

foreign invasion, are to result from our misdeeds, it is the voice of kindness that so tells us. If there be a worm that dieth not and a fire that is not quenched, it is the finger of love that points to them. No sinner is condemned for the sin that he was ignorant of. The Lord's way is so plain that a way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein.

3. *God is just, and therefore hates iniquity.* His punishments are inevitable. A man might fall from a lofty pinnacle to the granite ground and not be hurt sooner than a soul could fall from rectitude into iniquity and not suffer. In the truest and loftiest sense punishment is "natural consequence." It is the lurid and awful blossom of which sin was the bud.

4. *God is loving; his punishments are not vengeful, but reformatory in their intent.* Had Pharaoh minded the first plague, his armies would not have drowned in the Red Sea. Had Jeroboam I. listened to the warning of the prophet, the long succession of Israel's calamities would never have come. Had Jeroboam II. hearkened to Amos, the annihilation of the Israelite monarchy might have been avoided. Are you and I listening to the voice of God to-day?

5. *God is both just and loving,* which gives a peculiar pathos to the exhortation, *Prepare to meet thy God.* Prepare to meet him who was thy maker, and is thy almighty judge; who is so pure that he chargeth even his angels with folly; who is inexorable and cannot be turned aside. Prepare to meet him who is thy loving Saviour, who came to earth for the very purpose of showing a weak and sinful race how a God can love. He whose portrait is given in verse 13, he that treadeth upon the high places of the earth and maketh the morning darkness, is the same one that turned the mid-night of the world into sunshine by his incarnation, and who, being lifted upon the cross, draws all men toward him.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

A rough pasture-land, where the hills are bleak and sandy, where the herds and flocks quietly graze in the grassy vales, where the herdmen and shepherds lazily loiter among the fields. There are only cattle and sheep stolidly feeding day after day, the sun coming up, the sun going down, and Tekoa is the same weary land.

But one of the men of Tekoa has heard a voice. Life for him among his herds has lost its interest. He sits apart. His thoughts are afar. He sees strange visions coming into form and color. O, weary is the burden he carries for the sins of his people. He hears the mutterings of the thunders of judgment. Still worse, he witnesses the sin that calls down the lightning fires.

In his prophetic mood he is still looking afar. The colors burn within the range of his rapt vision. There is a flame of indignation flushing his cheek. He sees in different places two crowds of idol-worshippers. He hears their insane outcries. He frowns as he sees their frantic prostrations. Two different crowds of idolaters! Communities among the Assyrians or Philistines or Edomites, says somebody. No; towns, alas, in Israel! One is Beth-el, where Jacob saw the angel ladder; the other is Gilgal, where Israel camped after the wonderful crossing of the Jordan. And those idolaters are descendants of Abraham! O, the hot shame tingling the face of Amos!

But look! The figures in the prophetic glass are shifting; the same sharp colors, but a different scene. He is looking upon a famine-smitten land. Hunger is in the cities. Hunger is in the valleys. Hunger is out in the wide, desolate fields. Men go with famished look and feeble walk. Beggars ask for bread at every door. The crowd clamor for food in the gates of the towns. And yet no one holds out pleading hands to him who can turn the very stones into bread.

The prophet witnesses another scene. It is a land withering in drought. The sun is only a hot furnace-door in the heavens; the earth is only the ashy bed of the furnace itself. No rain drips from the clouds. No water runs in the brooks. Where babbling streams made their music, saddest silence reigns. People despairingly look down into empty wells. Crowds flock to cities where any fountain may be rumored to flash its jeweled crystals in the sun. Home they may go with empty water-skins. Drought in the land, thirst tormenting and incessant, and yet where in all the prophet's sweep of vision does he see any soul bowed before God and asking water of him in the palm of whose hand rolls the great deep?

The glass shifts. There are other scenes rising up out of the mists of the prophetic hour. Blasting and mildew are in all the land. The palmer-worm is crawling over the gardens, crawling over the vineyards, crawling over the fig-trees, crawling over the olive-trees. All the land wriggles with the curse. Stalks and tendrils bare of foliage everywhere! A land desolate as with death! And who is alive unto God and crying for deliverance?

The prophet witnesses still another terrible scene. It is an evil presence with fetid, poisonous breath, with covered face, that makes no outcry, that has muffled its feet, but moves with all the fatal power of Egypt's pestilence when Pharaoh would not let God's people go. The strength of youth is no armor against it. The feebleness of age meets not with its pity. A host of warriors securely encamped cannot alarm it. But who prays for a covert from its ravages?

Once again do the strange mystic colors light up before the prophet's eyes. There have been outa-