

regard God as a mere talisman by means of which they hope to ward off impending evil. They do not recognize in Him the infinitely holy God who asks man to do justly and to love mercy and to walk in all humility in His presence.

Thus we find that the people have fallen into idolatry, accompanied by vice of the most degrading character. They have built their temples to Baal, and formed groves for his worship, with all the drunkenness and impurity usually associated with that worship. This is the great burden of our prophets' message. Their souls are filled with horror at the idolatry of the people. Baal-worship has taken complete possession of them. Besides these false priests, also, are the professors of witch-craft and sooth-saying, just as in the decaying empire of Rome there were the Jewish fortune-tellers, and as in modern Europe there are strange forms of spiritualism and strange superstitious cults.

But were there no true-hearted souls in this corrupt kingdom? We strain our ears to catch the notes of their gentle voice amid the noisy brawls of the assassin and the wild ritual of the heathen god. We do not listen in vain. We hear the voice of God's people. In that doomed city God has left Himself a remnant.

1. We hear of the righteous: Amos 2 : 6, "The righteous were sold for silver."

2. We hear of "the just": Amos 5 : 12, "They afflict the just, they take a bribe; they turn aside the poor in the gate from the right."

3. We hear of "the prudent": Amos 5 : 13, "The prudent shall keep silence in that time."

4. We hear of "God's people": Micah 3 : 2. There can only have been a very few in this class, however, like Noah and his family in a sinful world, like the Mystics before the Reformation.

Such is an attempt, very briefly, to describe the life of the people of Israel as it presented itself to Hoseah, Amos and Micah. So graphic is the description given by these prophets