
from thy master, the Lord God of the Prophets, here given us. It is thine honor thus to have been employed, while it is the Church's happiness, to be thus ministered unto. But, blessed for ever, blessed be the Lord who hath sent thee with his message! Precious Jesus! give both to him that writes, and to him that reads, grace to improve by thy servant's labors; that that blessedness may be in the lot of both, who *hear and keep the words of our God*, as the time for the accomplishment draweth nearer. Amen.

THE
PROPHET AMOS.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE Prophet *Amos* hath furnished the Church with a more copious prophecy than that of *Joel*, but the purport of his writings is much to the same amount.

The name *Amos*, which signifies *Burthen*; or as some render it, *loading* or *weighty*, from *Omas*; was not unsuitable to the importance of *Amos's* writings, which are certainly very weighty and powerful. It is supposed that he was of *Tekoah* in *Judah*, about four leagues from *Jerusalem*: but there is no certainty on this point. And it is supposed that his ministry was immediately after that of *Joel*. We have the reign indeed in which it took place; but unless we had the very period of the earthquake which he speaks of in the first opening of his prophecy, it is not very easy to ascertain the exact time. Neither is it essential in a work of this kind. The subject matter of his prophecy, and the evident marks of inspiration with which the Book itself is accompanied, become points of much greater importance to regard. The chief scope of *Amos*, in those Chapters, is directed to the reproof of the nations at large, and Israel in particular. He speaks directly of judgments that were hanging over the head of both, and from the solemn prospect calls upon them to turn to the LORD. But what I more earnestly desire the Reader to remark with me is, the sweet close of his prophecy, in the bright prospect of the coming of the LORD JESUS to his kingdom. Here *Amos* seems to rise to a greater degree of beauty and fulness in his prophecy; and as the other Prophets had done, under various figures, in representing the Mediator's advent and reign; so *Amos* assures Israel, that

the Lord would plant them in their own land, and they should never more be plucked up or destroyed. The LORD the SPIRIT, be both with the Writer and Reader of this Commentary, through the whole of *Amos's* prophecy, that we may find him, like all his cotemporaries, bearing testimony to JESUS, and to the word of his grace, that to him *give all the Prophets witness, that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* Amen.

CHAP. I.

CONTENTS.

In this first Chapter, Amos in the Lord's name is calling to account the several nations in the neighbourhood of Israel, and rousing them to the apprehension of divine judgments.

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 earthquake.

2 And he said, The LORD will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem: and the habitations of the shepherds shall mourn, and the top of Carmel shall wither.

The Prophet in a very modest preface, here introduceth himself and his commission. He was but a poor herdman, and that was among the humblest stations. And yet he was called by grace to the work. Reader! recollect how many in all ages of the Church, have been thus singled out, and set apart for the ministry. What a damp to the pride of life! *Elisha* shall be called from plowing; and *David* from the sheep cotes; yea, the Apostles of Christ from fishing! The gospel never flourished in our land equal to those days, when men went forth with their lives in their hand, not sent by men, but by the Lord. The time of *Amos* commencing his labors is noted by the earthquake. Concerning this earthquake, we have a more certain account of the fact than we have of the time of it. *Zechariah* confirms that it was in the days of *Uzziah*, but doth not state the year. *Zech* xiv. 5. Some make it to be about the time of *Isaiah's* vision; Chap. vi. And others when *Uzziah* profaned the temple. 2 *Chron.* xxvi. 16—21. But what I more particularly beg the Reader to remark is, the solemn way and manner in which the Lord's warnings are given. *Amos* calls it, the Lord *roaring from Zion*, and *uttering his voice from Jerusalem*. All the Lord's calls are powerful. And those from his Church and people more alarming than every other!

3 Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Damascus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof: because they have threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron:

4 But I will send a fire into the house of Hazael, which shall devour the palaces of Ben-hadad.

5 I will break also the bar of Damascus, and cut off the inhabitant from the plain of Aven, and him that holdeth the sceptre from the house of Eden: and the people of Syria shall go into captivity unto Kir, saith the LORD.

The Lord begins with *Damascus*, one of the most antient enemies of Israel when in *Canaan*. The three or four transgressions mean *many*; and for every one of which the Lord will account with them, and a dreadful account it will be when it comes. All the palaces of their kings shall be destroyed, and the inhabitants of their cities shall be punished. And these things were literally accomplished, as we read 2 Kings xvi. 9. If the Reader compares dates, he will find the distance between the prophecy and the accomplishment near fifty years.

6 ¶ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Gaza, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they carried away captive the whole captivity, to deliver *them* up to Edom:

7 But I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza, which 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.

Similar punishments are here held forth to *Gaza*, *Ashdod*, *Ashkelon*, and *Ekron*; the chief cities of the *Philistines*, those bitter foes of the Church. They all are brought in for their punishment, who had been so forward in their cruelties to God's people Israel.

9 ¶ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Tyrus, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof: because they delivered up

the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant:

10 But I will send a fire on the wall of Tyrus, which shall devour the palaces thereof.

The conduct of *Tyre* was base towards Israel, and now *Tyrus* comes to be reckoned with. The breach of the *brotherly* covenant, seems to have an allusion to the friendly compact which had been made between *Solomon* and *Hiram* many years before, which we may read 1 Kings v. 12.; and so much friendship was there between them, that *Hiram* called *Solomon* brother, 1 Kings ix. 13.

11 ¶ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Edom, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof: because he did pursue his brother with the sword, and 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, which shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

Edom, that is the descendants of *Esau*, now come in for their account. Never surely was there ever a more bitter hatred and animosity, and that descending from father to son, than what *Esau's* children manifested against the children of *Jacob*. But, Reader! the thing is explained to us by the Holy Ghost. Gal. iv. 29. Of all wrath that is the greatest. How blessed is it that there is One looking on, and will ultimately reckon for all.

13 ¶ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, and 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.

The Chapter closeth with the judgment of the children of *Ammon*; and a solemn one it is. When the Lord comes to reckon with his enemies, how tremendous his judgments are!

REFLECTIONS.

READER! we shall lose the beauty of this solemn scripture, and overlook the interests we ourselves have in it, if we do not behold the Lord of hosts thus calling the nations to account for their hatred to Christ and his people! It is all on Christ's account that their hatred began. In all ages of the Church, this bitterness of the carnal hath gone forth against the Lord's heritage and chosen. It began in the heart of *Cain*, against *Abel*, wholly on this account: *Ishmael* mocked *Isaac*; *Esau* hated *Jacob*: and thus the seed of the Serpent have shewn their deadly teeth against the seed of the Woman, and his offspring. What an awful consideration it is! And what very awful consequences are involved in it! Reader! in the absence of higher evidences, this is no small one, to bring comfort to a child of God; I mean his love to Zion. *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem*, (said one of old) *let my right hand forget her cunning! If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; yea, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.* Reader! can you adopt this language? Is Jesus and his Church; Jesus and his members, dear to you? If so, take with you the comfortable assurance of the beloved Apostle in his testimony of the divine life, and say with the same confidence as he said; *we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren!*

CHAP. II.

CONTENTS.

The same subject is continued here as occupied the former Chapter. Moab is first reckoned with, and then Judah, and Israel.

THUS saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Moab, and for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime:

2 But I will send a fire upon Moab, and it shall devour the palaces of Kirioth: 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.

We have some account of Moab's cruelty, for which the Lord is here bringing him to account. 2 Kings iii. 26, 27. It is worthy observation, and I take occasion to remark it in this place, in the Lord's displeasure at *Moab*, that though the Lord doth and will punish sin wherever it is found, yet the sin most to be dreaded is sin in the

Lord's people. Here we find the Lord's provocation most marked. Sin is sin in all men, as weeds are weeds wherever they grow; but most offensive, and soonest to be rooted out in a garden. Hence, when the Lord's people became forgetful of the rock that begat them, we are told, *when the Lord saw it he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters.* Deut. xxxii. 15—21. Reader! mark this with peculiar emphasis! I do not say as much, but I verily believe it, and perhaps it may be so, all the sorrows and calamities of public life begin at this place; the Church of Jesus in her transgressions.

4 ¶ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Judah, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they have despised the law of the LORD, and have not kept his commandments, and their lies caused them to err, after the which their fathers have walked.

5 But I will send a fire upon Judah, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

Judah comes now before the Lord's tribunal, and though for a while separated from Israel, yet not from Israel's God. We find the Lord himself speaking of both by the Prophet, under one and the same character. Jeremiah iii. 6—19. Here we ought to pause, and to consider the awfulness of *Judah's* apostacy from the Lord. Reader! punishment and correction must be used, even with God's children, when tenderness and exhortation fail to call home the heart to the Lord. Psalm lxxxix. 30, 31, 32.

6 ¶ Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes;

7 That pant after the dust of the earth on the head of the poor, and turn aside the way of the meek: and a man and his father will go in unto the *same* maid, to profane my holy name:

8 And they lay *themselves* down upon clothes laid to pledge by every altar, and they drink the wine of the condemned in the house of their god.

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.

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

11 And I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites. *Is it not even thus, O ye children of Israel?* saith the LORD.

12 But ye gave the Nazarites wine to drink; and commanded the prophets, saying, *Prophecy not.*

13 Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed *that is full of sheaves.*

14 Therefore the flight shall perish from the swift, and the strong shall not strengthen his force, neither shall the mighty deliver 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 himself.

16 And *he that is courageous among the mighty* shall flee away naked in that day, saith the LORD.

The Lord having reckoned with all the neighbouring nations, Israel's sworn foes, and having also begun with *Judah*, now takes in hand her sister *Israel*. And a solemn account it is. Chiefly beginning in idolátry, and consequently soon falling into injustice and oppression. For in the Lord's people, as well as all other people, sin begins in a departure from God. When men cease to know and love the Lord, the transition is soon made to every evil tendency toward men. And the Lord heightens the aggravation of his people's sin, by shewing them: how he had blessed them, brought them out of the hands of one enemy, even *Egypt*; and driven out before them another, even *the Amorite*; and still more, took of Israel's young men to be Nazarites and Prophets; that is, distinguished them with such honors as to be separated from all other nations; *a kingdom and a nation of priests*. And I apprehend yet more in the expression of the Nazarites and Prophets! probably making them types and preachers of the glorious One Nazarite, the Lord Jesus Christ; for this was the most distinguishing honor of Israel. The Lord finisheth the subject, with speaking of the sad consequence of his displeasure. In doing which he makes use of a strong figure; *I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves*. An astonishing expression of the Lord,

But what is meant by it? I humbly apprehend, not simply a pressure the Lord felt unable to bear, but as he saith elsewhere, *I am broken with their whorish heart that hath departed from me.* Ezek. vi. 9. Reader! pause over the solemn expression. And when you have duly done so, allow me to ask you, is it not Jesus that is thus figured out, who hath borne all the sins of his people, and carried their sorrows? Is there not very evidently an allusion to Him, on whom Jehovah hath laid the iniquities of his redeemed? Seen in this point of view the subject becomes most blessedly interesting. And the cries of the Son of God, in the days of his flesh, forms a striking correspondence with what the Prophet saith of him here, *I am pressed under you.* See Heb. v. 7. Matt. xxvi. 33, 39. Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 21. The Chapter ends, as might be supposed, with the Lord's threatened judgment. And it is by chastisement the Lord for the most part brings back his people, when that chastisement is accompanied with grace. Luke xv. 17, 18, 19. Ezek. xiv. 22, 23.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! think what a sad representation is made in this Chapter of human transgression. Not only the nations of the earth, but the Lord's people, are involved in the same rebellion against God. It is not Moab alone, but Judah and Israel also. *Had it been an open enemy* that had done the Lord such dishonour, *then it might have been borne.* But the expostulation is cutting indeed, when it is said, *it was even thou my companion, and mine own familiar friend!* Alas! who among the redeemed of the Lord, that can stand forth and plead not guilty to the charge.

Precious Lord Jesus! in every place, and in every view, how sweet and consolatory doth thy great and gracious undertaking come home to my heart! And dost thou, dearest Lord, say, behold! *I am pressed under you as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves!* Oh! thou Lamb of God! thou hast indeed been pressed for thy people, when as the mighty burden-bearer of thy Church, thou didst bear all our sins in thine own body on the tree, when thou didst die, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God! Oh! blessed Lord! still vouchsafe to bear our souls up above all sin and sorrow, trial and temptation; work in us true godly sorrow for those sins which brought thee to the cross; and do thou, gracious Lord, rescue us from the power and dominion of sin, and the guilt and punishment of it; and *sanctify our whole souls, and bodies, and spirits, to the day of thy coming.* Amen.

CHAP. III.

CONTENTS.

The subject is continued through this Chapter, which formed a part in the conclusion of the former. Israel is still before the judgment seat, and the Lord is expostulating with his people.

HEAR this word that the LORD hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying,

2 You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

I beg the Reader to notice what I before remarked in the preceding Chapter, though Judah and Israel were separately there arraigned, yet here *the whole family* are considered as one, consequently Judah is included. And I do as earnestly beg the Reader to remark with me, that the family name and relationship between God and his people is still the same. Though Israel and Judah are rebellious, yet still children, though rebellious children. Though outcasts, yet still God's outcasts; this feature is never lost sight of in the word of God. Isaiah xvi. 3. And I still beg once more the Reader to observe, that in the punishment of Israel, it is as God's Israel; yea, the Lord declares that the correction of them is on this account; because them only the Lord knew of all the families of the earth; that is, knew them in covenant relationship; and therefore the Lord would correct them for their iniquities. Reader! pause over the whole, and stand amazed at the goodness of God! Behold! how even in chastisements the Lord manifests his love to Israel. Read some of the many scriptures to this amount, and form your own conclusions accordingly. If we see at any time a man correcting a child, we may be sure from the act itself, it is the child's own father. Heb. xii. 5—10.

3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

4 Will a lion roar in the forest when he 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 for him? shall *one* take up a snare from the earth, and have taken nothing at all?

6 Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid? shall there be evil in a city, and the LORD hath not done *it*?

7 Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets.

8 The lion hath roared, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

The Lord is going on in his expostulations. He first shews, that by Israel's revolt that sweet communion between the Lord and his people was interrupted. *Can two walk together except they be agreed?* While therefore Israel thus rebelled, how could the Lord walk with Israel? And when the Lord called to them in a loud voice of judgments, as the roaring of a lion, if Israel turned a deaf ear to the voice, and became hardened instead of humbled by the correction; if Israel ascribed to *second* causes what evidently came from the *first*, here were still stronger evidences of a deplorably wicked mind. The Lord next appeals to common sense and reason. *Is there evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?* The sword, the pestilence, and the famine; the strife of tongues, and the malice of enemies; these may, and these will be the apparent cause; but every one that thinks at all must know that these are but instruments; the hand and direction is the Lord's. Never should we have known that the malice of Egypt against poor Israel was of the Lord's doing, had not his blessed scripture said so; but as the scripture hath said so, we have not only authority to mark it down as an undeniable truth, but from such an insight into the Lord's government, to form the same conclusions upon numberless occasions in life. See Psalm cv. 25. When the Lord corrects his people in this manner, with the sword or tongue of his and their foes, it is all in mercy to them, and destruction in due season to their enemies. What a beautiful and godly sentiment did David express on this occasion concerning Shimei's cursing: *let him alone, (said he,) and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him.* 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12.

9 ¶ Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressed 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 taketh out of the mouth of the lion two legs, or a

piece of an ear ; so shall the children of Israel be taken out that dwell in Samaria, in the corner of a bed, and in Damascus *in* a couch.

13 Hear ye, and testify in the house of Jacob, saith the Lord God, the God of hosts.

14 That in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him, I will also visit the altars of Beth-el ; and the horns of the altars shall be cut off, and fall to the ground.

15 And I will smite the winter house with the summer house : and the houses of ivory shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end, saith the LORD.

There is somewhat very striking in the Lord's appeal to the nations of the earth for the justification of his conduct concerning his people. It not only is intended to this purpose, for perhaps this is the smallest reason why the Lord publisheth his proceedings ; but it is a yet stronger appeal than before to the Lord's degenerate people. We have a striking example, Isaiah v. 3, 4. But in the midst of all the judgments that are to fall upon the people, the covenant relationship is still preserved, see verses 13—17.

REFLECTIONS.

READER ! while you and I pause over a subject of so truly humbling a nature as this Chapter affords, in the contemplation of the Church's backsliding and rebellion against God ; and while from a conscious sense of the part we all bear in the great aggregate of human transgression, we take to ourselves, as we justly ought to do, shame and confusion of face ; let us learn to form a proper distinction between the fatherly corrections of the Lord over his children, and the tremendous judgments manifested to his enemies. What the Lord himself hath here said, is enough to lead our hearts to form a right estimate of all his corrections. *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.* The very scripture, in the moment of threatened correction, carries with it in its bosom a full testimony that that correction is not to destroy but to reform. Hence Reader ! let us learn, that the Lord's design is to bring the heart home, not to harden, but to soften ; to purge from sin, not to leave the soul in sin ; to bring to Jesus, not to lead from Jesus. A gracious and a blessed end is in every dispensation. And most blessed it is when the poor sinner, led by grace, is brought back with the awakened cry of the soul ; *Lord ! take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips.* Blessed Jesus ! how unceasing our need of thee ; and how precious thy salvation ! Oh ! for grace, to have our souls kept from sin, and our souls washed from sin, in thy blood !

CHAP. IV.

CONTENTS.

The Lord is still pleading with Israel, and most solemn pleading it is. The Lord sheweth also, how ineffectual hitherto his punishments to reform had proved.

HEAR this word, ye kine of Bashan, that *are* in the mountain of Samaria, which oppress the poor, which crush the needy, which say to their masters, Bring, and let us drink.

2 The Lord GOD hath sworn by his holiness, that lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fish hooks.

3 And ye shall go out at the breaches, every *cow at that which is* before her, and ye shall cast *them* into the palace, saith the LORD.

Under the similitude of the fat bulls of Bashan, the Prophet shews how Israel had oppressed the poor and lean among them. And under the figure of fishermen, he sets forth how in the end they that oppressed should be dragged away. The Reader will observe from hence, what is always connected together, haughtiness and cruelty to men, where the heart is rebelling against God.

4 ¶ Come to Beth-el and transgress; at Gilgal multiply transgressions; and bring your sacrifices every morning, *and* your tithes after three years;

5 And offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with leaven, and proclaim *and* publish the free offerings: for this liketh you, O ye children of Israel, saith the Lord God.

It should seem that in the midst of all their transgressions they still carried on a shew of religion. Like their idolatrous neighbours around, they would not be totally void of some form of worship, and therefore set up the appearance of it in Bethel. Some have thought, that they had not only openly established idol worship there, but that the *whole* nation was guilty of it. But we know that in the grossest moments of idolatry, in the days of the kings of Israel, the Lord had *seven thousand in Israel who did not bow the knee to the image of Baal.* 1 Kings xix. 18. Rom. xi. 3, 4.

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 also I have withholden the rain from you, when *there were* yet 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 ; but they were not satisfied : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

9 I have smitten you with blasting and mildew, when your gardens and your vineyards, and your fig-trees, and your olive-trees increased, the palmer-worm devoured *them*, 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, and have taken away your horses ; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils : yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.

11 I have overthrown *some* of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand 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 : *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.

Here we have an account of the Lord's sore judgments upon Israel ; by famine, by withholding the fruits of the earth, and by marking his judgments in a distinguishing manner, causing it *to rain upon one city and not upon another* ; by pestilence, blasting, and mildew ; by the destruction of the sword ; and by particular marked providences

to some, not unlike the overthrow of *Sodom*; these were among the methods the Lord was pleased to take to rouse Israel to a sense of sin, and to an awakening concern for his pardoning love and mercy. But the Lord adds, and repeats it many times, as if feeling for his people, *yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord!* Reader! how sure and certain it is, as the gospel of Christ teacheth, and this scripture fully confirms, there can be no return to the Lord in a way of repentance and faith, until the Lord first comes to the sinner in a way of grace and mercy. Grace must first enter the heart, before the heart will cry out, *Lord! save, or I perish!* Oh! how blessed is it to have such provisions of grace preserved for the recovery of his people in the person of Jesus, when the enemy hath at any time been thus triumphing over the Lord's redeemed with an high hand! When thus the Lord gives grace, then, and not before, Israel is prepared to meet his God as a covenant God in Christ.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! the continuance of the Lord's expostulations with his antient Church, Chapter after Chapter, will not fail I hope, to operate both upon your heart and mine, to the same conclusion as it did in the Apostle's mind; that sin will then indeed appear to be sin, when by the holiness of the commandment it is discovered to be exceeding sinful. Depend upon it, until by the sovereign grace of God in the heart, the proper nature and malignity of sin is brought home in its proper colours, the children of God, as well as others, have but too slight views of sin. It is only when God the Holy Ghost lays *judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet*, that the sinner lays low in the dust before God, and never presumes to open his mouth any more in a way of justification, or in softening transgression. And the same solemn considerations will serve to teach, why it is among the Lord's redeemed that the nations of sin, from the remains of indwelling corruption, do sometimes rise up with such violence a-fresh, and distress so exceedingly the soul. It is to shew the believer, after all his attainments, what a poor creature he is in himself; and what he would be if not kept by the Almighty power of God, through faith unto salvation. And what can tend to endear Jesus equal to a daily, hourly sense of our need of him? What can so effectually operate, under the Lord's grace, to hide pride from our eyes, and to keep open a perpetual spring of humbleness, and faith, and godly sorrow for sin; as such motions from within, that we are still in the body? Precious Lord Jesus! be thou increasingly precious every hour, and then those workings of a corrupt nature, kept under and restrained by thee, will be overruled to thy glory, and our soul's welfare. Blessed be that glorious covenant, which shews the ruin, and brings the remedy! Though sin hath reigned, and doth reign, unto death; yet shall *grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord!*

CHAP. V.

CONTENTS.

We have here the same subject continued, and in which the Lord is taking up a lamentation for the land of Israel. The close of the Chapter brings forward an additional charge against them for hypocritical worship.

HEAR ye this word which I take up against you, *even* a lamentation, O house of Israel.

2 The virgin of Israel is fallen; she shall no more rise: she is forsaken upon her land, *there is none to raise her up.*

3 For thus saith the Lord God, The city that went out *by* a thousand shall leave an hundred, and that which went forth *by* an hundred shall leave ten to the house of Israel.

We have here some sweet tokens that the Lord is coming forth in mercy as well as judgment. When the Lord laments over his people, this is a sign of grace. And I beg the Reader to remark with me, that like our Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem, the beloved city, it is the city, and not the people of the city, that is said, *she is fallen, and shall no more rise.* The temporal judgments of the Lord are always to be carefully distinguished from spiritual visitations. See the Lord's lamentation over Jerusalem, and read it in this view, and both places will be found to correspond. And I beg, both upon these and every other portion of the divine word of a similar kind, to observe, that if these things were attended to, it would prevent those misconstructions of scripture which weak minds interpret, as though they intimated the counsel and purposes of God were changeable, and the Lord's people might fall from grace and be cast away. Here the Prophet is pointing to the Babylonish captivity, and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, which we know took place. And the Lord Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, referred to the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, which also followed by the Roman army. But in both instances, the Church of believers was still safe, and as the Apostle saith, *God did not cast away his people which he foreknew.* Romans xi. 2. Luke xiii. 34, 35.

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 come to nought.

6 Seek the LORD, and ye shall live; lest he

break out like fire in the house of Joseph, and devour *it*, and *there be* none to quench *it* in Beth-el.

7 Ye who turn judgment to wormwood, and leave off righteousness in the earth,

8 *Seek him* that maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth 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 strengtheneth the spoiled against the strong, so that the spoiled shall come against the fortress:

10 They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly.

11 Forasmuch therefore as your treading *is* upon the poor, and ye take from him burdens 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 wine of them.

12 For I know your manifold transgressions, and your mighty sins: they afflict the just, they take a bribe, and they turn aside the poor in the gate *from their right*.

13 Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time: for it *is* an evil time.

14 Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD the God of hosts shall be with you, as ye have spoken.

15 Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

16 Therefore the LORD, the God of hosts, the LORD saith thus; Wailing *shall be* in all streets; and they shall say in all the highways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourn-

ing; and such as are skilful of lamentation, to wailing.

17 And in all vineyards *shall be* wailing: for I will pass through thee, saith the LORD.

The first verse in this paragraph is a confirmation, if it were needed, of what I advanced in my observations on the former. Seeking the Lord, implies the hope of finding him, and indeed the promise is of life. For the Lord hath never said to the praying seed of Jacob, *seek ye my face in vain*. Psalm xxvii. 8. It is a sure sign of returning grace, when such rich proclamations come from the throne. See Isaiah lv. 6, 7. There is a great beauty in the allusion to the planets, those faithful nightly witnesses of heaven. Job speaketh of him that gives to the *Pleiades*, and *Orion*, their sweet influences. Job xxxviii. 31. And as those heavenly bodies testify to God's faithfulness concerning his covenant of day and night; so the Lord engageth to be gracious to his people when they call upon him. Gen. viii. 22. I beg the Reader to remark with me, how again the Lord engageth that his people shall live in seeking him, and that as the Lord of hosts he will be with them. The wailing and mourning in all the streets that are spoken of, do not only refer to the desolations of Jerusalem as a city; but also to the sorrow of the soul, under the awakenings of the Holy Ghost, when the heart is leading under a sense of sin to the Lord.

18 Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to what end *is* it for you? the day of the LORD *is* darkness, and not light.

19 As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; 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?

It should seem from what is here said, that there were characters in those days not unlike the scoffers the Apostle describes, that should come in the last days, who derided the day of the Lord's coming. What an awful thing it is to be hardened in sin? 2 Peter iii. 3, 4.

21 ¶ I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

22 Though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept *them*: neither will I regard the 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 judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

25 Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?

26 But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

27 Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the LORD, whose name is, The God of hosts.

We have here the Lord's threatenings concerning the captivity of the people, and which we know came to pass. *Stephen*, the first martyr, made a quotation from this scripture. Acts vii. 42, 43. But what I particularly beg the Reader to remark with me, through this whole Chapter is, that we can clearly discover sweet and blessed tokens of grace mingled with threatenings; so that we feel constrained, again and again, as we go through it, to cry out with the Prophet, *the Lord will not retain his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.* Micah vii. 18, 19, 20.

REFLECTIONS.

As we read this Chapter, and as we close it, we may cry out with the Psalmist, *I will sing of mercy and judgment*; and direct our song unto the Lord; *to thee, O Lord, will I sing.* It is truly blessed to observe, how in the midst of judgment the Lord remembers mercy; and even while the Lord is chastening his people for their sins, he is coming forth to their deliverance in his grace. And it is doubly blessed when the cause is discovered; namely, his own free, rich, and sovereign love, and his covenant engagements in Christ. And though he punisheth them for their sins, and as it is said in scripture, *takest vengeance of their inventions*, yet he regardeth their persons, and forgiveth their iniquities. And it is still more blessed, when the soul of a poor self-condemned sinner is enabled to follow up the precious truth in the heart-felt enjoyment of his own soul. It is founded in covenant love and faithfulness. It is secured in the relationship in which the Great Redeemer hath put himself to his people. It is confirmed in the ransom and full equivalent paid by their Almighty Surety for the sins of his people; and God the Spirit sets to his seal the firm and unquestionable truth. Thus bringing with it all the testimonies of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the poor sinner, when returning by grace unto the Lord, finds confidence in coming, and rejoices in hope of the glory of God!

CHAP. VI.

CONTENTS.

Here is a cry to the Church. The wanton state of professors described; and the Lord's determination to punish.

WOE to them *that are* at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria, *which are* named chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel came!

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 their border greater than your border?

3 Ye that put far away the evil day, and cause the seat of violence to come near;

4 That lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall;

5 That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music, like David;

6 That drink wine in bowls, and anoint themselves with the chief ointments: but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.

What is here said of Zion, in the days of the Prophet Amos, is equally applicable to the Church in all days. There is nothing more foreign to a state of grace, than a state of ease in the world. For when a soul is really and truly at ease in Christ, he must be at contentment with the world. It was the character which the Lord gave Moab, that Moab had been at ease from his youth, and had settled on his lees; so that the old tang of nature was the same, and no change of heart had taken place. Jeremiah xlviii. 11. Whereas the Lord Jesus describes his people as being carried into captivity, and called upon as his followers to the taking up a cross, plucking out an eye, cutting off an arm. Luke ix. 23. And the Apostle sets it down as a truth not to be questioned, that *if any man will live godly in Christ Jesus, he must suffer persecution.* 2 Tim. iii. 12. We have therefore here a melancholy picture of sinners at ease, unawakened to a sense of sin, and unconcerned for their eternal salvation. And what makes the picture more melancholy is, that it is *in Zion*; that is, under the

very roof of God's church. Reader! think how truly awful must it be, to sit under the preaching of the gospel, and yet to be a total stranger to a work of grace in the heart. The Prophet describes in these verses the corresponding conduct of all such; ease, indolence, disregard, and a contempt of salvation. *They are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.* Alas! no—nor for the agonies of the Lord Jesus! *Job* hath given another such a description. *Job* xxi. 7—15. Reader! before you turn away from this awful account, for very awful it is, look round and see whether you cannot find the picture of the Prophet, and what the Man of *Uz* describes; but too sadly brought forth to the life, in the present day in which we live. Yea, bless God if in your own heart, and house, and family, no such features appear.

7 ¶ Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive; and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.

8 The LORD GOD hath sworn by himself, saith the LORD the God of hosts, I abhor the 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 a man's uncle shall take him up, and he that burneth him, to bring out the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that *is* by the sides of the house, *Is there yet any with thee?* and he shall say, No: then shall he say, Hold thy tongue: for we may not make mention of the name of the LORD.

11 For behold, the LORD commandeth, and he will smite the great house with breaches, and the little house with clefts.

12 ¶ Shall horses run upon the rock? will *one* plow *there* with oxen? for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock:

13 Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought, which say, Have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?

14 But, 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 entering in of Hamath unto the river of the wilderness.

Probably the captivity here spoken of, in the first sense, had a reference to the Babylonish captivity. But I humbly conceive it had respect to another of an higher nature in a spiritual sense. But, Reader! think if it be possible to what a desperate state of hardness and impenitency must that man be arrived, who hath given up even the mentioning the name of the Lord. Well may every one who reads this account cry out, *from pride, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment, good Lord deliver us!*

REFLECTIONS.

I CANNOT pass away from this solemn Chapter, without first desiring the Reader to ponder well the sacred contents of it, and learn from it how to form a just estimate of what is still going on in life, in the different characters, *between him that feareth the Lord, and him that feareth him not.*

The carnal world, in this our *British Zion*, are, as Amos described the Zion of old, in the time of his ministry. A graceless mind, meeting with what is called the good things of life, have their whole hearts, and families, and houses, swallowed up in those sensual enjoyments. No prayer in their family; no grace in themselves; their children, if they have any, their servants all around them, breathe, and live, and move, in the same corrupt atmosphere. They put far away the evil day as a day of dread and horror. *They chant to the sound of the viol;* but know nothing of the melody of the gospel. *They invent to themselves instruments of music;* but are ignorant of the joy of the soul. *They send forth their little ones to the dance;* but teach them nothing of the afflictions of Jesus! But, oh! how sad the close of their account. *They spend their day* (saith Job,) *in wealth,* or (as the margin of the Bible hath it) *mirth—and in a moment go down to the grave!* Reader! shall not you and I say, in the language of the dying Patriarch, *O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united!*

On the other hand, look at the people of God, and you will discover, that in proportion to the attainments under grace they have acquired in the school of Jesus, so are their exercises and conflicts. *I think* (said Paul) *that God hath set forth us, the Apostles, last as it were appointed to death; for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men. Even to this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place. And these were men of whom the world was not worthy.* Reader! with whom is your choice? Can you with Moses, and from the same blessed principle of faith as he had, take up his resolution, and choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season? Oh! the unspeakable blessedness of such a state even now: when like him, *we esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.* And oh! the blessedness that will follow, when mortality is swallowed up in glory!

CHAP. VII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is going on in this Chapter, in the Lord's name, to preach to the people of their sins, when he is interrupted by Amaziah the priest, who informs the king against him. Amos continues faithful, and denounceth judgment upon Amaziah.

THUS hath the LORD God shewed unto me : and behold, he formed grasshoppers in the beginning of the shooting up of the latter growth ; and lo, *it was* the latter growth after the king's mowings.

2 And it came to pass, *that* when they had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, O Lord God, forgive, I beseech thee : by whom shall Jacob arise ? for he *is* small.

3 The LORD repented for this. It shall not be, saith the LORD.

The Prophet is here preaching by figure, in vision perhaps it might be ; and by a multitude of grasshoppers, he points out the certain ruin of the country by famine. If we compare this scripture with the corresponding history of the times in which *Amos* ministered, we shall discover the illustration of the figure. It was in the reign of *Uzziah*, see 2 Chron. xxvi. But whether those grasshoppers were literally so, and destroyed the fruits of the earth, or whether typical of the army of the *Assyrians*, the sense is the same : it was for punishment to the people. The Prophet's prayer is beautiful, and the Lord's answer most gracious. Reader ! did not the Prophet here become a type of the LORD JESUS ?

4 ¶ Thus hath the Lord God shewed unto me : and behold, the Lord God called to contend by fire, and it devoured the great deep, and did eat up a part,

5 Then said I, O Lord God, cease, I beseech thee ; by whom shall Jacob arise ? for he *is* small.

6 The LORD repented for this, This also shall not be, saith the Lord God.

The subject in these verses is the same, but the figure is changed. Under the image of fire, and so tremendous as to devour the great deep, the ruin of the people is set forth. But, here as before, the intercession of the Prophet prevents it. There is somewhat particularly striking in all this : and the repeated prayer and success of the

Prophet cannot fail, I should hope, to lead our hearts to Jesus. As the judgment was typical, so was the intercession. For it was not Moses, as Moses, standing in the gap; not Aaron, as Aaron, putting on incense, and making an atonement for the people; not Amos, as Amos, so crying for Jacob's arising; that came up before the Lord: because all these themselves were sinners, who alike needed One to intercede for them. And who then could they all represent, but Jesus, who in his sacrifice, was *the lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; and in his intercession, the High Priest for ever, sworn into his office by Jehovah himself, after the order of Melchisedeck? See all those scriptures. Deut. ix. 24—29. Numb. xvi. 46, 47, 48. Rev. xiii. 8. Psalm cx. 4.

7 ¶ Thus he shewed me: and behold, the LORD stood upon a wall *made* by a plumb-line, with a plumb-line in his hand.

8 And the LORD said unto me, Amos, what seest thou? and I said a plumb-line: then said the LORD, behold, I will set a plumb-line in the midst of my people Israel: I will not again pass by them any more:

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

We have here a third sermon of the Prophet in figure, and to the same amount as the former. The similitude of measuring is adopted, and probably it was here meant to shew, the time limited thereby for the Lord's forbearance, until the captivity commenced. But I beg the Reader to keep in view, what ought never to be lost sight of, that the Lord still calls Israel *his people*. Amos sent to preach to them; and the whole sum and substance of his preaching tended to this point, the Lord's covenant in Christ was before the Lord. Wretched and unworthy as they were in themselves, there is an everlasting worthiness in *the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world*.

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 words.

11 For thus Amos saith, Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land.

This is an interesting passage in the history of Amos, and deserves to be particularly considered. It seems that this *Amaziah*, priest of

Bethel, was priest of the golden calves at Bethel which Jeroboam had set up. He had the ear of the king, and, therefore, while the poor Prophet was preaching to the common people, Amaziah was accusing him at the court. In his accusation, he endeavours to make Amos appear as though he had only personally preached against the king. He hath conspired against *thee*, said *Amaziah*. Whereas the whole bent of *Amos's* preaching was to say to the whole house of Israel, that by their sin the land would be laid waste by the sword. *The land* (he said) *was not able to bear with Amos's preaching*. Whereas, we have not a word of any complaining but himself. But did he tell the king how Amos had interceded with the Lord for Israel, and how he had succeeded? Not a word of this! So that in the very moment, while the poor herdman of *Tekoa* was really and truly the best friend of Israel; he is represented as the greatest enemy both to the king and country: a traitor to his prince, and a disturber of the people! These things are not uncommon.

12 Also Amaziah said unto Amos, O thou seer, go, flee thee away into the land of Judah; and there eat bread, and prophesy there:

13 But prophesy not again any more at Beth-el: for it *is* the king's chapel, and it *is* the king's court.

Observe the awful character of this golden calf-priest. While carrying on a private charge against poor Amos to the king, he recommends him, as a kind friend, to run away from his station, and to gain popular favour among the men of Judah. Perhaps he intended, had he accomplished his purpose, to bring him back again for punishment, as his flight would have implied his guilt in the charge of conspiring against the king. And as *Amaziah* had no one object in his office of priesthood, but gain: so he advised Amos to gain plenty of bread by his prophecy in Judah. *The king's chapel*, and *the king's court*, are striking expressions, to shew what an awful state of religion the kingdom was then in, under such idolatrous services, and such idolatrous high-priests as *Amaziah*. Oh! the long-suffering and patience of the Lord!

14 Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah, *I was* no prophet, neither *was* I a prophet's son; but *I was* an herdman, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit:

15 And the LORD took me as I followed 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 sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a polluted land; and Israel shall surely go into captivity forth of his land.

Blessed be the Lord for making his servants faithful. Who but must admire the humbleness and modesty of Amos, in his account of his call to the ministry! And who but must be delighted with the firmness of the man, while acting as the servant of the Lord? Observe what holy zeal and boldness an heart truly devoted to the Lord finds in the Lord! Faithful servant of thy God, valiant Amos! Even in the degenerate age in which we live, still there is grace enough in the Church to admire, if not to follow thy bright example, in being bold amidst the *Amaziah's* around, to glorify the Lord God of Israel, *whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear.*

REFLECTIONS.

I TAKE occasion, from the noble conduct of the Prophet in this Chapter, in opposing the priest of Bethel, to remark to the Reader and mine own heart no less at the same time, how truly blessed it must be, thus to defend the truths of God, whenever or by whomsoever they are opposed. Cowardice in a minister of God is worse than in the soldier of an earthly prince; for the deserting the cause of this world is but for a day, but running from the Redeemer's standard affects a whole eternity. Had the Prophet been a time-serving man, no doubt the charge of *Amaziah* would have alarmed him, and soon bought him over. But as his study was to approve himself to God, he felt that holy indignation, which not only repelled the attack, but gave him an honest boldness to reprove in his Lord's name. And never was there a day in the Church of God, when a modest firmness became more necessary than the present. Lord! give thy servants, whom, like *Amos*, thou hast called to the work, grace, like *Amos*, earnestly to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. Let an holy zeal make them earnest to win souls, and to consider that faith worth contending for, which gives God all the glory of salvation, and exalts the Lord Jesus as the source and fountain of all spiritual life, in grace here and glory to all eternity. And do thou, Lord, carry on thy work in their heart, and the hearts of thy people, that both may be living under the rich anointings of God the Holy Ghost! Amen.

CHAP. VIII.

CONTENTS.

The Prophet is here again in this Chapter instructing by figure. By a basket of summer-fruit is shewn the state of Israel. The Chapter closeth with the threatenings of famine.

THUS hath the Lord GOD shewed unto 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 of Israel: I will not again pass by them any more.

By the similitude of *summer-fruit*, which of course as soon as it ripens hastens to decay, is shewn, in a lively representation, the transitory state of all men; not only Israel, but all flesh: for all is as grass, and as the flower of the field. But in this place there is a peculiar reference to Israel's hastening to captivity. In a spiritual sense the image is still more striking. How truly short are all the summers of our spiritual enjoyments!

3 And the songs of the temple shall be howlings in that day, saith the Lord GOD: *there shall be many dead bodies in every place; they shall cast them forth with silence.*

4 ¶ Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make 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 set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit?

6 That we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; *yea*, 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? and it shall rise

up wholly as a flood : and it shall be cast out and drowned, as *by* the flood 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 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 of an only *son*, and the end thereof as a bitter day.

When devotion itself is out of tune by the heart being under no influences of grace ; alas ! what a sacrifice of fools is then offered ! Sabbaths are burdens, ordinances tiresome, prayer a drudgery, in seasons like these. Oh ! for grace to be always under the blessed teachings of God the Holy Ghost !

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 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 young men faint for thirst.

14 They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy god, O Dan liveth ; and, The manner of Beer-sheba liveth ; even they shall fall and never rise up again.

What an awful sound is here ! And how dreadfully awful in that land, that parish, that people, that family, or person, in whom it is fulfilled. A famine of bread the common staff of life is distressing. But what is the life of the body to the life of the soul ? This threatening was in part accomplished, when the Church was carried into *Babylon*. And what a dark season in after ages took place, from the close of prophecy to the coming of Christ ? And in our own land before the reformation, what a deplorable condition was this island in ! Blessed Lord Jesus ! grant that never more our candlestick may be removed out of its place, but let that sweet promise be our portion :

though the Lord give the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not our teachers be removed into a corner any more, but our eyes shall see our teachers, and our ears shall hear a word behind us; saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. Isaiah xxx. 20, 21.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! while we read the awful threatenings of the Lord to Israel of old, of turning the songs of the temple into howlings, and inducing a famine of the word of the Lord, more to be dreaded than all the famine of bread and water; while we trace the cause in Israel's despising the Lord's sabbaths, is it possible but we must tremble, lest the crying sins of our *British* Israel should bring on the same judgments, and from the same causes? Was there ever a day like the present, when the Lord's days were so profaned, or the pure and holy religion of the Lord Jesus so little regarded? Blessed Lord! look in mercy upon our Zion, and take thine own cause into thine own Almighty hand! Pour out upon the remnant of thy people that are left, in the midst of the present adulterous and sinful generation, *a spirit of grace and a spirit of supplication*. Enable them to come with weeping, and with earnest cries for the Lord's graciousness to be preserved to our land. And do thou Lord as thou hast said, and let that sweet promise be now fulfilled, which is now so much needed. *Then will I turn to the people (thou hast said) a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent; and then will I take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride, and thou shalt no more be haughty, because of my holy mountain!*

CHAP. IX.

CONTENTS.

The Chapter opens with solemn threatenings, and concludes with gracious promises. The reference to Gospel days is clearly proved from the application made to this scripture in the Acts of the Apostles, under the Apostle's preaching.

I SAW the LORD standing upon the altar: and he said, Smite the lintel of the door, that the posts may shake; and cut them in the head all of them; and I will slay the last of them with the sword: he that fleeth of them shall not flee away, and he that escapeth of them shall not be delivered.

2 Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine

hand take them: 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, and not for good.

5 And the LORD GOD of hosts *is* he that toucheth the land, and it shall melt, and all that dwell therein shall mourn: and it shall rise up wholly like a flood; and shall be drowned, as *by* the flood of Egypt.

6 *It is* he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in 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.

7 *Are ye* not as 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 the Syrians from Kir?

Amos is here describing what he saw in a vision. So the Lord spake to the Prophets. The whole of Isaiah's prophecy is called the vision of Isaiah. Isaiah i. 1. Observe the opening of this memorable scripture: the Lord standing *upon* the altar, to shew his authority. And observe further, it is the altar, not between the cherubim on the mercy-seat, for now the Lord is come to judge, not to pardon. *Smite the lintel of the door*, said the Lord; as if he meant to say, let it be thrown down. And while those that run away seem to escape, it is but seemingly so, for the Lord will pursue and overtake, whether they take shelter in heaven or hell; whether on mount *Carmel* or the bottom of the sea. Reader! who can protect from the power of such an Almighty avenger of wrong! *Who shall stand when he appeareth?* See Nahum 1—6. The expostulation of the Lord is striking. *Are ye not, O Israel, as the children of the Ethiopians?* that is, what pretensions have ye to my favour more than they. Reader! if we

know not the Lord in a way of grace, we are no better than others in the claims of nature!

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: saving that I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob, saith the LORD.

9 For lo, I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among all 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.

I have often thought that this part of Amos's prophecy is peculiarly ours, and it is indeed enough to arrest our most serious attention, as a nation and a people. Surely *the eyes of the Lord are upon us!* Our land hath been for many generations like Judea of old, with the gracious eyes of the Lord upon us, from one end of the year even to the other end of the year. Deut. xi. 12. But what hath been our provocations from father to son? What the Lord said by the Prophet *Malachi* is our character, Malachi iii. 7. Let the Reader observe the awful sifting time here spoken of; and though there is indeed, that sweet and precious promise, that in this strict search, not a grain of the pure wheat shall perish or fall to the earth; yet in national calamities, who but must take part? When the Lord for the wickedness of a land maketh it barren, these form awful times. In the days of *Lot*, though sent out of the overthrow, his city was destroyed. Gen. xix. 29. In the days of *Jeremiah*, the good figs as well as the bad were carried away. Jerem. xxiv. 5. And the Lord by *Ezekiel* declared, that in respect to temporal things, he would *cut off the righteous with the wicked*. Ezek. xxi. 3. Oh! who could but mourn to lose even but our ordinances, our sabbaths; and to have the golden candlestick of the blessed gospel removed out of its place! Rev. ii. 5.

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 ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old;

12 That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the LORD, that doeth this.

13 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the plowman 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 pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.

If we had the least doubt to what day this referred, or what was meant by the raising up the tabernacles of David, the Apostles of Christ would determine both. See Acts xv. 16, 17. And if we could after this hesitate, or need enquiry further concerning the David spoken of, the general scope of prophecy would soon settle this point. The tabernacles of David can mean no other, than in their fallen and ruined state, our poor ruined nature. But yet as belonging to our spiritual David, the Lord Jesus Christ, it must be raised again in him. And under the beautiful figure of husbandry, the plowman, and the reaper; the mountains, and the hills dropping sweet wine; surely, nothing can more delightfully set forth the spiritual blessings of the gospel. Here the Lord may truly be said to bring back the captivity of his people, and to feed them with a fulness of salvation. And, I pray the Reader to observe, how blessedly the Prophet closeth the whole, in the assurance the Lord gives of the everlasting duration of his people in him, and under his favour. Perhaps a more blessed promise is not to be found in the whole body of prophecy. It is similar to that glorious one of the same kind in the writings of the Prophet Jeremiah; and it is confirmed with Jehovah's own solemn declaration, *saith the Lord God. Yea, saith (the Lord,) I will rejoice over them to do them good; and I will plant them in this land assuredly, with my whole heart and with my whole soul.* Well may all the faithful say, Amen. Jerem. xxxii. 41.

REFLECTIONS.

READER! now we have gone through the writings of this highly taught Prophet, let us pause, and gather into one view the whole purport and scope of his ministerial labours in this department, to which God the Holy Ghost commissioned him. We find him, like most of his brethren, in the college of the Prophets, opening his prophecy with marking the desolate state of the Church in the day of his ministry. With what earnestness and zeal do we behold him calling upon Israel to turn to the Lord! How strong and full the figures he makes use of, to set forth the alarming situation in which Zion lay before the Lord. He reproves indeed all the nations around,

and fully shews the Lord's determination to arise to their punishment. But it is Israel and Judah more immediately, whom the Prophet mourns over for their transgressions and sins. Here the Prophet finds cause for the exercise of sorrow and affliction, while calling upon them to turn from their iniquities, and to seek the favour and loving-kindness of the Lord. But, Reader! do not forget to connect with the whole, and to gather into one point of view the close of *Amos's* sermons. His last Chapter in the end of it is all gospel. Jesus and his salvation, the spiritual David of his people, is here set forth, so truly, lovely, gracious, and interesting, that it is impossible, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, not to see, that to this one object, and to this alone, the whole of the Prophet's ministry was directed. All that *Amos* said before, and all the alarms he rang to the sinners in Zion, all his labours were to introduce the glories of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ, and to give the Church the gracious promises, how the Lord would recover his people, and manifest his grace, notwithstanding all their undeservings. May the Lord give both to Writer and Reader grace, to gather the many blessed instructions intended to the Church by this prophecy. Farewell! faithful servant of the Lord! may all that are called to the ministry of the word find equal strength to resist all the *Amaziah's* which oppose them. Blessed Lord Jesus! raise up many an *Amos* in the present day, to hold forth to thy Church and people the truth; and never fail to publish *the whole counsel of God*. Amen.

THE PROPHET OBADIAH.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

OBADIAH might be an eminent servant in the Church of the Lord in his sermons, and preaching, and ministry: but in his writings he is very short. But certainly, short as it is, for it contains only a single Chapter, it carries with it the mark of divine inspiration.

The name of *Obadiah* is not without meaning. It signifies *a labourer of the Lord*. There are several of this name in scripture. There is an Obadiah mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 21. and another the grandson of *Uzzi*, a chief man in his day with his brethren, 1 Chron. vii. 3. One also, a valiant man in David's army. 1 Chron. xii. 9. But neither of these was our Prophet. As he opens his prophecy without any account of himself, it is not very easy to determine, either his con-