

the classical world just before the coming of Christ, or of the moral decay of the French nation at the end of the last century, brought about by the reign of deism and atheism.

The religious condition of the people is more difficult to understand. Their religion was a curious compound of the false and the true, the false leavening the true until the whole became a mass of festering corruption. Let us, first, listen to the echoes of the true religion as these are rung out by our three prophets.

1. They showed a reverence for holy days. They say: "When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn, and the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat?" And accordingly, God says regarding Israel; "I will also cause her mirth to cease, her feast-days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths and all her solemn feasts."

2. Amos 5 : 18. "They desire the Day of the Lord." They think that, when the day of vengeance comes, God who loves his chosen people Israel will rescue them. They think that the "Day of the Lord" will be to them a day of blessing and not of judgment. They have no dread that the blow, when it falls, will destroy them as a nation forever.

3. Micah 3 : 4. "They cry to the Lord," hoping that He will hear them, notwithstanding their unrepented sins.

4. They "boast that the Lord is among them;" and they fancy that no evil will befall them when such an One is in their midst."—Micah 3 : 4. "The heads thereof judge for reward, and the priests thereof divine for money; yet will they lean upon the Lord and say: Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us."

5. They are careful to offer up sacrifice. They are willing, so far as their means permit, to present before God thousands of rivers of oil; they are prepared to sacrifice their first-born for their transgressions.

Such a religion as this is manifestly false. It has no real life; and thus, we are not surprised to find that it is associated with irreligion of a most degraded character. The Israelites