

Lesson, Amos 6: 1-8. Commit vs. 3-6.

1. 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 musick, 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.

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.

GOLDEN TEXT.

"They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way."—Isa. 28:7.

LESSON PLAN.

1. God's messenger to his people.
2. Their special sins.
3. The lessons he taught them.

DAILY READINGS.

- M. Finful indulgence, Amos 6: 1-8.
 T. Be wise! Prov. 23: 15-23.
 W. Walking wisely, Eph. 5: 6-21.
 T. Punishment of sin, Isa. 24: 1-12.
 F. Given to pleasure, Isa. 47: 5-11.
 S. Sin of worldliness, Jas. 4: 1-10.
 S. Love it not! 1 John 2: 12-17.

CATECHISM.

Q. 35. What is sanctification?
 A. Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

LESSON HYMNS.

Nos. 127, 573, 529, 530.

1. The messenger.—

Amos prophesied in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and Jeroboam II, son of Joash, king of Israel. B. C. 750-740.

He was a native of Tekoa, a town on the borders of the desert of Judah, about twelve miles south of Jerusalem. Its ruins still exist under the ancient name Eltekon (Jos. 15: 59).

He was a shepherd and a dresser of sycamore trees, the fruit of which resembled wild figs and was used as food by the common people in Egypt and elsewhere. The Arabs to-day usually have a few fruit trees around the chief well of their pasture. And so Amos, while attending his dwarf sheep in the desert, cultivated in some low oasis this easily grown fruit of the sycamore.

Like John the Baptist, his manner of life was simple and free from the formalities and stately insincerities which are hostile to clear moral perception. "He was in the desert till the day of his showing unto Israel" (Lu. 1: 80). Like Jesus, before he entered upon his public mission among men, he was in the wilderness, "and was with the wild beasts" (Mark 1: 13). Hence his lessons and figures of speech are distinctly colored by these experiences. For example—"The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord hath spoken, who can but prophesy?" (3: 8). "As the shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of the lion a piece of an ear," etc. (3: 12.)

It was from amid scenes of this sort, and after he had, as a wool-grower and trader, gathered a good measure of knowledge of the people on his journeys among the markets of the land, that God called him to be a prophet. His education for the office was exceptional, and not that ordinarily enjoyed. So he himself declared to the priest at Bethel, who sought to prevent him prophesying in the kingdom of Israel: "I was no prophet, neither was I prophet's son," i. e., a student, "but I was an herdman, and a dresser of sycamore trees: and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto my people Israel'" (7: 14-15). He did so, chiefly to the Ten Tribes, and in a subordinate degree to the tribe of Judah to which he belonged.

We have no reliable data for determining how long he continued his ministry. Probably he did so till within twenty years of the date at which Isaiah entered upon his brilliant career of instruction to the same stubborn and rebellious people.

2. Their special sins.—

Here we have to think not of the people as a whole, but mainly of one class. The prophet's address is directed to the rulers, the chief men. What are their offences? They "are at ease in Zion." Inactive so far as their sacred duties are concerned. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. Not only are