

of God's mercy in answer to prayer. In the vision of the plumb line we have a vision of judgment. Here God declares to the prophet the meaning of the vision in these words: "Behold I will set a plumb line in the midst of my people Israel; I will not again pass by them any more, 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."

Now this vision of the plumb line has a message for us to-day just as truly as it had for Israel in the days of Amos. Let us then see what we may learn from the plumb line in the hands of the Lord.

I. *God's plumb line defines the limit of salvation.*—One of the ordinary uses of a plumb line is to define the limit of safety. Builders use the plumb line in order that the walls may be built perpendicular. It is a well known law of statics that the centre of gravity must fall within the base, and this is always the case with a wall built perpendicular. The plumb line then in the hands of man defines the limit of safety for a building. Another familiar use of the plummet or plumb line is to ascertain the depth of the sea. Here, too, the plumb line is used to define the limit of safety. The plumb line indicates the depth of water, and tells the mariner whether there is sailing room for his vessel, or whether he is in danger of making shipwreck on shoals or sunken rocks. The plumb line gives warning so that if there is danger he may cast out his anchor ere it be too late.

God has a plumb line. That plumb line is the bible, and the illustrations we have used may help us to understand God's use of His plumb line. 1st. God's plumb line points out the *place* of safety. During the American war, at the military prisons such as Andersonville, large numbers of prisoners of war were detained. These prisoners were watched by a few guards. Around each prison there was a line marked beyond which the prisoners were forbidden to go. This line was called the dead line, and any prisoner who crossed that line was liable to be shot. The dead line showed the limit of safety. Now the Lord has marked out a dead line for sinners, and he has said distinctly all beyond that line are condemned already. Beyond that line there is no salvation. That place of safety is the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ there is no condemnation, to them who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit. There is none other name whereby we can be saved only the name