whom

would He receive worship if Israel were destroyed? If Jahveh was necessary to Israel, none the less was Israel necessary to Jahveh. In Amos' time the nation was passing through a period of almost unequalled prosperity. His grateful people lavished their gifts and sacrifices, and Jahveh, no less grateful, had blessed them with peace and plenty. All had not yet been accomplished, but the crowning manifestation of His favour would not be far distant, "nothing remained save to pray for its speedy coming." Thus Israel, in fanatical faith, *desired the day of the Lord.*

Amos does not repudiate this conception, but he introduces into it a new idea which entirely alters its significance. Jahveh will have a day, a day of triumph, a day of manifestation. Jahveh will indeed vindicate His righteousness; but to Israel the day will spell disaster and not victory. The people are right when they declare the day must come; but, on that day, so far from Israel triumphing over her enemies with Jahveh's help, Israel shall herself be humbled at Jahveh's hand. For the nation to whom Jahveh has especially revealed Himself has not risen to the responsibilities of the fuller revelation, and has refused to make any response to Jahveh's demand for righteousness and justice. Other nations shall indeed be punished in that day, yet not as the oppressors of Israel, but because they have transgressed the righteousness which is Jahveh's first requirement of all peoples. It was the introduction of this ethical element into the popular conception which made it possible for Amos at the same time to retain the idea and to reverse its meaning. And this new interpretation of Jahveh's day sprang in its turn from a new conception of Jahveh Himself. In that day Jahveh would be manifested as He was, not as Israel conceived Him to be. In that day Jahveh would vindicate, not Israel, but His own eternal and essential righteousness. So far from restoring the kingdom to Israel, He would in that day remove the kingdom from Israel.

For Amos refused to regard Israel as in any way indispensable to Jahveh. Jahveh would take care to vindicate Himself, even if such vindication meant to Israel utter and hopeless ruin.

The splendid daring of this whole passage can hardly be overrated. Amos challenges the central article of Israel's creed, and subjects it to a ruthless reinterpretation. He repudiates the idea that religious observances, however sacred, are in themselves of the least religious value in the eyes of God. By laying stress on the ethical and universal requirements of Jahveh, and by shewing that His relation to Israel was morally conditioned, he prepares the way for a translation from a monolatrous to a monotheistic conception of God. Amos is thus called the founder of ethical monotheism: for there can be but one righteousness; and when this righteousness is recognized as the only power in heaven and earth, and is further identified with the supreme purpose of Jahveh Himself, then this belief in one righteousness leads to faith in the One and Only God.

Such was the amazing achievement of the herdman of Tekoa. And who can fail to see in it the working of that Spirit whom Christians confess to have spoken in times past "by the prophets"?

18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD!  
wherefore would ye have the day of the LORD? it is darkness,

and not light. 19 As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; <sup>1</sup>or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. 20 Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness, and not light? even very dark, and no brightness in it? 21 I hate, I despise your feasts, and I <sup>2</sup>will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 Yea, though ye offer me

<sup>1</sup> Or, and<sup>2</sup> Heb. will not smell a savour.

21-27. Many critics regard this passage as the proper continuation of iv. 4-11. For the thought, to which Amos here gives such forcible expression, as to the relation of Jahveh to the worship which was offered to Him, cf. Is. i. 11 ff.

Amos attacks all the outward forms of contemporary religion; for to him the cultus appears to lie at the root of all the trouble. Not because it is idolatrous, or schismatic, or ritually incorrect, but because it encourages a fundamentally wrong conception of Jahveh. Until it is swept away men will never realize what it is that God really wants, nor who He is.

21. *feasts*, such as the Passover and the feast of Booths. The Hebrew word is derived from the *pilgrimage* which was involved in attending these festal gatherings.

*I will take no delight in, lit. I will not smell.* The expression had by no means passed altogether into the region of metaphor: cf. Gen. viii. 20 f., *And Noah builded an altar unto Jahveh...And Jahveh smelled the sweet savour.*

This in its turn may be compared with the story as it appears in the Babylonian account of the Deluge:

“I offered sacrifice:

I prepared an offering on the summit of the mountain.

I set Adagur-vases, seven by seven,

Underneath them I cast down reeds, cedar-wood and incense.

The gods smelt the savour,

The gods smelt the goodly savour;

The gods gathered like flies over the sacrificer.”

(Cf. Driver's *Genesis*, p. 105.)

The LXX. translated similar phrases by *δσμη εὐωδίας*, and this expression is taken up into the New Testament, e.g. 2 Cor. ii. 14-16; Eph. v. 2; Phil. iv. 18. In connexion with the appearance of this phraseology in the New Testament we may make a couple of quotations.

“How ingrained was this belief (i.e. that the smoke of burnt offerings flattered the nostrils of Deity), may be judged by us from the fact that the terms of it had to be adopted by the apostles of a spiritual religion, if they would make themselves understood, and are now the metaphors of the sacrifices of the Christian heart” (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* I. p. 170).

The other is taken from Robertson Smith on the use of the Psalms in the Christian Church:



<sup>1</sup>your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the <sup>2</sup>peace offerings of your fat beasts. 23 Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. 24 But let judgement roll down as waters, and righteousness as a <sup>3</sup>mighty stream. 25 Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and <sup>4</sup>offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? 26 Yea, ye <sup>5</sup>have borne

<sup>1</sup> Or, burnt offerings with your meal offerings

<sup>2</sup> Or, thank offerings

<sup>3</sup> Or, everflowing

<sup>4</sup> Or, meal offerings

<sup>5</sup> Or, shall take up...And I will cause &c.

“It is true that not a little of the colouring of the Psalms is derived from the ritual and order of the old dispensation, and has now become antiquated; but practical religion does not refuse these bonds of connection with the past. The believing soul is never anxious to separate its own spiritual life from the spiritual life of the fathers. Rather does it cling with special affection to the links which unite it to the Church of the Old Testament; and the forms which, in their literal sense, are now antiquated, become to us an additional group of figures in the rich poetic imagery of the Hebrew hymnal” (*O.T.J.C.*, p. 191 f.).

23. *Take thou away from me*, lit. *from upon me*. These hymns are a burden which Jahveh can hardly bring Himself to bear; cf. Is. i. 14.

24. *let judgement roll down as waters*. Righteousness, not ritual, is what Jahveh wants; justice, not worship.

Some have taken the *judgement* as the punishment which Jahveh will assuredly bring upon this obstinately blind people. The sentence must then be interpreted as a prediction and a threat. But this seems very far-fetched. The meaning of Amos is not that Jahveh will send *judgement* as an overwhelming stream, but that Jahveh wants right living and social justice.

*a mighty stream*, lit. *perennial*, or *everflowing*. The *stream* was a rushing torrent in the rainy seasons, but in the summer it was reduced to a trickling rivulet, or even just the dry bed of a parched brook. In contrast with such torrents the righteousness of Jahveh is like a *stream* whose waters never fail.

25. The answer to the question is in the negative. Amos means that during the whole of the wilderness wanderings the Israelites did not bring Jahveh sacrifice or offering; from which it follows that sacrificial worship cannot be the indispensable condition of maintaining Jahveh's gracious relation toward Israel. Though the forty years were without offering, yet they were not without many tokens of divine love, cf. ii. 9, 10.

This verse is sufficient proof that Amos cannot have been acquainted with any document such as the Priestly Code, which regards Israel's system of worship as instituted at Sinai.

For this whole point of view we may compare Jer. vii. 21—23, where the later prophet takes up and reinforces his predecessor's teaching: *Thus saith the LORD of hosts: Add your burnt offerings to your sacrifices... For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them, in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Harken unto my voice, and I will be your God.*

26. The difficulties attaching to this verse are almost insuperable.

A. The A.V. and the R.V. (following the LXX.) take the verse as referring to the past, in which case the context demands that the reference should be to the idolatrous worship in the wilderness. But there are serious objections to this interpretation.

(a) Grammatically the construction is extremely doubtful. The only natural rendering is *And ye shall take up*.

(b) This view cannot be brought into harmony with the context. Amos is endeavouring to prove to a people, who have identified religion with sacrifice, that such outward forms are no necessary condition of true worship. He refers to the wanderings in the wilderness when Jahveh was nearest to them, and they brought Him no offering or sacrifice, but sacrificed to all kinds of strange gods. This makes havoc of the whole context.

(c) We cannot suppose Amos to have been ignorant that the gods whom he mentions are Assyrian or Babylonian deities, with which religions Israel cannot have come into any close contact before the conquest of Canaan.

B. We therefore take the words as a prediction.

(a) This is the simplest grammatical construction, and harmonizes well with v. 27, *And I will cause you to go* (there is no *therefore* in the Hebrew).

(b) The verse thus begins the announcement of the punishment which we expect at this juncture.

But this view labours under difficulties only a little less formidable than that which we have already set aside, for

1. It would be a very strange way of describing the conquest of a country to say that its inhabitants "would take up their gods." The ordinary mode of expression in such a case would be that the victors would take up the idols of the vanquished as trophies, not that the vanquished would themselves carry their own images into captivity.

2. Amos nowhere charges his countrymen with idolatry. On the contrary his complaint against them is their almost fanatical devotion to Jahveh. Yet how greatly his arraignment of Israel would have been strengthened, if he could have shewn that they had deserted Jahveh for these foreign divinities.

W. R. Smith turns the edge of the last objection by suggesting that this worship of star-gods cannot have been a rival service to that of Jahveh, but had probably attached itself in a subordinate way to the offices of His sanctuary (*Prophets of Israel*, p. 140). But this raises a further difficulty as to such a syncretistic worship in Amos' day, which we have no sufficient material for solving.

<sup>1</sup>Siccuth your king and <sup>2</sup>Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves. 27 Therefore will I cause you

<sup>1</sup> Or, the tabernacle of your king Some ancient versions have, the tabernacle of Moloch.

<sup>2</sup> Or, the shrine of your images

C. Wellhausen (followed by Nowack and Cheyne) regards the verse as a gloss inserted by some later reader who missed a reference to the idolatrous practices prevailing in his own age, and took pains to remedy the omission by bringing the prophecy (as he thought) more up to date: cf. St Stephen's speech in Acts vii. 43, where *beyond Damascus* appears as *beyond Babylon*.

This is perhaps a weak solution, but in default of any more satisfactory suggestion it seems the only one open.

*Siccuth your king.* LXX. τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ Μολόχ; Vulg. tabernaculum Moloch vestro; so Syr. and A.V. *the tabernacle of your Moloch*. The one thing that seems certain is that *Chiun* is a proper name. The LXX. Ραιφάν (Acts vii. 43, Ρεμφάν) is plainly a corruption of Καρφάν = ק'רפ' for ק'רפ' i.e. *Kéwán* or *Kaiwán* for *Kiywán* (*Chiun*), which no doubt represents the Babylonian-Assyrian *Kaimánu*, later pronounced *Kaiwánu*, the name used, not only by the Babylonians but after them by other Semitic peoples, to denote the planet Saturn. In Babylonian it appears to be a title of the god Ninib, though there is some uncertainty on the point (Schrader, *K.A.T.*<sup>3</sup>, p. 409, note 1). At any rate there can be little doubt that *Kéwán* here = the Assy. *Kaiwánu* = Saturn.

The explanation of *Siccuth*, or rather *Sakkúth*, is not so clear. Schrader (*K.A.T.*<sup>2</sup>, p. 443, Engl. trans. vol. II. p. 141 f.) has suggested that *Sakkúth* must be identical with the *Sak-kut* which occurs in a Babylonian list as a name of Ninib, though some good authorities question this (*K.A.T.*<sup>3</sup>, p. 410, note 7). But if the explanation is correct, we are led to the result that both *Kéwán* and *Sakkúth* are different titles of the same god, Ninib. An indirect confirmation of this has come to light in a mythological text, where we read "may Sakkut and Kaiwan break the spell," the two names occurring side by side exactly as in the present passage. See further Rogers, *Encycl. Biblica*, col. 749.

But the Hebr. text here can hardly be in its original state. The LXX. places *the star of your god* before *Kéwán*: "ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch and the star of your god Raiphán, their images which ye made for yourselves." It is doubtful, however, whether this can represent the true text, for in Hebrew the order of the words thus rearranged is exceedingly stiff and unnatural. Probably with Wellhausen we should omit *your images* as a gloss on *your god*, and *the star* as a gloss on *Kéwán*, reading the verse: *And ye shall take up Sakkúth your king and Kéwán your god, which ye made for yourselves*. At a later date star-worship was largely practised in Israel, e.g. 2 K. xxiii. 12 etc.

<sup>1</sup> See, however, Langdon *Bab. Liturgies*, p. 120, n. 6. *Sak-kut* goes back to *Sak-kud*, a regular title of Ninib = Mars.

to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is the God of hosts.

Reference must however be made to the argument of W. R. Smith, who refuses to take *Siccuth* and *Chium* as proper names. He would translate, and it must be noted that his translation is very dubious and contrary to the usage of the words, "the *shrine* of your king and the *stand* of your images," i.e. the portable shrine and platform on which the idols were borne in procession (*Prophets of Israel*, p. 400; *O.T.J.C.*, p. 294). He regards the Assyrian interpretation as excluded by the date of Amos, who does not accuse his people of the worship of foreign gods; outwardly they are only too zealous for Jahveh. But this assumes that the book of Amos has escaped all interpolation, and no assumption could be more precarious. We must not ask, in settling a difficulty of this kind, first what could Amos have written, and then what can the words be made to mean; but first what do the words mean, and then can they have been written by Amos? Do they form part of the original text? Judged by this standard, this verse can hardly be regarded as due to Amos himself.

27. *beyond Damascus*. That Amos had Assyria in mind cannot be doubted, for there was one nation, and one nation only, which deported peoples to the north-east.

*with the LORD*. The addition of (*is*) *his name* is grammatically awkward, and may well be a later addition. Coupled with *Jahveh of hosts* it is a phrase characteristic of the later prophetic books.

## VI. THE INEVITABLE END VI. 1—14

Amos has uttered a woe against those *that desire the day of the LORD*. He now pronounces a second woe on those that are so immersed in their own pleasures as to be unmindful of the ruin which their selfish sloth has made inevitable. Amos once more addresses the ruling classes. They have been the first to sit at ease, they shall be the first to go into exile; they shall retain their preeminence. It is unlikely that the passage is preserved in its original form. Verse 2 is suspicious on several grounds to be mentioned later, while the grim fragment about the plague (*ev.* 9, 10) seems altogether out of its context.

**VI. 1** Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of

**VI. 1.** *in Zion*. There is no reason to suspect the originality of these words, though as the context shews (*v.* 6, *the affliction of Joseph*), Amos almost immediately concentrates his attention on the nobles of the northern kingdom. Still it is quite possible that the words originally formed no part of the spoken oracle, but were added when the prophecies were committed to writing.

*the notable men*, lit. those who are *noted*, or *marked by name*, of

the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come!  
 2 Pass ye unto Calneh, and see; and from thence go ye to  
 Hamath the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines:  
 be they better than these kingdoms? or is their border greater

sufficient importance, that is, to be distinguished from the common crowd; cf. Num. i. 17; 1 Chron. xvi. 41.

*the chief of the nations.* Cf. iii. 2. Amos here speaks ironically of the opinion which Israel has of itself. It is a people which speaks loud of its privileges and position, but thinks little of the responsibilities which that position involves. Jahveh loathes this proud boasting (v. 8).

*to whom the house of Israel come.* What for? The obvious reply is *for judgement*. But why is not this expressed, more particularly as on it the whole sense of the passage depends? Some such expression as *ye judges of the house of Israel* would have been more intelligible than this allusive sentence. The Syriac Version has *and they led captive the house of Israel*, which suggests *באו את* for *באו*. Other conjectural emendations are: (chief of the nations) *and lords of the house of Israel* (*באו להם* for *בעלי*) or *and as gods (are they) in the house of Israel* (*באו להם בבית* for *באלהים בבית*). This would continue the prophet's ironical congratulation of the nation's leaders in the terms which they considered only fitting to their dignity, cf. Ps. lxxxii. 6; Zech. xii. 8. Such are some guesses; but probably the text is corrupt.

2. The interpretation of this verse is uncertain.

(a) Is the verse intended as a partial affirmation of the claim to be *the chief of the nations*? In this case the sense would be somewhat as follows: neither Calneh, nor the great Hamath, nor Gath, is so great or so flourishing as *these kingdoms*, i.e. Israel and Judah. Thus has Jahveh favoured you, while you have neglected Him and provoked His wrath by your luxury and selfishness (3—6), therefore dread punishment awaits you (7 ff.).

The objections to this rendering are:

i. Israel certainly did not need any corroboration of their belief that they were *the chief of the nations*.

ii. And had corroboration been needed, it would have been particularly weak to have selected such a place as Gath to demonstrate Israel's superiority, and ludicrous to point to great empires such as Assyria and Egypt for the same purpose.

iii. Nor would it be true to imply that the contemporaries of Amos neglected Jahveh. Amos never brings such a charge. They were only too zealous, though with a zeal not according to knowledge.

iv. *these kingdoms* cannot mean Israel and Judah as this way of taking the passage demands. The words cannot mean anything else than their natural and obvious sense, i.e. the kingdoms that have just been mentioned, Calneh, Hamath, and Gath.

than your border? 3 Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the <sup>1</sup>seat of violence to come near; 4 that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the

<sup>1</sup> Or, sitting

(β) The plain meaning of the passage seems to be: "These towns and kingdoms have fallen. What has happened to them may also happen to yourselves. For you are not better than they." But what then are we to make of the further addition *or is their border greater than your border?* A very slight alteration provides us with a clause corresponding to the previous question—"Are *ye* better than they? Or is *your* border greater than *their* border?"

The cities, therefore, are referred to not as flourishing, but as fallen; and the verse is to be taken not as an assurance of any kind, but as a threat.

This opens the way for further considerations.

(α) The Massoretic text is plainly corrupt. There is no subject to *better than these kingdoms*; we have to supply *ye* to make a subject. Then again we have seen the need of emending the last clause of the verse if we are to give sense to the passage.

(β) There can be no question that the whole verse disturbs the clear connexion between *vv.* 1 and 3—7.

(γ) Finally there is no historical situation (as far as our knowledge goes) in Amos' time which corresponds with the facts to which the prophet appeals. The suggestion of the passage is that the fall of these cities was a recent event and much in men's minds. This may have been true of Gath, which is not mentioned in the oracle against Philistia, perhaps as having already been destroyed (see note on i. 6). The other two towns, however, were not taken till the time of Sargon; Calneh, if it is to be identified with Kulana or Kullani of the inscriptions, fell later than B.C. 720, that is, many years after the activity of Amos, and subsequently to the capture of Samaria itself.

The conclusion can hardly be resisted that the verse is an insertion.

3. "An epigram and a proverb, for it is the universal way of men to wish and fancy far away the very crisis that their sins are hastening on" (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 174); cf. Is. v. 18.

*cause the seat of violence to come near.* Elsewhere Amos speaks of oppressive violence on the part of the ruling classes, iii. 10, v. 7, 10—12. The expression here, however, is not a perfectly natural one, and some textual error may be suspected in the words *seat* or *sitting of violence* (שֵׁבִיט הַחַסָּד). Various emendations have been proposed, of which the following are specimens: *robbery* or *devastation and violence* (שָׁד וְחַסָּד), as in iii. 10, Hab. i. 3, Jer. vi. 7, xx. 8, Ezek. xlv. 9), *the rod of violence* (שֵׁבִיט הַחַסָּד), *the rod of the slave-gang* (שֵׁבִיט הַחַסָּד); but *the rod* is not a suitable object for the verb *cause to come near*, and instead of *the slave-gang* we should expect *the oppressor* or *task-master*, as in Is. ix. 4 [Hebr. 3].

lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall; 5 that sing idle songs to the sound of the viol; that devise for themselves instruments of music, <sup>1</sup>like David; 6 that drink <sup>2</sup>wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments; but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. 7 Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that

<sup>1</sup> Or, like David's

<sup>2</sup> Heb. in bowls of wine.

4. *stretch themselves.* The exact meaning of the Hebrew word is doubtful, but it clearly refers to luxurious and wanton conduct at table.

5. *sing idle songs.* A.V. *chant.* Another difficult word of uncertain meaning. The reference may be to some form of striking the strings, but more likely the R.V. is right. Many scholars connect the word with an Arabic root meaning *to precede*, hence *to exceed due bounds, to be hasty or immoderate.* Following this clue Dr Driver suggests that it "may be used of those who extemporized poetry over-rapidly, without premeditation, in a hurried flow of unmeaning, unconsidered words" (*Joel and Amos*, p. 236).

*devise for themselves instruments of music.* A.V. *invent.* The words can hardly refer to the *invention* of musical instruments, as the verse is describing actual occurrences at the feasts of the wealthy.

Perhaps instead of *instruments of music* we should read *all kinds of song.* This would involve the omission of a single letter (קל־שיר for קל־שיר).

*like David.* This is a proof of the ancient character of the tradition connecting David with music. It shews, however, that David was famed for secular rather than for sacred song, unless indeed we take the words as ironical.

6. Lit. *that drink in wine-bowls*, rather than in wine-cups. Such is their intemperate greed that ordinary goblets will not satisfy these Samarian drunkards. The bowls may be the vessels in which the wine was mixed. Elsewhere the word is used of the great *basins* from which the blood of the victim was tossed against the altar (cf. Ex. xxxviii. 3; Numb. iv. 14, vii. 13; Zech. ix. 15).

The LXX. (perhaps to supply the omission of object to *drink*) translates *δυσλωμένον οἶνον.* This may rest on a different reading (קל־שיר) for קל־שיר.

*with the chief ointments*, lit. *the first of oils*, a phrase, which like *lambs out of the flock* and *calves out of the midst of the stall* in v. 4, is intended to indicate the fastidiousness of these dainty aristocrats.

*the breach of Joseph* may refer to the carrying away captive of Gilead and Galilee by Tiglath-pileser, but in Amos' mouth the words are more naturally taken to denote the moral corruption of Israel. To this the rich are completely indifferent. "We know their kind! They are always with us, who live well and imagine that they are proportionately clever and refined. They have their political zeal, will

go captive, and the revelry of them that stretched themselves shall pass away. 8 The Lord God hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD, the God of hosts : I abhor the <sup>1</sup>excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces : therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein. 9 And it shall come to pass, if there remain ten men in one house, that they shall die. 10 And when a man's <sup>2</sup>uncle shall take him up, even he that burneth him, to

<sup>1</sup> Or, pride<sup>2</sup> Or, kinsman

rally to an election when the interests of their class or their trade are in danger. They have a robust and exuberant patriotism, talk grandly of commerce, empire and the national destiny ; but for the real woes and sores of the people, the poverty, the overwork, the drunkenness, the dissoluteness, which more affect a nation's life than anything else, they have no pity and no care" (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 175).

7. Jahveh will put a fearful stop to this scandal. With a fierce kind of joy Amos drives home his unwelcome message by an alliterative play upon words (cf. viii. 1 f.)—*sar mirzah seruhim*—and by an impressive oath in Jahveh's own lips (cf. iv. 2, viii. 7).

8. *the excellency of Jacob*, better *the pride of Jacob*, not merely the proud temper of the nation, but everything that contributes to the gratification of national pride.

*will I deliver up the city.* The Hebrew idiom almost demands the addition of that to which the city is to be delivered up. Some scholars think that a word may have dropped out, "I will deliver up the city to the enemy," or more probably to the pestilence, which would connect this verse with the grim verses which follow.

*the city* is no indefinite city, but Samaria itself (Heb. *a city*, but this is quite usual in poetical passages).

9. *if there remain ten men in one house*, i.e. if ten escape from the sword and the pestilence. But if there were ten survivors in one single house, it would mean that the number of victims would be very small, which contradicts the sense intended. Perhaps some other word such as *dwell* stood originally in the place of *remain*. "I will deliver up the city to the pestilence ; and it shall come to pass, if ten men *dwell* in one house, that they shall die."

10. This verse seems to have baffled the ingenuity of many commentators.

There is no previous word to which the pronoun in "*his* uncle (so lit. for *a man's uncle*) taketh *him* up, *his* burner," can be referred. One must suppose it to refer to one of the ten dead men mentioned in the previous verse, but it is a strange construction.

*a man's uncle*, mg. *kinsman*, i.e. his nearest surviving relative ; the plague has carried off father, brother, and son.

*he that burneth him*, lit. *his burner*, is a particularly odd expression. It is usually explained by supposing that the ravages of the plague were such as to render burial impossible. The Hebrews never burned



bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is in the innermost parts of the house, Is there yet any with thee? and he shall say, No; then shall he say, Hold thy peace; for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD. 11 For, the bodies of their dead, save in the most exceptional circumstances, e.g. criminals, Lev. xx. 14, xxi. 9; Jos. vii. 15, 25; Saul and his sons, 1 Sam. xxxi. 12.

The Hebrew *his burner* seems, however, to refer to some recognized custom, and it is possible that the allusion is here not to burning the body, but to burning spices in honour of the dead; cf. Jer. xxxiv. 5 and 2 Chron. xvi. 14.

But even so, there is no proof that in Amos' time this custom had any such prevalence as to justify so incidental an allusion, while *his burner* remains a peculiar and unlikely expression.

Again what is the meaning of *Hold thy peace (Hush !)*, etc. in the mouth of one who by his own question has just prompted the other to break silence?

Then there is the difficulty of the thrice repeated *and he shall say*.

Plainly something is wrong with the text. The following emendations and suggested transpositions are worthy of notice.

i. Oort regards *and he will say, Hush (ואמר הם)* as dittography of *and he will say, No (ואמר דם)*; and for *we may not make mention of the name of the LORD* he reads *so that it shall not be mentioned by name (omitting יהוה)*. Then, by transposing verses 9—10 and 11, we obtain the description of an earthquake.

Thus, (v. 8) "And I will deliver up the city with all that is therein, (v. 10) so that it shall no more be remembered by name; (v. 11) for, behold, Jahveh commandeth, and the great house shall be smitten, etc. (v. 9) And it shall come to pass, that whenever ten men die in one house (omitting *remain*), (v. 10) their relatives will clear away the ruins to bring the bones out of the house and he shall say...Is there yet any with thee? and he shall answer, No."

ii. More scholars than one emend the opening words of v. 10 to express the idea of *a remnant* (reading *וְנִשְׁאַר דָּרוֹר מִסֶּפֶר* for *וְנִשְׁאַר דָּרוֹר וְיִמְסְרֶנּוּ*).

a. Box and Oesterley, suggesting that a verse describing drought or plague has fallen out between v. 8 and 9, read "And only a remnant shall be left, and they shall break into the house to bring out the bones," etc.

b. Zeijdner, beginning with the same emendation, proceeds more daringly and reads, "And an escaped one shall be left to bring out the bones out of the house, and he will say to him...and he will say, 'No,' and he will say, 'These have done foolishly. Make thou mention of the name of Jahveh'" (*וְנִשְׁאַר מִסֶּפֶר לְהוֹצִיא עֲצָמִים...וְאָמַר אִם וְאָמַר*) (*הַסְכִּילוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַזֶּקֶר בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה*). This brilliant emendation cannot be bettered if we are to emend the passage at all.

iii. Less violent, and less satisfactory than the emendations noted

behold, the LORD commandeth, and <sup>1</sup>the great house shall be

<sup>1</sup> Or, he will smite the great house

above, is the suggestion of Giesebrecht, simply to omit the words *and he shall say, No*. He points out with justice that if there is to be no speaking, the speaker must give no opening for further speech, but, if he speaks at all, must speak only to forbid speech. Again how strange is the answer *No* to the question whether there be any more in the house! One would expect a very different reply, such as "Many a corpse." Giesebrecht therefore supposes that when one who surveys the hideous harvest of the plague breaks the silence, his companion answers "Silence! Make no mention of Jahveh's name." Where the spirits of vengeance have wrought such dread havoc, the mere mention of the divine name may be sufficient to rouse the evil demons to a renewed outburst of fury, and then indeed not even one will escape. But why does Giesebrecht think that it is the evil spirits, and not Jahveh Himself, who must not be roused by the mention of the name? *Shall evil be done in a city and Jahveh not have done it? Jahveh Himself has delivered up the city and all that is therein.* The panic-stricken survivors are all unmanned by the awful mortality. They know that "Jahveh has done it," but for what reason they neither know nor care to know. But they dread lest the very slightest reference to His dread doings may provoke Him to some further token of displeasure. "The whole of life was believed to be overhung with loose accumulations of Divine anger. And as in some fatal hollow of the high Alps, where any noise may bring down the impending masses of snow, and the fearful traveller hurries along in silence, so the men of that superstitious age feared when an evil like the plague was imminent, even to utter the Deity's name, lest it should loosen some avalanche of His wrath"—G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 180.

Wellhausen suggests that these two verses cannot be in their right place: they have no connexion with what precedes or with what follows; moreover *v.* 11 stands in the most intimate relation to *v.* 8. It seems reasonable to suppose that these verses are a fragment about the pestilence which have somehow been wrongly inserted into this context. The text would then read: *Therefore will I deliver up the city and all that is therein. For, behold, the LORD commandeth, and they shall smite* (vid. *infra*) *the great house, etc.*

The situation is excellently stated by the late Professor Harper: "This verse and the following introduce a new element into the description of the future punishment, and at the same time a new form and a new style. After these verses the old idea, style, and form recur. The new element is the plague; the new form, an individual experience; the new style, conversational prose" (*Amos and Hosea*, p. 153).

Nothing however can weaken the grim and ghastly realism of this fragment. It shows us another side of the popular religion which Amos is never tired of attacking. He has spoken of the false peace of ritual: he now shews that it is this false peace tempered by panic and fear.

11. *the LORD commandeth, and he will smite* (marg.). This is a

smitten with breaches, and the little house with clefts. 12 Shall horses run upon the rock? will one plow *there* with oxen? that ye have turned judgement into <sup>1</sup>gall, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood: 13 ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

<sup>1</sup> See Deut. xxix. 18.

strange way of expressing the prophet's meaning. Either Jahveh Himself will smite, or He will command others and they shall smite. If in its original position v. 11 followed immediately after v. 8, we may suppose that the verse ran thus: *Therefore will I deliver up the city... and they shall smite, etc.*

For the indefinite subject to *they will smite* see v. 16 note.

*the great house* and *the little house* are to be taken quite literally: none shall escape the universal ruin. It is fanciful to interpret *the great house* and *the little house* figuratively, as if they stood for the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

12. Explains the necessity for judgement. Perversion of justice into poison is as unnatural as to make horses run upon the crags, or oxen plough the sea.

*will one plow there with oxen?* This translation involves the necessity of mentally supplying *there*, which is the most important word in the sentence, and therefore the word which was least likely to be omitted. And it has to explain a further difficulty; the Hebrew word for *oxen* is a singular collective, but the present text gives a plural. Both these difficulties are avoided by the conjecture of Michaelis, which does not involve the alteration of a single letter, *Does one plow the sea with oxen?* (reading <sup>אֶת הַיָּם</sup> <sup>בְּאֵרֶב</sup> for <sup>אֶת הַיָּם</sup> <sup>בְּאֵרֶב</sup>).

*gall* is too definite. The word is better translated *poison*.

13. *which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns?*

*a thing of nought*, lit. *a not-thing*, which is quite after the prophets' manner of describing a thing, the unreality of which they desire to emphasize; cf. *a not-people*, and *a not-God*, Deut. xxxii. 17, 21, and *a not-man*, Is. xxxi. 8, also *Lo-ruhamah*, *Lo-ammi*, Hos. i. 6, 9.

*horns*, the common symbol of strength. These people are boasting of their exploits in the Syrian wars. At an earlier date than this Zedekiah son of Chenaanah had made him *horns of iron*, saying, *Thus saith Jahveh, With these shalt thou push the Syrians until they be consumed* (1 K. xxii. 11).

There is however another interpretation which more than deserves mention. Graetz, followed by most German commentators, suggests that, instead of treating the words rendered *a thing of nought* and *horns* as common nouns, we should take them as the names of places, *Lo-debar* and *Karnaim*, which we may suppose to have been wrested from the Syrians in the course of Jeroboam's campaigns. *Karnaim* is referred to in 1 Macc. v. 26, and probably in Gen. xiv. 5. *Lo-debar*

14 For, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the LORD, the God of hosts ; and they shall afflict you from the <sup>1</sup>entering in of Hamath unto the brook of the Arabah.

<sup>1</sup> See 2 Kings xiv. 25.

was another place on the E. of Jordan, mentioned in 2 Sam. ix. 4, xvii. 27, ?Josh. xiii. 26. Gilead was precisely the battlefield between Jeroboam and the Syrians.

14. *a nation* is of course Assyria ; cf. Is. v. 26 ff., where the right reading is, "He will lift up an ensign to a nation from far," etc.

*from the entering in of Hamath.* The historical books describe the conquests of Jeroboam in almost exactly the same words : *He restored the border of Israel from the entering in of Hamath to the sea of the Arabah* (2 K. xiv. 25).

*Hamath* was a town of considerable importance and the seat of an independent kingdom. It was situated on the Orontes, beyond the broad valley of Coele-Syria, some 150 miles distant from the northernmost point of Israelite territory. *The entering in of Hamath* was probably the frontier itself, marked by the pass between the Lebanons, whence the road to Hamath was conventionally considered to begin.

*the Arābah* is the deep depression through which the Jordan flows to the Dead Sea.

*the wady of the Arābah* is perhaps to be identified with *the wady of the poplars* (Heb. *the wady of the Arābim*), mentioned in Is. xv. 7 as the frontier stream between Moab and Edom. There can be little doubt that Jeroboam, following the example of every strong and successful king of Israel, would have done his best to strengthen his frontiers in this direction. *The sea of the Arābah* (i.e. the Dead Sea, mentioned in the book of Kings as the limit of Jeroboam's conquests) may represent the actual, *the wady of the Arābah*, the ideal extent of the Israelite kingdom.

This then is to be the end—entire extinction. With gradually increasing clearness the prophet has sought to drive home to the consciences of his people the inevitable end of all this light-hearted acquiescence in wrong and corruption. The end of these things is death. Again and again he assails their social system, their religious outlook. At last in despair he concludes this portion of his discourses with a prediction of utter annihilation, and with an indication of the executioner. Thus ends the second book of the oracles of Amos : it is a sad and sombre close.

## C. VISIONS AND VOICES VII. 1—IX. 8 a

The Lord Jahveh doeth nothing except He reveal His secret to *his servants the prophets*. To His servant Amos He had revealed the certainty of Israel's doom. These chapters tell us how Amos arrived at this conviction which lay at the root of his prophetic ministry. In the visions of the locusts, the fire, and the plumbline, Israel's punishment was revealed to him, and at Bethel he recounted to the people what he had seen and heard (vii. 1—9).

There follows a biographical section which records the turning-point in the ministry of Amos, one of the turning-points of religious history. Amaziah, the representative of the official hierarchy and the upholder of established order, appeals to the powers that be to suppress this fanatical seer. But the silencing of the prophet for a season gave immortal speech to prophecy, for Amaziah's suppression of the spoken word suggested the committal of the prophetic oracles to writing. Thus written they endured, and we pass from the rude and spasmodic utterances of earlier seers to the beginnings of the imposing literature of prophecy, one of the most priceless religious treasures which mankind possesses. Amos silenced in Israel speaks to the world (vii. 10—18).

He retaliates upon Amaziah with a fresh oracle of disaster, in which the priest, as well as the prince and people, shall be utterly consumed (v. 16, 17).

Yet another vision follows; the vision of harvest fruit, the harvest which should be the end (viii. 1—3).

One last and terrible apparition burns itself into the prophet's soul; Jahveh Himself at the altar, saying, Smito: and under this divine smiting Israel sinks undone and annihilated (ix. 1—4 or 1—8 a).

The reconstruction here suggested has of course a conjectural element. There seems to be good reason for connecting ix. 1—8 a with viii. 1—3. On the other hand, a number of considerations, which are discussed later, make it hardly possible to resist the conclusion that the ray of hope which breaks through the thunderclouds to light the close of this overpowering prophecy (ix. 8 b—15) must not be attributed to Amos.

## I. THE FIRST VISION: A PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS VII. 1—3

**VII. 1** Thus the Lord GOD shewed me: and, behold, he formed locusts in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter

**VII. 1.** *the Lord GOD shewed me, or made me see.* The same phrase introduces all the visions save ix. 1. Their "visionary" character is maintained on the ground that they are carefully distinguished from the historical incident narrated in vii. 10—17. The prophetic visions are discussed in the Introduction. Whatever the psychological or literary explanation of them may be, the fact remains that, as is stated in the language of Amos, the Lord Jahveh *made me see*. To see that which is *invisible*, to see in the visible order that which is not seen, to catch something of the moral meaning of outward events, this is the secret

growth; and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's

of power. To see not *that* which is invisible, but *Him* who is invisible (Heb. xi. 27), was the secret revealed to the prophets which made their power resistless. It was a secret learned by prayer. These visions themselves tell us of the prophets' prayers (cf. Is. vi.; Jer. i.). *Lord, open the eyes of this young man that he may see* was the prayer of Amos' predecessor in Israel (2 K. vi. 17); *Open thou mine eyes that I may see* was the prayer of a later poet (Ps. cxix. 18). The desire to penetrate beneath the surface of things and to see something of God's purposes, to see the wondrous things of His law, to see, in fact, Jahveh Himself—this desire drove the great spirits to prayer; the prayer, when answered, drove them to prophecy. For when they had seen Jahveh, or rather when Jahveh had *made them to see*, they became conscious of new standards. *Jahveh was standing by a wall, with a plumbline in his hand*. And the wall which they had erected with such labour, at such expense of men and money, of men's bodies and of men's souls (cf. Rev. xviii. 10—14), was found false instead of true, crooked instead of straight. The whole civilization was corrupt: it could not stand the test which Jahveh applied to it. Ordinary people could not see that there was anything very much wrong, *for spiritual things are spiritually discerned*. But the prophet's eyes were opened; *Jahveh made me to see*.

*Behold, he formed locusts, rather was forming*. The word *forming* is used of a potter at work, and frequently denotes the creative operations of God; cf. iv. 13; Gen. ii. 7, 8, 19, of the creation of man and the animals. The absence, however, of any subject to the participle is strange. In the other visions where Amos describes the action of Jahveh, he introduces the divine name (e.g. *vv.* 4, 7, ix. 1). A very slight textual alteration, which can claim the support of the LXX., gives the text *behold a fashioning of locusts* (reading *לִפְרָוֹ* for *לִפְרָוֹ*); this would be parallel to viii. 1, *behold, a basket of summer fruit*.

*Locusts*. It required little imagination to *see* such a plague, for plagues of locusts were the most frequent of Palestinian ravages, and might be expected every ten years; but it required much insight to *see* anything divine in so common and so unpleasant a visitation. The word used for *locust* in this passage probably denotes the insect in its larva stage.

*the latter growth*. The essential meaning of *lekesh*, which occurs only here in the O.T., is *lateness* (hence *malkōsh* = *latter rain*). The word has lately reappeared in the Hebr. inscription found at Gezer in 1908<sup>1</sup>, where it seems to denote the *late sowing* in the month of Feb.; here, however, it probably refers to the *spring crops*, which would mature under the genial airs of spring and the rains of March and April. The reference can hardly be to the hay harvest in particular,

<sup>1</sup> This inscription, which may be assigned to the 6th cent. B.C., gives a calendar of farming operations for eight months in the year. See Driver, *Hebr. Text of Samuel* (edn. 1913), p. vii f.

mowings. 2 And it came to pass that when they made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord GOD, forgive,

as in Palestine the grass is not made into hay, but is eaten by the cattle as it grows.

The spring crops were richer than the earlier crops of winter. If the crops of April were destroyed all hope of provender for the cattle was gone till December. In the scorching summer, the absence of all verdure would mean death to the sheep: and it is probably to such a disaster that the next vision refers.

*and, lo, it was the latter growth after the king's mowings.* This fixes the time still more precisely; but whether it is part of the original prophecy of Amos, or an expansion by a later reader anxious to shew how critical was the occasion, must remain doubtful. The addition reads rather like a gloss: *latter growth* has no article in the Hebrew.

*the king's mowings* were apparently a tribute in kind which the kings of Israel levied on all the spring herbage, to feed the royal cavalry; in 1 Kings xviii. 5 there may be a further allusion to this impost. A similar tax for a similar purpose was afterwards annually levied *in the month of Nisan* by the Romans on all pasture-land in Syria (see W. R. Smith, *Rel. of Sem.*, p. 228 n.).

Until this tax was levied no one was allowed to touch his crops; *after the king's mowings* every one would immediately begin to make use of his own grass. It was just at this critical moment that the locusts invaded the land.

It must be admitted that the translation *mowings* is somewhat doubtful; and several scholars agree in giving *shearings* as a truer rendering. But in this case it is not obvious why the time should be specified as *after the king's sheep-shearings*. The royal sheep would not be sheared at any other than the ordinary time for shearing.

The text as it stands is also doubtful: *and (the) latter growth* (or spring crop) was *after the king's mowings*; as a matter of fact, this was not the case. We may improve the sense by following a clue given by the LXX. and read פִּלִּי for שִׁבְיָהּ. The reference will then be to the *locust* in a maturer stage of its growth than when Amos first saw them being formed in the hand of Jahveh. The whole passage would then run: *Behold, a fashioning of locusts (larvae), in the beginning of the shooting up of the spring crops; and, lo, full grown locusts after the king's mowings.*

2. *And it came to pass that when they made an end.* The translation of R.V. is little more than a paraphrase. To improve the grammar of a text which can hardly be original we may read, *And it came to pass when they were making an end of devouring* (וַיְהִי הֵאָחֳרָה) for וַיְהִי אִם בָּרָה; so Torrey, after Wellhausen).

*grass* should be *herb*, all verdure being included in the term.

*forgive.* The prophet, at any rate, was conscious of something more terrible than the loss of crops. He recognized that the disaster was deserved. The locusts were the punishment of God on a nation

I beseech thee : how shall Jacob stand ? for he is small. 3 The LORD repented concerning this : It shall not be, saith the LORD.

whom the prophet's conscience had already condemned. But if "the heart makes the theologian," the prophet must have a heart also. So Amos prays for the people—the stern, solitary prophet for the blind and stubborn, of whose pardon he has no hope, and whose inevitable destruction he has been raised up to proclaim. "Upon his mission of judgement we follow Amos with the greater sympathy that he thus comes forth to it from the mercy-seat and ministry of intercession" (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 113).

*how shall Jacob stand?* lit. *rise*. The prophet seems to put aside the thought of irretrievable overthrow. He assumes that *Jacob will rise*, though he doubts whether this is possible. The end is not yet.

3. *The LORD repented*. This anthropomorphic expression, which appears so frequently in the sacred writers, bears witness to their belief in a God who cares, a God who answers prayer, and can control all things for His purposes of righteousness and love : He can be moved by man's appeal, because His will for man's good is unchangeable. An illuminating passage in this connexion is 1 Sam. xv. 29, 35. In the latter verse it is stated that *Jahveh repented that he had made Saul king over Israel*, while six verses previously Samuel declares *the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent : for he is not a man that he should repent*.

*concerning this*, i.e. the undefined visitation that impended over Israel. *It shall not be, saith Jahveh*. *It*—the same awful unnamed calamity, of which the prophet spoke in his first predictions, *I will not turn it back*. Perhaps Amos felt that the final visitation would be too awful for any words.

## II. THE SECOND VISION : A DEVOURING FIRE VII. 4—6

4 Thus the Lord GOD shewed me : and, behold, the Lord GOD called to contend by fire ; and it devoured the great deep,

4. *was calling to contend by fire*. *Was calling*, probably in the sense of *commanding*, cf. the great nature passages v. 8, ix. 6, which, however, can hardly be taken as unquestioned examples of Amos' language and style.

*to contend*, i.e. in controversy, a forensic metaphor ; cf. Hos. iv. 1 ; Is. iii. 13 ; Mic. vi. 2.

*by fire*. Either some vast conflagration, or an intolerable drought, or some forest fire consequent on the drought.

*and it devoured the great deep*. *The great deep* is the subterranean ocean upon which, it was thought, the world rested, and from whose depths the fountains and rivers had their source. When these ran dry, it must be because of some elemental battle waged in the depths beneath. The prophet pictures the supernatural fire as having its origin in the



and would have eaten up the <sup>1</sup>land. 5 Then said I, O Lord GOD, cease, I beseech thee : how shall Jacob stand ? for he is small. 6 The LORD repented concerning this : This also shall not be, saith the Lord GOD.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. portion.

supernatural underworld. Raging fiercely in those unfathomable depths, the flames of Jahveh lick up the sources of all the waters, and it seems that the solid earth must in an instant sink into an ocean fire. In another moment it *would have eaten up the land*; but the prophet, tongued-tied with horror, broke into speech and supplication. *O Lord Jahveh, cease, I pray thee.* The picture is so awful that Amos can think only of the punishment, not of the sins which called it down. So, this second time, he cries *Cease*, and not *Forgive*.  
*the land*, lit. *the portion*, the land of Israel, the *portion* which Jahveh had assigned to this people (cf. Mic. ii. 4, *the portion of my people*).

### III. THE THIRD VISION : JAHVEH'S PLUMMET AND ISRAEL'S WALL

VII. 7-9

7 Thus he shewed me : and, behold, the Lord stood <sup>1</sup>beside a wall made by a plumbline, with a plumbline in his hand. 8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou ? And I said, A plumbline. Then said the Lord, Behold, I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people Israel ; I will not again

<sup>1</sup> Or, upon

7. *the Lord stood.* The word describes an attitude of greater determination than merely standing. *And behold! the Lord was stationed.*

*a wall made by a plumbline*, i.e. a plumb-wall', faultless as Israel imagined its wall to be. The context makes it clear that the wall is no ideal wall, but Israel's wall. And it is condemned because when Jahveh comes to test the work, the plummet shews that the wall has not been built straight or true.

It is not impossible that the original oracle omitted the word *wall*, and ran: "Thus he shewed me, and, behold, a plumbline. And he said unto me, What seest thou? And I said, A plumbline." This derives very strong corroboration from a comparison with viii. 2.

8. *Behold, I will set a plumbline.* Two striking parallels may be quoted: 2 Kings xxi. 13, *I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of*

<sup>1</sup> This rendering is not quite certain; 'ānāk (only here) may mean *adamant* rather than *plummet*; so LXX., followed by Pesh. and Symm. The 'ānāk "in the hand" of Jahveh will then be a weapon of hard metal. See Condamin, *Revue Biblique* ix. (1900), p. 586 ff.

pass by them any more: 9 and the high places of Isaac shall be

*Samaria, and the plummet of the house of Ahab*; Is. xxviii. 17, *I will make judgement the line, and righteousness the plummet*; cf. also Is. xxxiv. 11; Lam. ii. 8.

*I will not again pass by them*, lit. *I will not again pass over* (i.e. the transgression) *unto them*. The doom now pronounced is irrevocable, and no opportunity is given to the prophet to intercede.

9. *the high places of Isaac*. The *high places* are not doomed because they violate the law of the one sanctuary. Until the reign of Josiah, when the legislation of Deuteronomy was first published, there had been no centralization of worship in Jerusalem, and therefore no condemnation of the local sanctuaries. For centuries the worship of Jahveh had been carried on at the high places without protest of priest or prophet. Samuel himself presided at such worship (1 Sam. ix. 12—25, a passage which illustrates the “regularity” and the ritual of the sacrifices offered in the high places); and it was after a sacrifice in Gibeon, *the great high place*, that Jahveh appeared to Solomon (1 Kings iii. 4—15). The *high places* or *bāmōth* were natural, or occasionally artificial, eminences, situated a little distance outside the towns to which they belonged. They were served by priests (cf. 1 K. xii. 31, and 2 K. xxiii. 8, 9, which gives a brief account of the position assigned by Josiah and the reformation party to the local priests), and throughout the monarchy sacrifice was regularly offered at these sanctuaries to Jahveh (e.g. 1 Sam. ix.; 2 K. xii., xiv., xv.).

Israel was by no means the only nation that had “high places.” They were common in Moab (Is. xv. 2, xvi. 12). On the Moabite Stone (lines 3 and 4) Mesha tells how he “made this high place for Chemosh in Korhah, a high place of salvation.” In fact there can be no doubt that long before the Israelite invasion the Canaanites had worshipped on the same spots (cf. Deut. xii. 2). It needs no saying that there was every risk of the worship of Jahveh becoming contaminated with heathenish elements at these local sanctuaries with their Canaanite associations; and as Jahveh Himself was called Baal (Hos. ii. 16), the dividing line between the religions of Israel and Canaan tended to become less and less distinct. From this religious confusion the Israelites were rescued by Elijah (esp. 1 K. xviii.): but in no sense whatever must we suppose that Elijah restricted the worship of Jahveh to Jerusalem. On the contrary, as a result of Elijah’s labours, the worship of Jahveh was celebrated with renewed fervour at every high place. But the people could now differentiate between their God and the gods of Canaan; they were quite certain, at any rate for a time, that it was Jahveh, the God of Israel, who met them at the *bāmōth*. The compiler of the book of Kings writes from the Deuteronomic standpoint. He has nothing but condemnation for any worship which is not carried on in Jerusalem; but Amos has no fault to find with the worship of the high places. He does not complain of their irregularity or condemn their idolatry. He does not suggest that the Israelites are worshipping the wrong God, or worshipping Him in the wrong

desolate, and the sanctuaries of Israel shall be laid waste ; and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.

place. On the contrary, Jahveh Himself is the object of their devotion, and they do Him reverence in places which can claim immemorial sanction. The error lay in the people's conception of what their God was and what He desired. They seemed incapable of appreciating Jahveh's character, and they felt that His worship was merely a matter of feasts and pilgrimages. With such a conception of God Amos wages unceasing war.

*of Isaac.* A synonym for Israel used by Amos alone, only here and in v. 16.

*I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.* The royal house is condemned for the same cause as the high places with their priests. The king and his court were deeply involved in the system which gave rise to the social abuses against which the prophet cries in iii. 9 ff., iv. 1 ff., vi. 1 ff. But above all, the king had forgotten his real prerogative—to set forth national justice and civic righteousness. Therefore he and his must be swept away.

*with the sword.* The visions recall the series of disasters of which Amos speaks in iv. 6—12, *locusts* (iv. 9, cf. vii. 1, 2), *drought* (iv. 7, 8, cf. vii. 4), *the sword* (iv. 10, cf. vii. 9). These were insufficient to rouse the people to repentance. So follows in ch. iv. an unnamed terrible alternative ; and here in ch. vii. the sword of an unnamed executioner.

This parallel lends support to the view that the first two visions are prophetic interpretations of actual disasters, rather than predictions of coming horrors. It is Amos' task to bring home to the nation's conscience the meaning of what has hitherto befallen them. If they fail to see God in the past they will never turn and see God now. There is but one future reserved for such a people : not locusts, nor drought, nor earthquakes, nor pestilence, but the utter doom of certain death.

*the house of Jeroboam.* Hosea utters the same threat against the same dynasty, Hos. i. 4, 5.

#### IV. HISTORICAL EPISODE : PRIEST AND PROPHET VII. 10—17

10 Then Amaziah the priest of Beth-el sent to Jeroboam king of Israel, saying, Amos hath conspired against thee in the midst of the house of Israel : the land is not able to bear all his

10. "One of the great scenes of history" (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* I. p. 115).

We cannot be surprised at Amaziah's intervention. The last words of Amos were tantamount to a declaration of war. He had spoken against God and the king, the highest of high treason. Against God—for the local sanctuaries were not regarded as symbols of His universal

words. 11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land. 12 Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee

presence, but as His actual dwelling-places; their overthrow and the overthrow of Israel involved according to contemporary ideas the overthrow of Jahveh Himself. And against the king—for had not the prophecy terminated with a threat against the reigning dynasty? Amos must have seemed to Amaziah guilty, as the first Christians were accounted guilty, of atheism and treason.

So these two stood face to face, Amos and Amaziah, the prophet and the priest, the messenger of a living God and the mouthpiece of a doomed religion. As the years roll on, places and people may change their language and ideas; but the two principles, for which on that feast day in Bethel these two men did battle, will ever wage unceasing war. Of the end there can be no doubt. The representatives of the established order secure their temporary triumph; but the defeat or death of their victim is recognized by a later age to be more glorious than their own success.

Professionalism and prejudice, especially in the religious sphere, are always eager for the suppression of a prophet. Christendom at every altar commemorates the most signal instance in history of such a triumph. Against the Lord Jesus were arrayed most of the men and all the institutions which stood for religion and morality and public order. The ecclesiastical hierarchy combined with the civil government to send the Prophet to the scaffold. *He blasphemeth: He speaketh against Caesar.* So, eight hundred years before, did the priest of Bethel, conscious of no spiritual power with which to oppose this preacher of unwelcome truths, fall back on the invariable resource of a barren and envious sacerdotalism. *He speaketh against Caesar.*

*Amos hath conspired.* This was hardly true. No one could have been more entirely alone; for Amos seems to have had no friends, no disciples, no sympathizers. His only fellow-conspirator was God.

11. Amos had not actually said this; but perhaps it is unjust to charge the priest with deliberate exaggeration. If Jahveh were to rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword He would hardly spare the head of the house. The allusion to Israel's captivity and exile, moreover, makes it clear that Amaziah is giving the gist of other oracles in addition to the visions which Amos has just recounted.

12. Whether the king took any notice or not of Amaziah's information does not appear. Amaziah, however, is sufficiently fortified by his own official position and the opportunities it gave for occasional contact with royalty, to assume a tone of lofty superiority. He orders Amos off the premises, and does so in words of contempt, both for the man and for his message. *Seer of visions, get thee gone.*

*O thou seer* (Heb. רֵאָה). The word has a brief but interesting history. In the early literature it occurs only once in addition to this passage (2 Sam. xxiv. 11, *Gad, David's seer*). In the late book of

thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and

Chronicles the title reappears with some frequency. In the plural it occurs in Is. xxix. 10 (parallel to *prophets*), xxx. 10 (parallel to *ro'im* = *seers*), Mic. iii. 7 (parallel to *diviners*); and, it is interesting to notice, the word is found outside Palestine in the recently discovered Aramaic inscription of Zakir (8th cent. B.C.), lines 11 f. "and Baal-shamin answered me by seers (*hāzīn*) and by diviners<sup>1</sup>." The verb, however, from which the noun comes, is regularly used to describe prophetic vision.

*into the land of Judah.* From this it has been concluded that Judah was the prophet's home. Other references in Amos make this conclusion practically certain, but it is not to be derived from this single passage. Amaziah insinuates that in the rival kingdom Amos will find an appreciative audience for his denunciations of Israel.

*eat bread, i.e. earn thy living.* Amaziah, a priest by profession, imagines that all prophecy must be professional also. The religion which Amaziah represented had neither spiritual power nor spiritual discernment; the priest of Bethel, therefore, judged everybody by his own unspiritual standard. Priesthood and prophecy were, in his eyes, means of making a living; honourable means, no doubt, though both priests and prophets (especially prophets such as Amos) sometimes fell short of the standard. However, to make money was a prime necessity of life, whether for priest or prophet; and Amos had made a great mistake if he thought that his invective against the ruling classes and the established religion would bring him a livelihood in Israel. But Judah would welcome the preacher of her rival's doom; there he would be assured of popular applause. Amaziah affects a sort of sneering sympathy with what he imagines the prophet's aim to be: of course we know what all these visions and voices really mean; he is simply making a bold bid for popularity, or at least for notoriety, by passing as the public scourge for popular sins.

What Amos has to say in repudiation of this suggestion we shall consider later; but it must be confessed that Amaziah's way of looking at things was by no means without excuse. In early days the average seer was far more of a soothsayer than a prophet, and a fee for his services was regarded as his proper due (cf. 1 Sam. ix. 7, 8). Such fees were paid in advance, and the temptation could never have been far distant to adapt the prophecies to the fees received. That these financial considerations finally became decisive is proved by numerous allusions in prophetic literature, e.g. Mic. iii. 5, 11, and the story of Balaam and Balak's princes in Numb. xxii. 7, 15—18. When once this commercial state of things was reached, the prophets were naturally loath to lose their best customers by unpopular prophecies; as a result their prophecies were in no sense *oracles of Jahveh*, but mere reflections of the people's wishes. Instead of rising to their high calling as

<sup>1</sup> See Pognon, *Inscriptions Sémitiques de la Syrie, 1907-1908*; Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris* iii. pp. 1-11.

prophecy there : 13 but prophecy not again any more at Bethel : for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is a royal house. 14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, I<sup>1</sup> was no prophet, neither I<sup>2</sup> was I<sup>2a</sup> a prophet's son ; but I<sup>1</sup> was an herdman, and

<sup>1</sup> Or, am

<sup>2</sup> Or, one of the sons of the prophets See 1 Kings xx. 35.

messengers of the Lord of Hosts, they degraded themselves to the level of "court chaplains to king Demos." Afraid of offending the susceptibilities of their patrons, they prophesied *smooth things*, Is. xxx. 10, and *healed the hurt of my people lightly, saying, Peace, Peace ; when there is no peace*, Jer. vi. 14, viii. 11 ; cf. also 1 K. xxii. and Jer. xxviii.

For the clearer understanding of this passage, it should be noted that these prophets, who subsisted on charity and on credulity, were settled in various localities, and made their livelihood by acting as the professional soothsayers for that particular district. These local guilds were known as *b'né han-nebí'im*, or *sons of the prophets*.

13. *it is the king's sanctuary.* The sanctuary of Bethel was what we should term "a royal peculiar." It was under the immediate patronage of the king, who claimed complete control over all the arrangements. He himself appointed the priests to serve in the sanctuary and settled the order of services. He was, therefore, altogether within his rights in rejecting Amos from his own chapel.

*a royal house*, lit. *a house of the kingdom*, which may mean either *a national temple*, or *a royal residence*.

14, 15. The reply of Amos. "On such words we do not comment ; we give them homage. The answer of this shepherd to this priest is no mere claim of personal disinterestedness" (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 118). "Amos was the founder, and the purest type, of a new phase of prophecy" (Wellhausen, *Hist. of Isr.*, p. 472).

14. *I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son.* The R.V. takes the phrase as referring to the past : I *was* no prophet, but Jahveh called me. Apart from grammatical difficulties, such a construction is quite unsuitable to the context. What Amos *was* once does not concern Amaziah in the least. Amos refuses to be reckoned amongst the professional prophets. He is not, and never has been, such an one, nor is he a member of any of the prophetic guilds. He is just an ordinary and obscure member of society, who, in obedience to Jahveh Himself, left his occupation to preach what Jahveh put into his mouth. *No prophet I, nor prophet's son am I. A shepherd I, and dresser of sycamores.*

*an herdman.* In the next verse Amos tells that he was following the flock when the summons of Jahveh came to him ; we should, therefore, expect him to describe himself as a *shepherd* rather than a *herdman*. A slight alteration in the Hebrew (נִינֵר for נִינֵר) gives us the word used in i. 1 to describe the occupation of Amos—a *nakad-keeper*, a *shepherd* of those small stunted sheep which the *herdmen of Tekoa* were set to mind.

a dresser of sycamore trees : 15 and the LORD took me from following the flock, and the LORD said unto me, Go, prophesy unto my people Israel. 16 Now therefore hear thou the word of the LORD : Thou sayest, Prophesy not against Israel, and drop not *thy word* against the house of Isaac ; 17 therefore thus saith the LORD : Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, and thy

a *dresser of sycamore trees*<sup>1</sup>. The LXX. (κνίζων) and the Vulgate (vellicans) take the word *bôlēs* as referring to the process by which these sycamore-figs are rendered fit for human consumption. The fruit is infested by insects, and until the top or "eye" is "nipped off" so that the insects may escape, the figs are inedible.

The LXX. were plainly using a technical term, for Theophrastus uses almost the identical word (ἐπικνίζω) to describe the same process : *Hist. Plant.* iv. 2. The tree in question, though plentiful in the Maritime Plain, the Shephelah, and the Jordan valley, is never found more than 1000 feet above the sea ; it cannot therefore have grown on the high tablelands of Tekoa. Perhaps the shepherds, as they drove their flocks about for pasturage, sometimes came down to the wilderness sloping towards the Dead Sea ; "and here, in some sufficiently sheltered situation, must have grown the sycamore-trees which the prophet 'dressed'" (Driver, *op. cit.* p. 208).

15. *the LORD took me from following the flock.* Then and there he was made conscious of a call which he recognized as Jahveh's summons to his soul. Cf. the striking parallel of David's call in 2 Sam. vii. 8, *I took thee from the sheeppcote, from following the sheep,* and Ps. lxxviii. 71, *From following the ewes...he brought him.*

16. Amos repeats the substance of his former prophecies, with the addition of a personal reference. It is not Amaziah's doom that he foretells, but the doom of Israel, in which Amaziah and all his house shall be dragged down. *Thou sayest...therefore thus saith Jahveh ; a pointed contrast.*

*drop not thy word.* The expression is used more than once (Mic. ii. 6, 11 ; Ezek. xx. 46, xxi. 2 [Heb. xxi. 2, 7]) as a synonym for prophesying ; under the figure of dropping water, it conveys the idea of the flow of prophetic speech produced by inspiration.

17. *Thy wife, etc.* These coarse and cruel actions were the usual accompaniments of defeat in ancient times. Amos sees the vision of a captured city, with the slaughter that follows the siege. And Amaziah, for all his royal patronage and official priesthood, shall not escape the horrors of that event.

<sup>1</sup> The Hebr. *bôlēs* translated *dresser* is a verb derived from *balas*, which in Ethiopic means a *fig*, or sometimes a *sycamore*, and in Arabic is used of a kind of fig ; hence in Hebr. we may infer that it denoted the fig-shaped fruit of the sycamore. The verb derived from this noun will mean *to deal with* or *dress sycamore fruit*, but it tells us nothing about the way in which this was done ; cf. Driver, *in loc.*

sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou thyself shalt die in a land that is unclean, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of his land.

*in a land that is unclean*, i.e. some distant, foreign land, *unclean* because Jahveh is not worshipped there, and Jahveh could not be present for protection or consolation. So David, when contemplating exile in Philistia, protests that it will involve serving *other gods* (1 Sam. xxvi. 19; cf. Hos. ix. 3).

The oracle ends with Amos solemnly repeating the very words which Amaziah had used in evidence against him. Not for thirty years were they fulfilled, but Amos had the courage to declare God's message and to wait God's time. The words give the substance of his preaching. If Israel will not repent, *then he shall surely be led away captive out of his land*. And history vindicated Jahveh's prophet.

V. THE FOURTH VISION: THE "FALL" OF THE YEAR  
AND THE FALL OF ISRAEL VIII. 1, 2

**VIII.** 1 Thus the Lord GOD shewed me: and behold, a basket of summer fruit. 2 And he said, Amos, what seest thou? And I said, A basket of summer fruit. Then said the LORD unto me, The end is come upon my people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more.

**VIII.** 1. *a basket*. Jeremiah also uses a basket of fruit to illustrate one of his prophecies (Jer. xxiv.).

2. *The end*. Jahveh asked Amos what he saw. A basket of *kais* (כַּיִס) answered Amos. Not *kais* but *kēs* (כֶּסֶף) is reserved for Israel, said Jahveh. The assonance suggests this oracle. But there is association of ideas as well as association of sound. The late ripe fruit proclaims the fall of the year; the fall of the year brings before the prophet's mind the fall of Israel. Cf. ὁ δὲ θερισμὸς συντέλεια αἰώνος ἐστίν, Mt. xiii. 39, and Joel iii. [Heb. iv.] 13, Rev. xiv. 14—20.

Paronomasia was not scorned by the prophets. Jeremiah saw an almond tree, and the name of the tree *shākēd* (not in the first instance its fruits or flower) suggested the thought of Jahveh watching, *shōkēd*, over His word to perform it; here again there is an association of ideas. As to Amos the fruits of autumn suggested the approach of wintry desolation, so to Jeremiah the almond, first of all trees to flower, suggested the advent of another season. So the life of the tree seemed a parable of Jahveh's word; cf. St Mt. xxiv. 32.

Other illustrations of prophetic paronomasia may be seen in Hosea i. 5 (*Israel and Jezreel*); Mic. i. 14 (the houses of *Achzib* shall be *achzāb*, a deceitful thing, to Israel's kings); Is. i. 23 (*thy leaders are*



*misleaders*); and finest of all, Is. v. 7, "He looked for judgement (*mishpāt*), and behold oppression (*mispāh*), for righteousness (*sedākah*) and behold a cry (*se'ākah*)."

In the New Testament one instance has had issues of almost inconceivable magnitude, Mt. xvi. 18, *ὃ ἐφ' Ἰέρως, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πέτρᾳ οἰκοδομήσω μου τὴν ἐκκλησίαν*. Another instance not often noted is perhaps intended in Acts ix. 34, *Αἰνεία, ἰάται σε Ἰησοῦς*.

## VI. THE CERTAINTY OF JUDGEMENT VIII. 3—14

3 And the songs of the <sup>1</sup>temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord GOD: the dead bodies shall be many;

<sup>1</sup> Or, palace

A final address, rather than an appeal, to the corrupt wealthy classes, driving home the certainty of the judgement and its abundant justification. The verses in the text have suffered considerable dislocation, but it behoves us to be cautious in transposing and emending. After all, it is not the business of the critic to tell us what Amos ought to have said, but to find out, as far as may be, what he did say. Can he have written the present passage? Many critics are disposed to answer in the negative, or at any rate to detect a good many interpolations in these verses. E.g. in *v. 3 saith the Lord GOD* is a rather superfluous interruption; *v. 6a* looks like an addition inserted from ii. 6; in *v. 8* the comparison between the shock of an earthquake (*8a*) and the rise of the Nile (*8b*)—a gradual process lasting for some months—does not seem to be quite appropriate; the combination of figurative with literal thirst in *vv. 11, 13* strikes the reader as inartistic. At the same time we must beware of applying too rigorously our own canons of literary taste, and we have no right to reject a phrase merely because it is a repetition.

Bearing these cautions in mind we turn to the consideration of a difficult passage.

3. If this verse is in its right position, it must be taken as part of the preceding vision, which, however, it follows rather awkwardly. If it is transposed so as to follow *v. 9*, the prophet will then give us the reasons for expecting a judgement (*vv. 4—8*), and a description of *that day* (*v. 9*) which *v. 3* will bring to an appropriate climax.

*the songs of the temple shall be howlings*, lit. *the songs...shall howl*, a strange expression. A slight emendation improves the sense, *the singing women shall howl* (שִׁירוֹת for שִׁירוֹת). The word translated *temple* may equally well be rendered *palace*. So perhaps the verse describes the ruin, not of the sanctuary, but of the palaces which now echo with vain revelry (*vi. 7 f.*).

*the dead bodies shall be many*, etc. At this stage grammar is definitely flung aside. "By four disjointed lamentations, *howls* the prophet calls them, we are made to feel the last shocks of the final

in every place <sup>1</sup>shall they cast them forth with silence. 4 Hear this, O ye that would swallow up the needy, and cause the poor of the land to fail, 5 saying, When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may <sup>2</sup>set forth wheat? making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and dealing falsely with balances of deceit; 6 that we

<sup>1</sup> Or, have they cast them forth: be silent!

<sup>2</sup> Heb. open.

collapse, and in the utter end an awful silence. *Multitude of corpses! In every place! He hath cast out! Silence!*" G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 120.

The slaughter is indiscriminate, the burial promiscuous. *He* (that casteth) *hath cast them out in every place*. Perhaps the verb should be taken as an imperative, *Cast them out* in any place. *Many the carcasses. Throw them anywhere. Hush!*

*with silence*, lit. *Hush!* The survivors do their ghastly work in despairing silence; cf. vi. 9, 10.

It has been conjectured that these were the very words with which Amos was removed from Bethel: "Throw him out! Silence!" He retorts on the people the orders of the priest who refused to hear his prophecy.

If this verse is placed after v. 9, we obtain a wonderfully complete strophe: eclipse—slaughter—dishonoured burial—and the silence of despair.

4. *Hear this*. The beginning of the final address; cf. iii. 1, iv. 1, v. 1.

*ye that would swallow up*. LXX. οἱ ἐκτρίβοντες εἰς τὸ πρῶν, the last three words being probably a dittography of ἐκτρίβοντες. This suggests that we should point as in ii. 7 (עֲשֶׂהוּ for the M.T. עֲשֶׂהוּ), and render *ye that crush*; see note on ii. 7.

*and cause the poor of the land to fail*. If the text is correct, we have a peculiar, but well authenticated, construction which must be translated *and are for making the poor...to cease*. LXX. give καταδιναστεύοντες, with which they translate עֲשֶׂהוּ in iv. 1; perhaps they read עֲשֶׂהוּ in this passage also instead of עֲשֶׂהוּ, which may have crept in from the next verse.

5. *the new moon*. A popular holiday celebrated with religious observances (1 Sam. xx. 5, 24; Is. i. 13, 14; Hos. ii. 11; Ps. lxxx. 3; Num. xxviii. 11—15). Business was suspended; and the wealthy corn-factors were indignant at this interruption of their trafficking with the people's food.

The *sabbath* is here mentioned for the first time in prophetic literature. It is worth noticing that here, as elsewhere, the idea of the sabbath is bound up with the interests of the poorer classes; cf. Is. lviii.

*balances of deceit*. Amos parenthetically exposes the commercial dishonesties of these magnates. *They diminished the ephah* (the

may buy the poor for <sup>1</sup>silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat. 7 The LORD hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Surely I will never forget any of their works. 8 Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? yea, it shall rise up wholly like the River; and it shall be troubled and sink again, like the River of Egypt. 9 And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord GOD, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and

<sup>1</sup> See ch. ii. 6.

measure by which they sold), and enlarged the shekel (the measure by which the money paid to them by the purchasers was weighed). Not content with these fraudulent practices the wealthy counsellors had recourse to *false balances* (cf. for the condemnation of such conduct Prov. xx. 10, *A weight and a weight, an ephah and an ephah, both of them alike are an abomination unto Jahveh*; Deut. xxv. 13-15, *Thou shalt not have in thy bag a weight and a weight, a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thy house an ephah and an ephah, a great and a small*; see further Hos. xii. 7; Ezek. xlv. 9, 10; Lev. xix. 35, 36; Prov. xi. 1).

*dealing falsely with balances of deceit.* This is a paraphrase rather than a translation, and should run *falsifying* (lit. *making crooked*) *the balances of deceit.*

6. Cf. ii. 6. The meaning is that the poor have become so impoverished by the rapacity of these wealthy merchants, that they have to sell themselves and their children into slavery for the merest trifle in order to get the necessaries of life.

*the refuse of the wheat.* A fourth indictment: for dear money they sell the vilest wares.

7. *by the excellency of Jacob.* Some take the phrase here and in Hos. v. 5, vii. 10 to be an appellation of Jahveh Himself; but the context in these passages shews that the prophet is thinking of Israel's vain-glorious boasting; so render *pride*; cf. vi. 8. We must suppose that here, in Jahveh's mouth, the expression is one of scorn; His purposes are not more unalterable than the sinful pride of Jacob.

8. The nation's sinful *works* have stirred Jahveh's indignation, and nature shares His feeling. The whole emphasis is on the words *for this, because of this.*

The reference in the latter part of the verse is to the annual inundation of the Nile. A somewhat prosaic criticism finds fault with the comparison of an earthquake with the slow process of the rising and sinking of the Nile.

9. *I will cause the sun to go down at noon.* Cf. v. 18. The darkening of the sun as an adjunct to the terrors of the day of judgment, afterwards so common a feature in prophetic and apocalyptic literature, is here mentioned for the first time. It is more than

I will darken the earth in the clear day. 10 And I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day. 11 Behold, the days come, saith the Lord God, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the

possible that the idea may have been suggested to Amos by an eclipse which took place on the 15th of June, B.C. 763, or according to other authorities on the 9th of Feb., B.C. 784.

10. *your feasts*, lit. *your pilgrimages*, which were typical occasions of rejoicing; cf. Is. xxx. 29.

*baldness*. Shaving the hair as a sign of mourning was practised by the Hebrews (e.g. Is. iii. 24; Mic. i. 16), the Moabites (Is. xv. 2), the Philistines (Jer. xlvii. 5), the Phoenicians (Ezek. xxvii. 31), and other nations. Here Jahveh Himself brings *baldness upon every head* (cf. Is. xxii. 12); but in later days (Deut. xiv. 1) it was forbidden, doubtless because of its heathen associations.

*the mourning for an only son*. It is altogether wide of the mark to seek here for a reference to Tammuz, the Adonis of the Assyrians. The expression simply denotes intense bitterness of sorrow; cf. Jer. vi. 26, *make thee mourning, as for an only son, most bitter lamentation*.

*the end thereof* is not the end; it is but the ἀρχὴ ὀδύρων. At eventide there shall not be light, but the day and its bitterness must be lived all over again. The end of it is worse than the beginning: the close of day brings them only to the dawn of hopeless doom.

11, 12. The climax of despair. In their agony the people turn to Jahveh, but He is silent. "Then shall it be too late to cry for mercy, when it is the time for judgement."

The arguments for regarding these verses as an interpolation are singularly unconvincing. It is stated that figurative and literal *thirst* cannot be so closely combined; but in the first place this is more than doubtful, and secondly the difficulty would be removed by regarding *for thirst* in v. 13 as a gloss. It is also maintained that the phrase *in that day*, v. 13, points back to the same words in v. 9; and that the opening sentence of v. 11, *Behold, the days are coming*, interrupts the context and introduces quite another sort of expression. This, if true, may be met by regarding the opening words of v. 11 as an interpolation. The further objection that these verses presuppose an extended period of divine desertion, whereas the rest of the oracle suggests a sudden calamity, appears to forget that Amos was a poet and a prophet, and that it is useless to look in prophetic poetry for a rigid and prosaic consistency.

As a matter of fact the verses telling of Jahveh's abandonment of His people form a most appropriate and impressive climax to the oracle of ruin.

words of the LORD. 12 And they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east ; they shall run to and fro to seek the word of the LORD, and shall not find it. 13 In that day shall the fair virgins and the young men faint for thirst. 14 They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, As thy God,

*the words of the LORD.* We should read the singular, *the word*, together with many MSS. and all the Versions. In this time of crisis there would be no prophet of Jahveh whom the people might consult ; cf. 1 K. xxii. 5, 7.

12. *from sea to sea* may denote the ends of the earth ; but the expression taken in connexion with the following words has probably a more definite meaning. The Dead Sea marked the southern limit, while the Mediterranean was the western boundary of Israel's kingdom. Passing from the south to the west, they wander northward then eastward, thus compassing the whole land in their vain quest.

13. *for thirst* is perhaps best omitted, as superfluous both in sense and metre. Its omission obviates the difficulty noted above as to the anticlimax of physical drought succeeding the famine of the word of Jahveh.

14. *They that swear by the sin of Samaria.* The sin is not to be found in the swearing ; for every pious Israelite swore by Jahveh. *Thou shalt fear Jahveh thy God, and him shalt thou serve, and shalt swear by his name* (Deut. vi. 13) ; cf. Ps. lxxiii. 11 ; Is. xlv. 23. Idolatrous Israelites swore by *no-gods* (Jer. v. 7), by Baal or by Milcom (Jer. xii. 16 ; Zeph. i. 5).

What is the allusion in the words *they that swear by the sin of Samaria* ? The word for *sin* (*ashmath*) appears at first sight to be connected with *'āshām*, which occasionally means guilt (Gen. xxvi. 10 ; Prov. xiv. 9 ; Jer. li. 5), but more frequently the *guilt offering* (Lev. v., etc.). Here, however, Amos is clearly alluding to some concrete object, in fact to an idol, which was invoked by the people of Samaria. Long ago W. R. Smith suggested that this was the Asherah mentioned in 2 K. xiii. 6 (*Prophets*, p. 140), and it has been proposed to read *'ashrath* for *'ashmath* here. There is no need, however, to alter the text. Probably *'ashmath* (or better, *'ashimath*) is none other than *'Ashīma*, the god of the Hamathites, 2 K. xvii. 30 ; and the fact that the Israelites worshipped a god of this name has lately come to light in the Aramaic papyri discovered at Elephantine in Upper Egypt. In a list of subscriptions for religious purposes we find this surprising combination :

“For Jahu 12 karshas, 7 shekels  
For 'Ashem-bethel 7 karshas  
For 'Anath-bethel the sum of 12 karshas.”

Here we have evidence of the mixed worship practised by the Jewish colony of Upper Egypt in the 5th century B.C., no doubt brought with them from their native land. Along with the chief deity Jahu

O Dan, liveth; and, As the <sup>1</sup>way of Beer-sheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.

<sup>1</sup> Or, manner

(=Jahveh) they associated 'Ashem-bethel and 'Anath-bethel. The latter name was that of a goddess, known to have been worshipped by the Canaanites in ancient times; 'Ashem can hardly be any other than the 'Ashimath referred to by Amos in this passage. See Sachau, *Aram. Pap.* no. 20, col. vii. lines 4—6; Ed. Meyer, *Der Papyrusfund von Elephantine* (1912), 57 ff.; Burney, *Church Qtly.*, 1912, 403 ff.; Driver, *Hebr. Text of Samuel* (new edn.), xci. note.

*the way of Beer-sheba liveth.* Possibly (a) "the manner of Beer-sheba," referring to some special rites peculiar to this southern sanctuary. Or

(b) "the way to Beer-sheba." It seems strange to us to swear by the life of a road, but "this often happens among the Semites. To-day Arabs swear *wa hyât*, 'by the life of,' even of things inanimate... And as Amos here tells us that the Israelite pilgrims swore by the way to Beer-sheba, so do the Moslems affirm their oaths by the sacred way to Mecca" (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 186).

(c) We may have recourse to textual alteration. To correspond with the former clause we should expect a vocative, "Thy ..., O Beer-sheba." Moreover the final letter of *way* (רַי) seems to betray the pronoun *thy* which is needed. We might conjecture with Wellhausen *thy well*, O Beer-sheba (רַיִןִּי for רַי). One suggestion which keeps even closer to the consonantal text is that of Oettli, רַיִןִּי *thy beloved*, or *thy (divine) patron*; he points to the proper names Dodai (1 Chron. xxvii. 4), and Dodavahu (2 Chron. xx. 37), which stands for Dodijahu, i.e. *Beloved of Jahveh*, or *Jahveh is my patron*. The LXX. (ὁ Θεὸς σου) supports some such alteration. See *Encycl. Bibl.*, col. 1122.

## VII. THE FIFTH VISION AND THE END OF ALL IX. 1—8a

**IX. 1** I saw the Lord standing <sup>1</sup>beside the altar: and he said, Smite the chapiters, that the thresholds may shake: and

<sup>1</sup> Or, upon

We may notice four subjects:

- i. The vision of the smitten altar, *v.* 1 a.
- ii. The impossibility of escape, *vv.* 1 b—4.
- (iii. The majesty of Jahveh, *vv.* 5, 6.)
- iv. Jahveh knows no favourites; the nation that sins shall be destroyed, *vv.* 7, 8 a.

**IX. 1.** *the altar* is, of course, the altar at Bethel, the scene of Amos' preaching and of his conflict with authority, the national sanctuary. *beside the altar.* Marg. *upon*; an idiomatic usage, cf. 1 K. xiii. 1,

break them in pieces on the head of all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: <sup>1</sup>there shall not one of them flee away, and there shall not one of them escape. 2 Though they

<sup>1</sup> Or, he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered

where it is used of Jeroboam standing *by* (almost, leaning over) the altar to offer incense.

*and he said, Smite.* There is no need to specify who is addressed, whether the prophet, or one of the angels that surround the heavenly throne. When Jahveh speaks, there are ministrants both in heaven and earth to fulfil His commandment and hearken unto the voice of His words.

*the chapiters*, i.e. the spherical ornamentation of the pillars (in Ex. xxv. 31 of the golden candlestick) These capitals supported the roof of the temple.

*that the thresholds may shake.* There is no need to regard the *thresholds* as the architrave or lintels of the door. The blow dealt to the columns by a supernatural hand would shake the whole building to its foundations. Ewald considers that both terms apply to the *altar*, the first to the ornaments of the altar, the second to the bases: the whole is shivered.

*break them in pieces.* This is no more than a guess, for the word usually means 'to gain by violence.' Perhaps Amos imagined all the worshippers gathered together in the temple, when the hand of Jahveh struck the pillars, and the roof came crashing down *on the head of all of them.*

*and I will slay.* The beginning of a new oracle. The vision seems to end somewhat abruptly, and we have perhaps lost the words which formed the original conclusion. It has been suggested that we should complete the sense and rhythm with iii. 14*b*, which cannot be quite in place where it stands:

ix. 1 *a* *Smite the capitals, that the thresholds tremble!*  
*Yea, shatter it on the head of all of them!*

iii. 14 *b* *Yea, visit the altar, that the horns thereof be broken;*  
*Yea, they shall fall to the ground.*

*the residue of them.* Not merely a continuation of the foregoing picture, such as escape from the temple to secret and yet more dreadful death, but the beginning of a new oracle. Or perhaps we have here the conclusion of ch. ii. We may compare iv. 2, *and your residue with fish hooks.* Amos means that not a single one of all Israel's people shall escape.

Verses 2—4 bring out the utter impossibility of escape from Jahveh. For a somewhat similar expression of the sublime thought of Ps. cxxxix. 8:

*If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there;*  
*If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou art there.*

dig into <sup>1</sup>hell, thence shall mine hand take them ; and though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. 3 And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence ; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them. 4 And though they go into captivity before their enemies, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them : and I will set mine eyes upon them for evil,

<sup>1</sup> Heb. Sheol.

This conviction that no place was inaccessible to Jahveh is not found elsewhere in pre-exilic literature ; the dwellers in Sheol were thought to be cut off from Jahveh's hand, incapable of knowing the wonders of His power and love (Ps. lxxxviii. 5, 10—12 ; Is. xxxviii. 18). Situated deep down in the earth (Deut. xxxii. 22 ; Is. xiv. 15 ; Job xi. 8, xxvi. 5), Sheol was the farthest opposite from heaven ; cf. Is. vii. 11 R.V. marg.

It has also been noticed that the word *dig through* to Sheol occurs next in Ezekiel ; but the derivative "place of breaking through" is found in Ex. xxii. 2 [Heb. 1].

These circumstances, together with the fact that the sense of this verse is repeated in the next, have led some critics to question whether Amos could have written the passage, but their reasons do not carry conviction.

3. *Carmel* rises sheer out of the sea. Cf. Jer. xlvi. 18, *Like Tabor among the mountains, and like Carmel by the sea, so shall he come*. Its summit was clothed in dense forests where robbers found a safe hiding-place ; while its lower slopes were honeycombed with tortuous and narrow-mouthed caverns, where the hunted fugitive might hope to escape the pursuer. But "the Hound of Heaven" tracks them to their last retreat. In despair they fling themselves into the sea ; but even there they shall not escape, for *the serpent* shall bite them. We need not be at pains to identify the serpent with any marine monster known to science. "The serpent" was to the ancients the legendary embodiment of all those countless creatures which dwelt in the depths of the ocean. *God created the great sea monsters*, and they went to and fro, devouring and ferocious, on strange errands of the Almighty (Jonah i. 17 ; Is. xxvii. 1).

4. *And if they go into captivity*. Elsewhere the exile is the end ; but Amos has declared that the end is only the beginning, and that eventide shall be the dawn of bitterness. The disaster now threatened surpasses all previous threats. In v. 27, vi. 14 the exile is the final catastrophe ; but now not even the exile will shield them from the wrath of God. Nothing remains for them but annihilation by Jahveh's sword.

*it shall slay them*, reiterating the *I will slay* which stands at the opening of the oracle. In this whole passage it is the ethical conception



and not for good. 5 For the Lord, the God of hosts, *is* he that toucheth the land and it melteth, and all that dwell therein shall mourn; and it shall rise up wholly like the River; and shall sink again, like the River of Egypt; 6 *it is* he that buildeth his chambers in the heaven, and hath founded his vault upon the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth; the LORD is his name.

of God which determines the representation of Jahveh's universal power *in heaven and earth, and in the sea, and in all deep places*. If Jahveh is before all else the God of righteousness, whose will it is that righteousness shall be established, if need be, on the foundation of His people's ruin, then no limits of time or place can be set to the achievement of His purpose. The serpents in the sea and the armies of Assyria are alike at His disposal for the accomplishment of His design. And whether in their own country or in the farthest land of exile, those that hinder His purpose shall be reached by His almighty hand.

*I will set mine eyes upon them*. This phrase is elsewhere used in a good sense (Gen. xlv. 21; Jer. xxiv. 6). Amos seems here to be once more taking up a religious expression in everyday use, and giving it a new and sombre meaning (cf. v. 18). His opponents declined to believe his message; the eye of Jahveh, they said, is upon His people. Yes, says Amos in effect, it is—for evil and not for good.

5, 6. The majesty of Jahveh, God of hosts.

These verses stand in no appreciable relation with what precedes. Grammatically the construction is broken: *I will set mine eyes...and the Lord, Jahveh of Hosts, who toucheth the land...Jahveh is his name*. Moreover v. 5 practically repeats viii. 8, while 6b repeats v. 8b. Finally these two verses interrupt the context; v. 7 is plainly to be connected as closely as possible with v. 4.

*Jahveh watches over us* cried the priests and people. The prophet turns the word against them. It is no good appealing to your deliverance from Egypt and wanderings in the wilderness: other people have experienced the divine control; Jahveh is the God of all history, not only of your history. But He is a God of righteousness as well. In the knowledge of His will and person there may indeed be a difference between nation and nation; but the transgression of His righteousness makes one nation as another nation. Whatever their past history or present glory, whatever their forms of government or fashions of religion, Cushites, Philistines, Hebrews, Aramaeans, *the eyes of Jahveh are against a sinful kingdom, and He will destroy it from the face of the earth*.

6. *his chambers*. We must read *his upper chambers* (עֲלֵי־חַמְצָתָא for חַמְצָתָא) as in Ps. civ. 3, *who layeth the beams of his upper chambers in the waters*.

"The Hebrews pictured the sky as a solid vault, resting at its extremities on the earth (Job xxvi. 11): in this vault the heavenly bodies

7 Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and

were imagined to revolve: 'in front of it' (i.e. in the open air below its lower surface) the birds flew (Gen. i. 20): above it were the reservoirs in which rain was stored (as also snow and hail); and above these 'waters above the firmament' Jehovah sat enthroned" (Driver, *Joel and Amos*, p. 218).

7. *Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians?* Yet Amos had declared in Jahveh's name *you only have I known of all the families of the earth*, and now in the same name he declares that Israel is no more to Jahveh than the Cushites, Philistines or Syrians. Amos does not trouble to be consistent. 'Is Jahveh in special relation to Israel? Very well, this special relation entails special responsibilities' (so in iii. 2). But driven by the exigencies of his controversy with the people, Amos is prepared to challenge even this fundamental axiom. One nation is to Jahveh as another nation. He has no special favourites; He is not bound by physical ties to any country; His relation to Israel rests entirely on moral considerations, being based not on nature, but on grace. When once the conditions of morality are set aside, then Jahveh dissolves the bond which unites Him to His people, and Israel becomes as Ethiopia. *The children of the Ethiopians* or Cushites occupied the country of Nubia, with Napata as their capital. At this time they were known only as a remote and uncivilized people; at a later stage they emerged into considerable importance, establishing their suzerainty over the whole of Egypt, entering into friendly alliances with neighbouring states, and proving themselves formidable antagonists to the Assyrian power. This will account for their sometimes being spoken of as despised blacks (e.g. this passage and Jer. xiii. 23), and on other occasions receiving ornate compliments both from Hebrews and Greeks (e.g. Is. xviii. and Herodotus III. 20, 23, 114).

*the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir.* 'But Jahveh, having delivered Israel from Egypt, cannot desert her now.' To which Amos answers, 'It is not only Israel's migrations that Jahveh has directed: every historical movement is guided by His sovereign will.'

*Caphtor.* Cf. Deut. ii. 23; Jer. xvii. 4 (in Gen. x. 14 we should read *and the Caphtorim, from whence the Philistines went forth*). Caphtor is supposed by W. Max Müller to be the equivalent of *Keftó*, the ancient Egyptian name of the western quarter of the world, especially perhaps Cilicia (*Asien u. Europa*, p. 344 ff.); the LXX. here gives *Cappadocia* for *Caphtor*. If we could be sure that the kindred tribe of the Cheréthites (1 Sam. xxx. 14; Zeph. ii. 5; Ezek. xxxv. 16) were Cretans, as the LXX. writes in the last two references, then the Philistines must have been connected with Crete; recent opinion tends to favour such a connexion (e.g. Evans, *Scripta Minoa*, p. 77 ff.).

the Syrians from Kir? 8 Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth;

and **Aram** from Kir, the unknown birthplace of Syria in the regions of the north; cf. i. 5.

8. *the sinful kingdom.* Whatever the nation and whatever its history, Jahveh applies but one test; when by this test a nation is shewn wanting, Jahveh's eyes are against it for destruction.

#### D. A BRIGHTER PROSPECT IX. 8 b—15

saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD. 9 For, lo, I will command, and I will <sup>1</sup>sift the house

<sup>1</sup> Heb. cause to move to and fro.

8 b. *saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob.* These words mark the transition from the oracles of Amos to the "voices of another dawn," which form the present conclusion to the Book. Amos himself has just concluded his prophecy with a threat of unrelieved gloom: not one shall escape the crowning disaster—that is the burden of all his preaching. He has declared (v. 4) that not even the exile is the end; for in the land of captivity the sword of Jahveh shall pursue and smite them. Nor will Jahveh cease until He has destroyed the sinful nation from the face of the earth:—*nevertheless destroying He will not destroy the house of Jacob.* The latter half of the verse contradicts the former, and the context, and the whole tenour of Amos' prophecies.

These verses exhibit a different conception of the purpose, the means and the result of divine punishment from that which is elsewhere found in Amos. He always deals with the people as a whole: in the punishment which will overtake the nation, there will be no distinction between just and unjust; all will perish in the national overthrow. But in these verses the punishment is viewed as a day of discipline, as a means of purification, even of preservation. For it is only the *sinners of my people* that shall be consumed: a righteous remnant will remain to perpetuate the national existence.

Again, to Amos the instrument of punishment is always one particular nation: *Behold I raise up against you a nation*, the dreaded unnamed nation of the north. Here we are introduced to a totally new conception, Israel scattered among *all the nations*.

The final result of the divine visitation is, according to Amos, the triumph of the God of righteousness, manifested in the destruction of His sinful people. According to these latter verses, the result is restoration and renewal.

Moreover, the language points to a different authorship from the oracle of Amos. *In that day* Amos expects ruin and disaster (viii. 9, 13); *in that day* the restoration will begin, declares this writer (v. 11).

of Israel among all the nations, like as *corn* is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. 10 All the sinners of my people shall die by the sword, which say, The evil shall not overtake nor prevent us.

11 In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his

*Behold, days are coming* is Amos' introduction to a story of assault, disgrace, and exile (iv. 2), of a people famishing for Jahveh's words (viii. 11); the same words here disclose a vision of miraculous prosperity (v. 13).

We may also note that, whether the passage in ii. 4, 5 be the work of Amos or not, the prophet makes no distinction between Israel and Judah. Though his ministry was mainly confined to the northern kingdom, his indictment was directed to the whole house of Israel (iii. 1, vi. 1). But here the destruction of sinful Israel is contrasted with the joy and glory which shall yet be Judah's (v. 11 f.).

We therefore regard all these concluding verses as the work of some prophetic writer of a later day, who, in the midst of different surroundings, felt himself commissioned to bear a message of hope and consolation, as Amos had been a messenger of doom.

*I will sift*, cf. Luke xxii. 31, "Satan asked to have you (R.V. marg. obtained you by asking) that he might sift you as wheat," perhaps with conscious remembrance of this passage.

The metaphor can only be taken to mean that, while the whole nation will be subjected to the winnowing process, yet no good grain will be lost. Only the worthless shall fall through the sieve to the earth, like the chaff which the wind driveth away; cf. Ps. i. 4.

11. *the tabernacle of David*, rather *the booth of David*. The expression suggests that the *house of David* had been reduced to the humblest structure. The reference to the ruins of David's house emphasizes this aspect of affairs still more strongly.

But to what condition of disaster can the words be referred? At the time of Amos both Judah and Israel were flourishing under powerful kings. The Davidic dynasty, in particular, shewed no sign of decadence; Uzziah proved himself one of Judah's most successful monarchs. The reference to *the fallen booth of David* is altogether inappropriate in the mouth of Amos. The words in fact presuppose an entirely different historical situation: in the writer's experience the nation has not only suffered some terrible humiliation, but has begun to survive it.

The words of *vv. 11 and 12* are quoted by St James in his defence of Gentile liberty, in a form, however, which bears little resemblance to the Hebrew, and which appears to have modified, as well as to have been modified by, the LXX. version; Acts xv. 17, *δπως ἀν ἐκζητήσωσιν οἱ κατάλοιποι τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸν Κύριον* (i.e. למען יירשו אתיהוה שארית אדם). The speech of St James is plainly

ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; 12 that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and all the nations, which<sup>1</sup> are called by my name, saith the LORD that doeth this. 13 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman

<sup>1</sup> Or, were

condensed: and St Luke represents him as making not so much a specific quotation from Amos, as alluding to the general agreement of prophetic teaching with the party who pressed for the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Christian Church. The words of Amos occurred to him as a definite prediction of the moment which had arrived<sup>1</sup>.

The period of suffering which Amos had anticipated is almost past, and hope takes the place of despair.

*as in the days of old.* A phrase far more appropriate in the exilic age than in the age of Amos.

12. The prophecy of political exaltation is in strange contrast with all the preaching of Amos: Edom is reduced to a remnant. The singling out of Edom for special mention in this kind of connexion reflects the sentiments of the returned and embittered exiles; cf. Ps. lx.; Obad. 18—21.

*and all the nations, which are called by my name.* The phrase has no kind of religious significance, and does not refer to the nations' acknowledgement of Jahveh as God and Saviour. The translation should run *all the nations over whom my name has been called*; that is, as a sign of ownership or conquest. All the territory that David had subdued had been brought under Jahveh's suzerainty, He was its Overlord and Owner; cf. 2 Sam. xii. 28, where Joab asks David to come and complete the conquest of Rabbah *lest I take the city, and my name be called over it.* The same expression is used of the people (e.g. Deut. xxviii. 10; Jer. xiv. 9; Is. lxiii. 19), and of the temple (e.g. 1 K. viii. 43; Jer. vii. 10 ff.), and of the city (e.g. Dan. ix. 18 f., etc.).

13. *Behold, days are coming.* A phrase used with a very different application in iv. 2. For this description of miraculous fertility cf. Lev. xxvi. 5, *your threshing shall reach unto the vintage, and the vintage shall reach unto the sowing time.*

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<sup>1</sup> "The LXX. translators shared the larger hopes of their day, and on more than one occasion they allowed their sympathy with such aspirations to affect their renderings. It is however surprising that the Hebraic president of the Church of Jerusalem should have quoted from the Greek version in favour of Hellenistic converts; it is even more surprising that the accuracy of his quotations was not called in question by the party opposed to the extension of Jewish privileges. But the original prophecy is not destitute of the significance which St James attaches to it. *All the nations* are brought within the theocratic kingdom, albeit by martial conquest or political subjugation. The manner of their inbringing is brought by the LXX. more into harmony with the humaner ideals of a more tolerant age, but the fact of their inclusion in the restored theocracy is an idea present in the minds of the Hebrew prophets, and thus the passage is not inappropriately regarded as foreshadowing the share of the Gentiles in the Messianic salvation." Edghill, *Value of Prophecy*, pp. 514, 515.

shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. 14 And I will bring again the captivity of my people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. 15 And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be plucked up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

*the hills shall melt*, lit. *dissolve themselves*, i.e. in the streams of wine that come pouring down their sides.

14. *I will bring again the captivity*. It is doubtful whether the phrase should be translated thus, or *I will turn the fortune* (lit. *the turning*). It is almost exclusively a post-exilic expression.

*waste cities*. This again is the common promise of the post-exilic prophets, but in Amos' mouth it would be almost meaningless.

*they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof*. A contrast to the words of Amos in v. 11, *Ye have planted pleasant vineyards, but ye shall not drink the wine thereof*.

*they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them*. Contrast iv. 9, *I laid waste [correcting the text] your gardens and vineyards*.

15. *out of their land*. *Out of his own land* Israel shall surely go into exile, said Amos (vii. 11, 17): *out of their own land* they shall no more be pulled up, says "this voice of another dawn."

*thy God*. A title once used by Amos as a terrifying threat (iv. 12): here, as elsewhere in post-exilic literature, "a title expressive of consolation and affection" (Driver, *op. cit.* p. 226).

Two final considerations strengthen the conviction we have already reached that these concluding verses cannot be attributed to Amos:

1. As Wellhausen truly says, the singular greatness of Amos lies in the fact that he realized that Israel's overthrow meant Jahveh's victory. After the declaration of this unalterable conviction can we imagine him sinking back into the superstition which he attacks? Shall the delusion triumph over its destroyer?

2. Again, it is incredible that Amos, to whom God was above all things a God of righteousness, should set out to describe an ideal future which was concerned mainly with material prosperity. "Imagine him describing the consummation of his people's history, without one of those moral triumphs, to rally his people to which his whole passion and energy had been devoted. To me, it is impossible to hear the voice that cried, *Let justice roll on like waters and righteousness like a perennial stream*, in a peroration which is content to tell of mountains dripping with must and of a people satisfied with vineyards and gardens. These are legitimate hopes; but they are the hopes of a generation of other conditions and of other deserts than the generation of Amos" (G. A. Smith, *op. cit.* p. 195).

## APPENDIX

### THE WORDS OF AMOS RETRANSLATED AND REARRANGED

#### I. VISIONS AND VOICES

INTRODUCTION: The words of Amos which he saw i. 1.

1. THE FIRST WORD WHICH AMOS SAW vii. 1—3.
2. THE SECOND „ „ vii. 4—6.
3. THE THIRD „ „ vii. 7, 8.
4. THE FOURTH „ „ viii. 1, 2.
5. THE FIFTH „ „ ix. 1, iii. 14, vii. 9.
6. WHAT CAME OF AMOS' PREACHING vii. 10—17

#### II. FIVE ADDRESSES

1. FIRST ADDRESS iii. 1—8. *My word is God's word; therefore hear me, ye Israelites!*
2. SECOND ADDRESS iv. 1—3. *God has sworn; therefore hear me, ye proud and careless women!*
3. THIRD ADDRESS viii. 3, 4—14. *God has sworn (viii. 7); therefore hear me, ye violent and unscrupulous men!*
4. FOURTH ADDRESS v. 1—3, vi. 8, 11—14. *God has sworn (vi. 8); therefore hear ye, O house of Israel (v. 1); hear what awaits you by divine decree (vi. 8, 11—14).*
5. FIFTH ADDRESS iii. 9—12, 13, 15. *Samaria's shame calls for punishment (iii. 10, 11, 15, 12); therefore hear (v. 13), O ye foreign nations (v. 9).*

#### III. TWO PROCLAMATIONS OF WOE

1. JAHVEH'S DAY AND JAHVEH'S EYES v. 18—20, ix. 4b, 7, vi. 2, ix. 8.
2. "THE MOST FAVOURED NATION" vi. 1—7.

## IV. EXTERNALS AND ESSENTIALS

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6. AGAINST MOAB ii. 1—3.
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## VI. FRAGMENTS

1. THE VOICE OF JAHVEH i. 2.
2. DESCRIPTION OF A DROUGHT iv. 7, 8.
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  - a.* iv. 13.
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8. AN ADDITION, TO INCLUDE JUDAH ii. 4, 5.
9. AN APPENDIX BY A LATER PROPHET
  - a.* ix. 8 *b*.
  - b.* *vv.* 9 *c*, 10.
  - c.* *vv.* 11, 12.
  - d.* *vv.* 13—15.



## L. VISIONS AND VOICES

INTRODUCTION : The words of Amos which he saw<sup>1</sup> i. 1.

## 1. THE FIRST WORD WHICH AMOS SAW vii. 1—3.

Thus the Lord Jahveh made me see :

Behold, a forming of locusts—larvae, when the spring  
crops shoot,

And behold, when men may mow—locusts full grown.  
And when they were devouring the last vestige of verdure,

Then said I,

“Oh Lord, Jahveh,

I pray thee to forgive.

Who is Jacob that he can recover?

So small is he.”

Jahveh repented concerning this :

“It shall not be,” said Jahveh.

## 2. THE SECOND WORD WHICH AMOS SAW vii. 4—6.

Thus the Lord Jahveh made me see :

Behold, One called to contend by fire,  
even the Lord Jahveh ;

And it devoured the subterranean sources of the waters,  
And the solid earth it would have devoured.

Then said I,

“Oh Lord, Jahveh,

I pray thee to forbear.

Who is Jacob that he can recover?

So small is he.”

Jahveh repented concerning this :

“It shall not be,” said Jahveh.

<sup>1</sup> To fill out the Title of the Book the post-exilic editor has inserted three particulars which he gleaned mainly from the historical section, no. 6 below :—

*As to Amos himself* : who was among the shepherds of Tekoa.

*As to the scope of his oracles* : concerning Israel.

*As to the time of his ministry* : in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, ben-Joash, king of Israel. Two years before the earthquake.

## 3. THE THIRD WORD WHICH AMOS SAW vii. 7, 8.

Thus he made me see:

Behold, the Lord took his station on a certain wall,

A plummet in his hand.

“What seest thou, Amos?” said the Lord to me,

I said, “A plummet.”

“A plummet,” said Jahveh, “even now am I setting

In the midst of my people Israel.

I will no more forgive them.”

## 4. THE FOURTH WORD WHICH AMOS SAW viii. 1, 2.

Thus the Lord Jahveh made me see:

Behold, a basket of fruits gathered at the fall of the  
year.

And, “What seest thou Amos?” said he.

I said, “A basket of fruits gathered at the year’s fall.”

“Fallen,” said he, “finally fallen is my people Israel.

I will no more forgive them.”

## 5. THE FIFTH WORD WHICH AMOS SAW ix. 1, iii. 14, vii. 9.

I saw the Lord stationed at the altar:

And he said,

“Smite the capitals and let the bases be shattered,

Yea, fling them crashing on the heads of all of  
them.

iii. 14. I will visit the altars of Bethel, and the altar-horns  
shall be hewn off,

Yea, to the ground shall they fall.

vii. 9. And Isaac’s high places shall be desolate,

And Israel’s sanctuaries laid waste;

And I will rise against the house of Jeroboam

With the sword.”

## 6. WHAT CAME OF AMOS’ PREACHING vii. 10—17.

Then sent Amaziah priest of Bethel to Jeroboam king of  
Israel:

“Conspired against thee hath Amos in the midst of  
Israel,

The land is not able to hold all his words,

For thus saith Amos,  
 By the sword shall Jeroboam die,  
 And Israel into captivity shall surely go  
 Away from his own land."

And to Amos Amaziah said,  
 "O seer, get thee gone ;  
 Flee for thy life to Judah's land ;  
 There ply thy trade,  
 There prophesy.  
 But at Bethel thou shalt not prophesy again,  
 For a royal sanctuary is Bethel,  
 And a royal residence is Bethel."

And Amos answered, and said to Amaziah,  
 "No prophet I,  
 Nor prophet's son :  
 A shepherd I,  
 And dresser of sycomores.  
 And Jahveh took me from following the flock.  
 And Jahveh said to me,  
 Get thee gone, prophesy  
 Against my people Israel."  
 "And now hear thou the word of Jahveh .  
 Thou sayest,  
 Thou shalt not prophesy against Israel ;  
 Thou shalt not drop thy word against  
 the house of Isaac.  
 Therefore thus  
 Jahveh saith,  
 Thy wife in the city shall be ravished,  
 Thy sons and daughters by the sword  
 shall fall.  
 Thy land by lot shall be divided,  
 And thou in a land unclean shalt die.  
**AND ISRAEL—INTO CAPTIVITY SHALL SURELY GO  
 AWAY FROM HIS OWN LAND."**

## II. FIVE ADDRESSES

## 1. FIRST ADDRESS iii. 1—8.

*My word is God's word; therefore hear me, ye Israelites!*

*The agreement  
broken, vv. 1-3.*

Hear ye this word

Which Jahveh hath spoken against you, O ye sons of  
Israel,

Even against the whole family which I brought up from  
the land of Egypt.

Only you have I known from all earth's families,  
Therefore—I shall visit upon you all your iniquities.

Can two walk together  
Except they be agreed?

*Israel already in  
the hunter's toils,  
vv. 4, 5.*

Doth a lion growl in the wood  
If he have no prey?

Doth a young lion roar from his den,  
Except he have taken somewhat?

Doth a bird fall into a net upon the earth,  
If there be no bait for it?

Doth a snare fly up,  
If it have taken nothing at all?

*The prophets have  
warned in vain,  
vv. 6, 7.*

Can the trumpet be blown in a city,  
And the people not tremble?

Can evil befall a city,  
And hath Jahveh not done it?

Surely the Lord Jahveh doeth nothing,  
Without revealing his counsel to his servants the  
prophets.

*The doom is  
certain and the  
doom is clear,  
v. 8.*

The lion hath roared,  
Who doth not fear?

The Lord Jahveh hath spoken,  
Who can but prophesy?

## 2. SECOND ADDRESS iv. 1—3.

*God has sworn; therefore hear me, ye proud and careless women!*

Hear ye this word,

O ye cows of Bashan,  
Which dwell in Samaria's mount.

Ye be the women that wring the helpless,  
 Ye be the women that crush the needy,  
 Ye be the women that say to their husbands  
 Bring to us, that we may drink!

Sworn hath the Lord Jahveh  
 By his own holiness,  
 Lo! days are coming upon you  
 When one will take you away with barbs,  
 And the very last of you with fish-hooks.  
 Yea, through the breaches (of the battered walls) ye  
 shall go out,  
 Each woman headlong,  
 And ye shall be flung to the impure service of a  
 foreign god<sup>1</sup>.

3. THIRD ADDRESS viii. 3, 4—14.

*God has sworn: therefore hear me, ye violent and unscrupulous men!*

- v. 4. Hear ye this,  
 Ye that trample on the poor,  
 That are ready to make the lowly of the land to cease,  
 v. 6a. That are ready to buy the helpless for silver,  
 And the poor for a pair of shoes.
- v. 5b. Who diminish the measure,  
 And advance the price,  
 And falsify the balance of deceit.
- v. 5a. "When," say they, "will this new moon be over,  
 And the sabbath be past,  
 v. 6b. "That we may start selling the refuse of wheat?"
- vv. 7-8. Sworn hath Jahveh  
 By Jacob's sinful pride,  
 "Never will I forget all their works."  
 Because of this shall not the earth tremble?  
 Shall not every inhabitant thereof mourn?  
 Yea, as the Nile it shall rise all of it, and heave,  
 Yea, as the Nile of Egypt it shall sink down again.

<sup>1</sup> This is only a guess at the meaning of an unintelligible phrase.

- v. 10.           And into mourning will I turn your pilgrim-feasts,  
                   And into lamentation all your songs ;  
 And upon all loins will I bring sackcloth,  
                   And baldness upon every head.  
 And I will make it as the mourning for an only son,  
                   And the end thereof as the beginning of a bitter  
                   day.
- v. 11.           And I will send a famine in the land,  
                   No famine for bread,  
                   Nor thirst for water,  
 But for hearing the word of Jahveh ;
- v. 12.           And they shall stagger from the southern to the western  
                   sea,  
 And from the north to the sunrising they shall run to  
                   and fro,  
                   To seek the word of Jahveh,  
                   And they shall not find it.
- v. 13.           In that day the beautiful maidens and the youths shall  
                   faint,
- v. 14.           That swear by Ashma of Samaria,  
                   That say, By the life of thy God, O Dan !  
                   And, By the life of thy Patron, O Beer-Sheba !  
 Yea, they shall fall, and rise no more.
- v. 9.            And it shall be in that day  
                   —'Tis the oracle of the Lord Jahveh—  
                   That I will make the sun to set at noon,  
                   And I will bring darkness on the earth in the full  
                   light of day.
- v. 3.            And the singing women of the palace shall howl in that  
                   day—  
                   “Many the carcases !  
                   Everywhere, anywhere,  
                   Fling them out !  
                   Silence !”

## 4. FOURTH ADDRESS v. 1—3, vi. 8, 11—14.

*God has sworn (vi. 8); therefore hear ye, O house of Israel (v. 1); hear what awaits you by divine decree (vi. 8, 11—14).*

*Amos' dirge,*  
v. 1-2.

Hear ye this word,  
Which I am lifting up for you,  
Even your death song, O house of Israel.  
Fallen, and never to rise,  
Virgin of Israel!  
Forsaken upon her own land,  
None to upraise her!

*Jahveh's oath,*  
vi. 8.

Sworn hath the Lord Jahveh by himself  
—'Tis the oracle of Jahveh, God of hosts—  
I do loathe the pride of Jacob,  
And his palaces I hate.

vi. 11.

The city and its fulness will I deliver up;  
For the smiters shall smite the great house to frag-  
ments,  
And the little house to shivers.

*Why judgement  
is necessary,*  
vi. 12-13.

Do horses run upon crags?  
Does one plow the sea with oxen?  
That ye have turned justice to poison,  
And the fruit of righteousness to wormwood?  
Which rejoice in the conquest of 'Nought,'  
Which say, By our own strength we have taken to  
us 'Horns'<sup>1</sup>!

*Judgement by  
battle, v. 8.*

For thus saith the Lord Jahveh:  
The city that goeth forth a thousand shall have a hundred  
left,  
And she that goeth forth a hundred shall have ten left,  
To the house of Israel.

vi. 14.

For behold I am raising up against you,  
O house of Israel,  
—'Tis the oracle of Jahveh, the God of hosts—  
A nation;  
And they shall afflict even you,  
From the entrance of Hāmāth to the wady of the  
Arabāh<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Amos plays upon the names of two fortresses, Lo-debar ('Nought') and Karnaim ('Horns'), which we may suppose had been recently won from Syria.

<sup>2</sup> The words used in 2 Kings xiv. 25 to describe the whole extent of Jeroboam's empire.

## 5. FIFTH ADDRESS iii. 9—12, 13, 15.

*Samaria's shame calls for punishment (iii. 10, 11, 15, 12); therefore hear ye (v. 13), O ye foreign nations (v. 9).*

*The men of Ashdod and Egypt rise up in the judgement with this generation (v. 9) and condemn it, iii. 13.*

Hear ye and testify against the house of Jacob!  
—'Tis the oracle of the Lord Jahveh, the God of hosts—  
Proclaim ye over the palaces that are in Ashdod,  
And say ye it over the palaces that are in the land  
of Egypt!

v. 10.

Gather ye upon Samaria's mountains,  
And see the many tumults that are therein,  
And how they know not to do right  
—'Tis Jahveh's oracle—  
Who treasure violence and oppression in their  
palaces.

*Destruction from Jahveh's hand, v. 11.*

Therefore thus saith the Lord Jahveh :  
Distress shall encompass the land,  
And thy stronghold shall be razed from thee,  
And thy palaces shall be plundered.

v. 15.

And I will smite the winter house upon the  
summer house,  
And the houses of ivory shall perish,  
And many houses shall have an end—  
'Tis Jahveh's oracle.

v. 12.

Thus saith Jahveh :  
As the shepherd saves from the lion's mouth  
But a pair of legs or a piece of ear,  
So only shall the sons of Israel be saved in Samaria,  
Who sit in the corner of a couch,  
And on the sofa's silken stuff.

## III. TWO PROCLAMATIONS OF WOE

## 1. JAHVEH'S DAY v. 18—20.

Woe unto them that long for Jahveh's day!  
What have ye to do with "Jahveh's day"?  
Darkness it is, and not light.



Even as a man fleeth from a lion  
 And a bear falleth on him,  
 And he cometh home, and leaneth his hand upon  
 the wall,  
 And a serpent biteth him.  
 Is not "Jahveh's day" darkness, and not light?  
 Yea, deep darkness, and no brightness therein?

AND JAHVEH'S EYES ix. 4 b, 7, vi. 2, ix. 8.

(Woe unto them that say, Upon us hath Jahveh set his  
 eyes!

ix. 4 b. For behold) I will "set mine eyes" upon them for  
 evil, and not for good.

ix. 7a. Are ye not to me as the sons of the Cushites,  
 O sons of Israel?

—"Tis Jahveh's oracle.

*Other nations  
 have been  
 "brought up,"*  
 ix. 7b. Did I not bring up Israel from Egypt's land,  
 And the Philistines from Kaphtor,  
 And the Syrians from Kir?

*Other nations  
 have been  
 "brought down,"*  
 vi. 2. Pass ye over to Kalneh, and look;  
 Thence go ye to Great Hāmath,  
 And go ye down to Gath of the Philistines.  
 Are ye better than were these kingdoms?  
 Is your border greater than was their border?

ix. 8. Behold the Lord Jahveh's eyes are on every nation that  
 sinneth,  
 And I will destroy it from the face of the ground.

2. "THE MOST FAVOURED NATION" vi. 1—7.

Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion,  
 And are secure on Samaria's mount!  
 That call themselves the chief of the nations,  
 To whom the house of Israel come to be  
 judged<sup>1</sup>!

vv. 3—7. Fancying to put off the day of evil,  
 But bringing near the rod of the slave-gang<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this line is uncertain and the text corrupt.

<sup>2</sup> Conjectural.

They that lie in beds of ivory,  
 And sprawl on their sofas;  
 They eat the lambs from the flock,  
     And the calves fattened in the stall.  
 Idly they improvise to the sound of the lyre,  
     Like David they are accounted skilful in song<sup>1</sup>.  
 They drink whole bowls of wine,  
     And anoint themselves with the finest oils;  
 But for the breach of Joseph they are not grieved.  
 Therefore now they shall go captive at the head of the  
     captives,  
 And the shout of the sprawlers shall pass away.

## IV. EXTERNALS AND ESSENTIALS

1. RITUAL AND RELIGION iv. 4—12 *a*, v. 4, 5, iv. 12 *b*, v. 6.

*a. Israel's  
 insensate worship,  
 iv. 4, 5.*

Come ye to Bethel and—transgress!  
 In Gilgal multiply—transgression!  
 And bring your sacrifices each morning,  
     Every three days your tithes!

Burn your luscious thank-offerings;  
     And publish, proclaim your alms!  
 For so ye love it, ye sons of Israel,  
     Is the Lord Jahveh's oracle.

*b. And failure to  
 understand the  
 divine judge-  
 ments, iv. 6—12 a:  
 Famine.*

And on my part—  
     I have given you cleanness of teeth in all your  
     cities,  
 And want of bread in all your places;  
     But ye did not return to me,  
     Is Jahveh's oracle.

*Drought, vv. 7, 8.*

And on my part—  
     I have withholden the rain from you,  
     One piece of land would be rained upon,  
     And the other piece, whereon it rained not,  
     would wither;  
     But ye did not return to me,  
     Is Jahveh's oracle.

<sup>1</sup> So Marti.

*Failure of crops,*  
v. 9.

I have smitten you with blasting and mildew;  
I have laid waste your gardens and vineyards;  
And your fig trees and olive trees the locust  
devoured;  
But ye did not return to me,  
Is Jahveh's oracle.

*Pestilence, v. 10.*

I have sent among you the pestilence,  
Marching up from Egypt.  
I have slain with the sword your young men,  
And I have brought up the stench of your camps  
even into your nostrils;  
But ye did not return to me,  
Is Jahveh's oracle.

*Earthquake,*  
v. 11.

I have made overthrow among you,  
As the mighty overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah.  
And ye were as a brand plucked from the burning;  
But ye did not return to me,  
Is Jahveh's oracle.

*The final visitation,*  
v. 12a.

Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel<sup>1</sup>.

*Still a place for repentance,*  
v. 4, 5.

For thus saith Jahveh unto the house of Israel:  
"Seek me, if ye would live;  
But seek not Bethel.

*"God's house,"  
and God Himself.*

And Gilgal ye shall not enter:  
For Gilgal shall surely go into exile;  
And Bethel shall come to trouble.

iv. 12b.

Because I will do this to thee,  
Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel."

v. 6.

(And now, O house of Israel)  
Seek Jahveh, if ye would live,  
Lest he set the house of Joseph on fire  
And it devour, and there be none to quench it in  
Bethel.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the following verses (v. 4-5) tell what final punishment Jahveh has in store for Israel: or perhaps originally the oracle closed, as do all the others, with a threat of exile and annihilation.

## 2. SOCIAL RIGHTEOUSNESS IS WHAT JAHVEH REQUIRES v. 7, 10—12, 16, 17.

- v. 7.           These be they that turn justice to wormwood,  
                  And righteousness to the earth they fling ;
- v. 10.          They hate him that rebuketh in the gate,  
                  And him that speaketh sincerely do they abhor.
- v. 11.          Therefore because ye trample on the helpless,  
                  And tribute of corn ye take from him—  
Houses of hewn stone ye have built,  
                  But ye shall not dwell therein :  
Vineyards of delight ye have planted,  
                  But ye shall not drink the wine thereof.
- v. 12.          “Surely I know—  
                  Many are your transgressions  
                  And mighty your sins.  
                  Oppressors of the righteous !  
                  Takers of bribes !  
Yea, the poor in the gate they turn aside.”
- v. 16.          Therefore thus saith Jahveh, God of hosts, the Lord :  
                  “In all market-places, lamentation ;  
                  And in all streets shall they say, Ah ! Ah !  
                  And they shall call the husbandman to mourning,  
                  And unto lamentation such as are skilful in  
  wailing,  
                  And in all vineyards, lamentation !  
For I will pass through in the midst of thee” :  
                  Jahveh hath said it.
- v. 17.          And in all vineyards, lamentation !  
For I will pass through in the midst of thee” :  
                  Jahveh hath said it.

## 3. OBEDIENCE IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE v. 21—27.

*What Jahveh does  
not want,  
v. 21-24,*

“I hate, I despise your feasts,  
And I will smell no savour in your solemn  
                  assemblies ;

For though ye offer me burnt sacrifices,  
And your meal offerings—I will not accept them ;  
And the peace offerings of your fatlings I will not  
                  regard.

Remove from me the noise of thy songs ;  
The melody of thy lyres I will not hear.

*and what He does:  
pure religion and  
undefiled.*

But let justice roll down as the waters,  
And righteousness as an ever-flowing stream.

*No sacrifices were  
required in the  
wilderness: nor  
are they wanted  
now.*

Was it sacrifices and meal offerings that ye brought  
me,  
In the wilderness, for forty years,  
O house of Israel?

*Exile will be the  
punishment for  
neglect of true  
religion.*

But ye shall take up Sakkûth your king and Kêwân  
your god  
Which ye made for yourselves;  
And I will send you captive into exile  
Beyond Damascus."  
Said it hath Jahveh, God of hosts.

## V. PEOPLES, PRINCES AND PALACES

### 1. AGAINST ARAM i. 3—5.

Thus hath Jahveh said:

"For Damascus' countless crimes  
That dreadful thing I will not turn away;  
Because they have trodden Gilead with sharp threshing-  
boards of iron.

Yea, I will send fire on Hazael's house  
To devour Ben-hadad's palaces.

Yea, I will break the bar of Damascus' gate,  
And him that sitteth on the throne will I cut off  
from the vale of the sun-god's city,  
And him that holdeth the sceptre from his royal  
paradise;

And Aram's people shall be exiled to Kir."  
Jahveh hath said it.

*To Kir they must  
go as from Kir  
they came.*

### 2. AGAINST PHILISTIA vv. 6—8.

Thus hath Jahveh said:

"For Gaza's countless crimes  
That dreadful thing I will not turn away;  
Because they carried away captive a whole captivity, even  
all that was Edom's.

Yea, I will send fire on Gaza's wall  
To devour the palaces thereof.

And him that sitteth on the throne will I cut off from  
 Ashdod,  
 And him that holdeth the sceptre from Ashkelon ;  
 And I will turn my hand upon Ekron,  
 And they shall perish, even the residue of the  
 Philistines."  
 Jahveh the Lord hath said it.

3 AGAINST TYRE *vv.* 9, 10.

Thus hath Jahveh said :  
 "For Tyre's countless crimes  
 That dreadful thing I will not turn away ;  
 Because they sold a whole people to Edom,  
 And remembered not the league 'twixt sister states.  
 Yea, I will send fire on the wall of Tyre  
 To devour the palaces thereof."

4. AGAINST EDMON *vv.* 11, 12.

Thus hath Jahveh said :  
 "For Edom's countless crimes  
 That dreadful thing I will not turn away ;  
 Because with the sword he did pursue his brother,  
 And stifled his compassions ;  
 And perpetually his anger teareth,  
 And his fury rageth evermore.  
 Yea, I will send fire on Teman  
 To devour the palaces of Bozrah."

5. AGAINST AMMON *vv.* 13—15.

Thus hath Jahveh said :  
 "For the sons of Ammon's countless crimes  
 That dreadful thing I will not turn away ;  
 Because they ripped up women with child in Gilead,  
 That they might enlarge their own borders.  
 Yea, I will kindle a fire on Rabbah's wall  
 To devour the palaces thereof,  
 With a shout in the day of battle,  
 With a tempest in the day of storm.  
 And into exile their king shall go,  
 He and his princes together."  
 Jahveh hath said it.

## 6. AGAINST MOAB ii. 1—3.

Thus hath Jahveh said :

“For Moab’s countless crimes

That dreadful thing I will not turn away ;  
Because he burned the bones of Edom’s king to lime.

Yea, I will send a fire on Moab

To devour the palaces of his many cities.

And Moab shall die with tumult,

With a shout and with the trumpet’s call.

And the judge will I cut off from the midst of Moab,

And all her princes will I slay with him.”

Jahveh hath said it.

## 7. AGAINST ISRAEL (AND JUDAH) ii. 6—16, ix. 1 b—4 a.

*Social wrong,*  
ii. 6, 7.

Thus hath Jahveh said :

“For Israel’s countless crimes

That dreadful thing I will not turn away ;  
Because they sold for silver the man whose cause was  
right,

And the poor for a pair of shoes.

These be they that trample on the head of the  
helpless,

And the way of the humble they turn aside.

“*Tantum religio  
potuit suadere  
malorum,*” v. 8.

Yea, a man and his father go to the same temple  
prostitute,

That they may profane the Name of my Holiness ;  
And on garments taken in pledge they stretch themselves

By every altar,

And the wine of them that are fined they drink

In the house of this God of theirs.

*The call of a  
nation’s history,*  
vv. 9, 10.

Yet it was I that did destroy the Amorite before  
their face

Whose height was as the height of cedars,

And strong was he as the oak-trees.

And I destroyed his fruit above and his roots  
beneath

Yet it was I that brought you up from Egypt's land,  
And made you to walk in the wilderness forty years,  
To inherit the land of the Amorite.

*The call of a  
nation's con-  
science,  
v. 11.*

And of your sons I have raised up some to be prophets,  
And of your young men some to be Nazirites,  
Is it not so, ye sons of Israel?"  
'Tis Jahveh's oracle.

"And wine ye gave the Nazirites to drink;  
And to the prophets ye gave command,  
'Ye shall not prophesy.'

*God's rejection of  
the nation,  
vv. 13-16, ix. 1b.*

Behold I will make the ground totter under you,  
As a waggon totters that is filled with sheaves.

Then shall flight fail the swift,  
And the strong shall not put forth his might,  
And the warrior shall not deliver himself.

Then the bowman shall not stand,  
And the swift-footed shall not deliver (himself),  
And the horseman shall not deliver himself.

Then the stout-hearted among the warriors—  
Naked shall he flee in that day."  
'Tis Jahveh's oracle.

*ix. 1b.*

"And the very last of them with the sword will I slay,  
He that fleeth of them shall not flee away,  
And he that escapeth of them shall not be  
delivered.

*ix. 2-4a.*

If they dig down to Sheol,  
Thence shall my hand fetch them;  
And if they ascend to the heavens,  
Thence will I bring them down.  
And if they hide in the top of Carmel,  
Thence will I lay hold of them,  
And I will fetch them.  
And if they conceal themselves in the floor of the sea,  
Thence will I command the serpent,  
And he shall bite them.  
And if they go into captivity,  
Thence will I command the sword  
And it shall slay them."



## VI. FRAGMENTS

## 1. THE VOICE OF JAHVEH i. 2.

Jahveh from Zion roareth,  
 And from Jerusalem he uttereth his voice;  
 And the pastures of the shepherds mourn,  
 And the head of Carmel is dried up.

## 2. DESCRIPTION OF A DROUGHT iv. 7, 8.

When there were yet three months to harvest,  
 I would cause it to rain upon one city  
 And upon another I would cause it not to rain.  
 So two or three cities would stagger to one city  
 to drink water, and not be satisfied.

## 3. DESCRIPTION OF A PESTILENCE vi. 9, 10.

And it shall come to pass,  
 If ten men are left in one house, all shall die.  
 And when a man's kinsman comes to carry away the  
 corpse,  
 Even the man that cometh to burn him,  
 To bring the bones out of the house,  
 He shall say to him who is in the farthest  
 corner,  
 "Is any yet with thee?"  
 And he will answer,  
 "Hush! we must not mention the name of  
 Jahveh."

## 4. PERHAPS CONNECTED WITH THE PRECEDING v. 13.

He that is prudent shall keep silence in such a time,  
 For an evil time it is.

## 5. AN OFFER IF JOSEPH REPENTS v. 14, 15.

Seek ye good and not evil,  
 In order that ye may live.  
 And so shall Jahveh, God of hosts, be with you as ye say.  
 Hate ye evil and love ye good,  
 And set ye justice erect in the gate.  
 Peradventure will Jahveh, God of hosts, be gracious to the  
 remnant of Joseph.

## 6. AN ISOLATED PREDICTION ix. 9.

“For behold, I do command,  
 And I will shake the house of Israel among all the  
 nations,  
 Even as a man shaketh with a sieve.”

## 7. THE MAJESTY OF JAHVEH

a. iv. 13.

For lo! he formeth the thunder,  
 And createth the wind,  
 And declareth to man his judgement.  
 He maketh the morning darkness,  
 And marcheth on earth's high places:  
 Jahveh, God of hosts, is his name.

b. v. 8, 9.

He maketh Pleiades and Orion,  
 And turneth deep darkness into morning,  
 And darkeneth day to night:  
 He calleth to the waters of the sea  
 And poureth them out upon the face of the  
 earth:  
 Jahveh is his name.  
 He causeth havoc to flash forth,  
 And bringeth destruction on the fortress.

c. ix. 5, 6.

And Jahveh, the God of hosts, is he  
 Who toucheth the earth, and it melteth,  
 And all that dwell therein do mourn:  
 . . . . .  
 Who buildeth in the heavens his chambers,  
 And his vault upon earth hath he founded:  
 Who calleth to the waters of the sea,  
 And poureth them out upon the face of the earth:  
 Jahveh is his name.

## 8. AN ADDITION, TO INCLUDE JUDAH ii. 4, 5.

Thus hath Jahveh said:  
 "For Judah's countless crimes  
 That dreadful thing I will not turn away;  
 Because they have rejected the instruction of Jahveh,  
 And have not kept his statutes,  
 And their false gods led them astray,  
 The gods whom their fathers followed.  
 Yea, I will send fire on Judah  
 To devour the palaces of Jerusalem."

## 9. AN APPENDIX BY A LATER PROPHET

- a. ix. 8 b. *Amos writes*, I will destroy it from the face of the earth  
 (ix. 8 a).  
*The later prophet adds*, Nevertheless destroying I shall not  
 destroy Jacob's house.
- b. ix. 9 c, 10. *Amos writes*, I will shake the house of Israel among all the  
 nations, as a man shaketh with a sieve (ix. 9 a, b).  
*The later prophet adds*, And not a grain shall fall to the  
 earth.  
 By the sword shall die all the sinners of my people,  
 Who say, The evil shall not overtake nor befall us.
- c. ix. 11, 12. *Amos writes*, In that day ruin and disaster (viii. 9, 10, 13).  
*The later prophet adds*,  
 In that day  
 Will I raise up David's fallen booth,  
 And I will fence up their breaches.  
 And his ruins will I raise  
 And I will build it as in olden days;  
 That they may possess the residue of Edom,  
 And all the nations whom I own,  
 Is the oracle of Jahveh,  
 Who doeth this.

*a.* ix. 13-15. *Amos writes*, Behold days are coming—disgrace, desolation,  
the people forsaken by God (iv. 2, viii. 11).

*The later prophet adds*,

Behold days are coming,  
—'Tis Jahveh's oracle,

When the ploughman shall overtake the reaper,  
And the treader of grapes him that traileth the seed.  
And the mountains shall drop sweet wine,  
And all the hills shall be dissolved.

And I will bring back the captivity of my people Israel;  
They shall build waste cities and inhabit them.

*Contrast* vii. 9.

*Contrast* v. 11.

They shall plant vineyards,  
And drink the wine thereof,

*Contrast* iv. 9.

And they shall make gardens,  
And eat the fruit thereof.

*Contrast* vii. 11,  
17.

And I will plant them upon their own land,  
And they shall be no more pulled up from their own  
land,

Which I have given them:  
Said it hath Jahveh, thy God.

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**CAMBRIDGE : PRINTED BY  
W. LEWIS, M.A.  
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS**