

# CHAPTER 6

## INTRODUCTION TO AMOS 6

This chapter seems to be directed both to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the ten tribes of Israel, under the names of Zion and Samaria, and to the principal men in both; who are reprov'd and threaten'd for their carnal security and self-confidence, being in no fear of the evil day, though they had no reason for it no more than other people, (~~3066~~ Amos 6:1-3); are charg'd with wantonness, luxury, intemperance, and want of sympathy with those in distress, (~~3066~~ Amos 6:4-6); therefore are threaten'd to be carried captive first, and their city to be deliver'd up; which, for the certainty of it, is not only said, but swore to, (~~3067~~ Amos 6:7,8); and a great mortality in every house, and the destruction of all houses, both great and small, (~~3068~~ Amos 6:9-11); and since a reformation of them seem'd impracticable, and not to be expected, but they gloried in their wealth, and boasted of their strength, therefore they should be afflicted by a foreign nation rais'd against them, which affliction should be general, from one end of the country to the other, (~~3062~~ Amos 6:12-14).

**Ver. 1.** *Woe to them [that are] at ease in Zion*, etc.] Or “secure”,<sup>f147</sup> there; which was a strong hold, the city of David, the seat of the kings of Judah; where their court was kept, and the princes and chief men resided and thought themselves safe, the place being well fortified with walls, towers, and bulwarks: or “at ease”; that is, in easy, prosperous, comfortable circumstances of life; as Job was before his troubles, and others he mentions, (~~8162~~ Job 16:12 ~~8175~~ 12:5 ~~8213~~ 21:23); though to be in such a state is not criminal, but a blessing of Providential goodness, for which men should be thankful, and make use of it aright: but “woe to the rich in Zion”,<sup>f148</sup> as the Vulgate Latin Version renders it, when they have nothing else but temporal riches; this is all their portion, and the whole of their consolation, (~~4064~~ Luke 6:24); when they trust in these uncertain riches, and consume them on their lusts, as described in the following verses; are unconcern'd at the troubles of others, and give them no relief, but despise them, (~~8175~~ Job 12:5 ~~8304~~ Psalm 123:4); and even are thoughtless about their own future state, and put away the evil day far from them, (~~4079~~ Luke 12:19,20); and

such are they who like Moab are at ease from their youth as to their spiritual state, (<sup>2481b</sup>Jeremiah 48:11); never had any true sight of sin, or sense of danger; never complain of a body of sin, or are concerned about sins of omission or commission; nor troubled with the temptations of Satan, and have no fears and doubts about their happiness; and such there be who yet are in Zion, or in a church state, which Zion often signifies; and being there, trust in it, and in the privileges of it, and so are secure, and at ease; such are the foolish virgins and hypocrites, who place their confidence in a profession of religion, in being church members, and in their submission to external ordinances, and so cry Peace, peace, to themselves, when, destruction is at hand: and are moreover at ease, and wholly unconcerned about the affairs of Zion, both temporal and spiritual, and especially the latter; they do not trouble themselves about the doctrines they hear, whether truth or error; and about the success of them, whether they are made useful for conversion and edification; and about the continuance of a Gospel ministry, and a succession in it; and about the discipline of the church of God, and the walk of professors; or about what trials and afflictions are like to come upon the churches; or about the judgments of God in the earth; and therefore such carnal secure persons are either called upon to awake out of their sleep, and come off of their beds of ease, and shake off their vain confidence and carnal security; for the word may be rendered “ho”<sup>f149</sup>, as a note of calling, as in (<sup>2881b</sup>Isaiah 55:1 <sup>3016b</sup>Zechariah 2:6); or a threatening of calamity is denounced upon them, that the day of the Lord should come upon them as a thief in the night, or as a snare upon them that dwell on earth, and they be surprised with the midnight cry, and with the terrors of devouring flames, as the foolish virgins and hypocrite’s in Zion will, (<sup>4051b</sup>Matthew 25:6,7 <sup>2334b</sup>Isaiah 33:14). The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, render it, “who despise Zion”, or “neglect” her; and the word is sometimes used of insolent persons, and to express their insolence; (see <sup>4372b</sup>Isaiah 37:29); and so may be understood, not of the Jews in Jerusalem, but of the ten tribes, as the following clause; who despised Zion, the city of solemnities, the temple; and, the worship of God there, and set up the calves at Daniel and Bethel, and worshipped them; and therefore a woe is denounced upon them;

*and trust in the mountain of Samaria*; in the city of Samaria, built on a mountain, a strong fortified city, where they thought themselves safe; the royal city of the kings of Israel, the head of Ephraim, and the metropolis of the ten tribes, who here are intended: though the words may be rendered,

and the sense given a little different from this, as woe to the “confident” ones that ate in Samaria<sup>f150</sup>; not that put their trust in Samaria, but dwell there; but, however, are confident in their own strength, wealth, and might. The Targum is,

“that trust in the fortress of Samaria;”

(see ~~1168~~ 1 Kings 16:24);

*[which are] named the chief of the nations*; the persons at ease in Zion, and trusted in Samaria, were the principal men of both nations, Judah and Israel; or these cities of Zion and Samaria were the chief of the said nations: Zion, Which was near Jerusalem, and includes it, was the metropolis of Judea; as Samaria was the head city of Ephraim, or the ten tribes. The Targum is, that

“put the name of their children, as the name of the children of the nations;”

as the Jews did in later times, giving their children the names of Alexander, Antipater, etc.

*to whom the house of Israel came*; meaning not to the seven nations, of which the two named cities were chief, into which Israel entered, and took possession of, and dwelt in; for Samaria never belonged to them, but was built by Omri king of Israel, long after the entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan, (~~1168~~ 1 Kings 16:24); but the cities of Zion and, Samaria, into which the whole house of Israel came, or had recourse unto, at certain times: the ten tribes came to Samaria, where their kings resided, the court was kept, and the seats of judgment were; and the two tribes came to Zion, to Jerusalem, to the temple there, to worship the Lord.

**Ver. 2.** *Pass ye unto Calneh, and see*, etc.] What is become of that city, which was in the land of Shinar, an ancient city, as early as the days of Nimrod, and built by him, and was with others the beginning of his kingdom, (~~1100~~ Genesis 10:10); it belonged to Babylon, and is by Jarchi here interpreted by it, being put for Babel, as he supposes. According to Jerom<sup>f151</sup>, it is the same city, sometimes called Seleucia, in his days Ctesiphon; very probably it had been lately taken by the king of Assyria, and therefore made mention of; (see ~~2319~~ Isaiah 10:9); where it is called Calno;

*and from thence go ye to Hamath the great*; the same with Antiochia, as Jarchi and Jerom; called the great, to distinguish it from Hamath the less, sometimes called Epiphania; or from Hamathzobah, near Tadmor, or Palmyra, in the wilderness, (<sup><488></sup>2 Chronicles 8:3,4); though it might be so called with respect to its own grandeur and magnificence; as Sidon is called “Sidon the great”, though there was no other, (<sup><618></sup>Joshua 11:8); for it was a royal city; we read of Toi, king of Hamath, in the times of David, (<sup><108></sup>2 Samuel 8:9,10). It is placed by Josephus<sup>f152</sup> on the north of the land of Canaan; and so it appears to be, and to be between Damascus and the Mediterranean sea, from (<sup><375></sup>Ezekiel 47:15-17 <sup><380></sup>48:1). Abu’lfeda<sup>f153</sup>, a learned prince, who reigned in Hamath, and should know its situation, places it on the Orontes, between Hems and Apamea, that river surrounding it on the east and north. The learned Vitringa<sup>f154</sup> thinks that neither Antiochia nor Epiphania are meant, but the city Emissa; which Ammianus Marcellinus<sup>f155</sup> makes mention of along with Damascus, as a famous city in Syria, equal to Tyre, Sidon, and Berytus: and of the same opinion was Theodore<sup>f156</sup> among the ancients, and so Calmet<sup>f157</sup> of late. And so Hamath and Damascus are mentioned together as recovered by Jeroboam, (<sup><148></sup>2 Kings 14:28); very probably the kingdom of Hamath became subject to the kings of Damascus; (see <sup><242></sup>Jeremiah 49:23); but, be it what place it will, it is very likely it had been lately spoiled by the king of Assyria; (see <sup><373></sup>Isaiah 37:13).

*then go down to Gath of the Philistines*; one of their five principalities, and a chief one, so called to distinguish it from other Gaths, as Gathhepher, Gathrimmon. It stood about five or six miles south of Jamnia, about fourteen south of Joppa, and thirty two west of Jerusalem. A village of this name as shown, as Jerom<sup>f158</sup> says, five miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Diospolis or Lydda, and is taken to be the same place. It is famous for being the birthplace of Goliath; and is called in (<sup><108></sup>2 Samuel 8:1); compared with (<sup><380></sup>1 Chronicles 18:1), Methegammah, or the bridle of Ammah, or Metheg and her mother; that is, Gath and her daughters. Reland<sup>f159</sup> thinks Gath is the city Cadytis of Herodotus<sup>f160</sup>, who says it is a city of the Syrians, called Palestines or Philistines, and speaks of the mountains of it; and this city was not far from the mountainous country of Judea: now this city had been taken by Hazael, king of Syria, and its wall was broke down by Uzziah, king of Judah, (<sup><217></sup>2 Kings 12:17 <sup><406></sup>2 Chronicles 26:6);

*[be they] better than these kingdoms? or their border greater than your border?* that is, do Calneh, Hamath, and Gath, excel in dignity and grandeur, in wealth and strength, the kingdoms of Israel and Judah? or are they of a larger circumference, and exceed them in length and breadth? no, they did not; and therefore the more ungrateful were Israel and Judah to sin against the Lord as they had done, who had given them such rich and large kingdoms, and therefore might expect to be taken and spoiled as well as they: though some think there is a change of number and persons in the text, and that the sense is, are you better than these kingdoms, or your border greater than theirs? and, if not, you may expect to fare as they; see a like expression in (<sup>3108</sup>Nahum 3:8).

**Ver. 3.** *Ye that put far away the evil day*, etc.] The day of Israel's captivity, threatened by, the Lord, and prophesied of by the prophets; by this prophet, and by Hoshea and others: this they endeavoured to put out of their minds and thoughts, and supposed it to be at a great distance, yea, hoped it never would be; and like the Jews, with respect to their captivity, and the destruction of their city, said it was not near, but prolonged, yea, would never come to pass, (<sup>3108</sup>Ezekiel 11:3 <sup>3122</sup>12:22); so some men put far from them the day of death; which though to a good man is better than the day of his birth, yet to a wicked man is an evil and terrible day; he do not care to hear or speak, or think of it, lest it should dampen his carnal joys and pleasures: as also the day of Christ's coming to judgment; which though a good man hastens to in his affections, desires, and prayers, wicked men set at the greatest distance, yea, scoff at it, as believing it never will be, and to show that they are in no pain or uneasiness about it; (see <sup>2592</sup>Isaiah 56:12) (<sup>4148</sup>Matthew 24:48 <sup>6004</sup>2 Peter 3:4-12). The Vulgate Latin version renders it, "who are separated to the evil day"; appointed to it; foreordained to this condemnation; destined to ruin and destruction for their sins; (see <sup>2104</sup>Proverbs 16:4);

*and cause the seat of violence to come near*; boldly venture upon the commission of acts of injustice, rapine, and violence, on a presumption the evil day threatened will never come; or place themselves on the bench in courts of judicature, and there, without any manner of concern, commit the greatest acts of unrighteousness, as believing they shall never be called to an account for them by God or man.

**Ver. 4.** *That lie upon beds of ivory*, etc.] That were made of it, or inlaid with it, or covered with it, as the Targum; nor was it improbable that these

were made wholly of ivory, for such beds we read of: Timaeus says<sup>f161</sup>, the Agrigentines had beds entirely made of ivory; and Horace<sup>f162</sup> also speaks of such beds: and if any credit can be given to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on (<sup>Q100L</sup>Genesis 50:1). Joseph made his father Jacob to lie on a bed of ivory. Indeed, the Latin interpreters of these Targums render it a cedar bed; but Buxtorf<sup>f163</sup> conjectures that ivory is meant by the word used; and so Bochart<sup>f164</sup> translates it; on these they lay either for sleep and rest, or to eat their meals;

*and stretch themselves upon their couches*; for the same purposes, living in great splendour, and indulging themselves in ease and sloth; as it was the custom of the eastern countries, and is of the Arabs now; that they make little or no use of chairs, but either sitting cross legged, or lying at length, have couches to lie on at their meals; and when they indulge to ease, they cover or spread their floors with carpets, which for the most part are of the richest materials. Along the sides of the wall or floor, a range of narrow beds or mattresses is often placed upon these carpets; and, for their further ease and convenience, several velvet or damask bolsters are placed upon these, or mattresses<sup>f165</sup>, to lean upon, and take their ease; (see <sup>Q3518</sup>Ezekiel 13:18); and thus, and in some such like manner, did the principal men of the people of Israel indulge themselves. Some render it, “abound with superfluities”; the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, “are lascivious”; and the Arabic version, “burn in lust”; and so some of the Jewish writers interpret it of their committing adulteries, and all uncleanness, on their beds and couches;

*and eat the lambs out of the flock*; pick the best and fattest of them for their use: so the Targum,

“eat the fat of the sheep:”

*and the calves out of the midst of the stall*; where they are put, and kept to be fattened; from thence they took what they liked best, and perhaps not out of theft own flocks and stalls, but out of others, and with which they pampered themselves to excess.

**Ver. 5.** *That chant to the sound of the viol*, etc.] Or psaltery; an instrument of twelve cords, and that gave twelve sounds, as Josephus<sup>f166</sup> says, being stricken with the fingers; and to these sounds thesemen chanted or quivered, made like sounds with their voice, which they raised higher or lower, according to the sound of the instrument: they “particularized”, as

the word signifies <sup>f167</sup>; or observed the divisions and distinctions of notes and sounds, by the modulation of their voice:

*[and] invent to themselves instruments of music, like David:* not content with old ones, such as were used in former times, they invented new instruments and new tunes, and new songs to sing to them; as David made songs and invented several instruments of music to sing them upon and to, in religious worship, and for the praise and glory of God; so these men invented new ones to indulge their carnal mirth and jollity, in which they thought themselves to be justified by the example of David.

**Ver. 6.** *That drink wine in bowls,* etc.] Not in small cups or glasses, but in large bowls, that they might drink freely, even to drunkenness; hence we read of the drunkards of Ephraim, or the ten tribes, (<sup><2301></sup>Isaiah 28:1); or “drink in bowls of wine”; which is much to the: same sense. The Targum is,

“that drink wine in silver phials;”

*and anoint themselves with the, chief ointments;* which Jarchi says was balsam, and the best is that which grew about Jericho; this they did not for moderate refreshment, but for pleasure, and to indulge themselves in luxury:

*but they are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph;* or the “breach” of him <sup>f168</sup>; that was made upon him by some enemy or another: either what had been already made; Kimchi thinks it respects the carrying captive of some before the reign of Jeroboam; or it may regard the distress Pul king of Assyria gave to Israel, in the times of Menahem; or the carrying captive the inhabitants of several places by Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria, in the times of Pekah, (<sup><2159></sup>2 Kings 15:19,29); or else, as Jarchi thinks, this refers to some breach and affliction to come, which these men were unconcerned about; even what they heard from the mouth of the prophets should come to them; that the kingdom of the house of Israel should cease, and be utterly took away, (<sup><2004></sup>Hosea 1:4,6); which was fulfilled by Shalmaneser, who carried Israel captive into the cities of the Medes, (<sup><2176></sup>2 Kings 17:6); but the prophecy of this did not trouble them, or make them sick at heart, as the word <sup>f169</sup> signifies, nor any present affliction that might attend them; they did not weep with them that weep, were men of hard hearts, that had no sympathy with their brethren and fellow creatures. It is thought that here is some allusion to the attitude of Joseph’s brethren to him, when in

the pit, and sold by them into Egypt; or to the chief butler's forgetfulness of him, when advanced, and amidst his cups.

**Ver. 7.** *Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive,* etc.] That is, these men, who were the first and chief in the nation, who would not believe the day of Israel's captivity would ever come; or, however, had very distant apprehensions of it; but indulged and gratified their several senses of tasting, hearing, smelling, in a carnal way, and had no sympathy with and compassion upon their afflicted brethren; these should be the first the enemy should lay hold upon, and carry captive; as we find the royal family, the princes and nobles, the courtiers and chief tradesmen, were the first that were carried captive of the Jews, in Jeconiah's captivity, (<sup><122412></sup>2 Kings 24:12,14);

*and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed;* that stretched themselves upon couches, (<sup><3104b></sup>Amos 6:4); they shall have no more banquets or feasting bouts to attend to, by stretching themselves out, and lying upon couches at their ease; these shall be taken from them; and be glad of bread and water in an enemy's country, without a couch to recline upon. Some understand this of a funeral banquet, as in (<sup><24165></sup>Jeremiah 16:5); and so the sense is, that when they die, they shall not have that honour done to their memory, as to have a funeral feast provided for those that attend their burial, as was customary. Kimchi interprets it, "the mourning [of such] shall draw nigh"<sup>f170</sup>; and according to his father, Joseph Kimchi, the word in the Arabic language signifies to lift up the voice, either in mourning or joy; and so may signify, that as all feasts, and the joy that attends them, should be removed, which is the sense of the Targum, instead of that, mourning should take place; or they should be deprived of the common ceremony at death of mourning men and women.

**Ver. 8.** *The Lord God hath sworn by himself,* etc.] Because he could swear by no greater, (<sup><30613></sup>Hebrews 6:13); which shows the importance and certainty of the thing sworn to, and is as follows:

*saith the Lord, the God of hosts, I abhor the excellency of Jacob;* or, "the pride of Jacob"<sup>f171</sup>; of Israel, of the ten tribes, remarkable for their pride; hence called the crown of pride, (<sup><23013></sup>Isaiah 28:3); it may include all that was glorious, valuable, and excellent among them, of which they were proud; their kingdom, riches, wealth, and strength, their fortified cities and towns: if Judah is comprehended in this, it may regard the temple, which



was their excellency, and in which they gloried. So the Targum paraphrases it,

“the house of the sanctuary of the house of Jacob;”

and in like manner Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret it;

*and hate his palaces*; the palaces of the king and nobles, and great men, which should fall into the enemy’s hand, and be plundered and destroyed; which is meant by the Lord’s abhorrence and hatred of them, this being an evidence of it;

*therefore will I deliver up the city, with all that is therein*; or, “with its fulness”,<sup>f172</sup>; with all its inhabitants and riches; according to Jarchi, the city of Jerusalem is meant; though rather the city of Samaria, unless both are intended, city for cities; since the chief men both of Israel and Judah seem to be addressed, (<3061>Amos 6:1).

**Ver. 9.** *And it shall come to pass*, etc.] When the city is delivered up and taken:

*if there remain*; who are not carried captive, or destroyed by the sword:

*ten men in one house*; that is, many, a certain number for an uncertain:

*that they shall die*; either with famine, or by the pestilence, though they have escaped the other calamities; so general shall the destruction be, by one means or another.

**Ver. 10.** *And a man’s uncle shall take him up*, etc.] That is, his father’s brother, as Kimchi; or his near kinsman, as the Targum; to whom the right of inheritance belongs, and also the care of his funeral; he shall take up the dead man himself, in order to inter him, there being none to employ in such service; the mortality being so universal, either through the pestilence raging everywhere, or through the earthquake, men being killed by the fall of houses upon them; which Aben Ezra takes to be the case here; (see <3061>Amos 6:11 <3000>1:1 <3083>3:13);

*and he that burneth him*; which may be read disjunctively, “or he that burneth him”,<sup>f173</sup>; his mother’s brother, according to Judah ben Karis in Aben Ezra; for which there seems to be no foundation. The Targum renders it in connection with the preceding clause,

“shall take him up from burning;”

and so Jarchi interprets of a man's being found, and taken up in a house, burnt by the enemy at the taking of the city: but it is best to understand it of one whose business it was to burn the dead; which, though not commonly used among the Jews, sometimes was, (<sup><0812></sup>1 Samuel 31:12); and so should be at this time, partly because of the infection, and to stop the contagion; and chiefly because a single man could not well carry whole bodies to the grave, to bury them; and therefore first burnt their flesh, and then buried their bones, as follows:

*to bring out the bones out of the house*; in order to bury them:

*and shall say unto him that [is] by the sides of the house*; or “in the corner of it”<sup>f174</sup>, as the Targum; either the uncle shall say to the burner, that is searching the house for the dead; or the uncle and burner, being one and the same person, shall say to the only surviving one of the ten, that is got into some corner of the house through fear or melancholy, under such a sad calamity,

*[is there] yet [any] with thee?* any dead corpse to be brought out and burned and buried?

*and he shall say, no*; there are no more: or “[there is] an end” of them all<sup>f175</sup>; the last has been brought out: or, as the Targum,

“they are perished;”

they are all dead, and carried out:

*then shall he say, hold thy tongue*; lest the neighbours should hear, and be discouraged at the number of the dead in one house; or say not one word against the providence of God, nor murmur and repine at his hand, since it is just and righteous:

*for we may not make mention of the name of the Lord*; being forbid by their superiors; or it is not right to do it by way of complaint, since our sins have deserved such judgments to come upon us; or it will be to no purpose to make mention of the name of the Lord, and pray unto him to turn away his hand, since destruction is determined, the decree is gone forth. The Targum is,

“he shall say, remove (that is, the dead), since while they lived they did not pray in the name of the Lord.”

And so the Syriac and Arabic versions make this to be the reason of the mortality, “because they remembered not the name of the Lord”; or, “called not upon” it.

**Ver. 11.** *For, behold, the Lord commandeth*, etc.] Hath determined and ordered the judgment before, and what follows: Kimchi paraphrases it, hath decreed the earthquake, as in (<sup><1085></sup>Amos 3:15); of which he understands the following:

*and he will smite the great house with breaches*; or “droppings”<sup>f176</sup>; so that the rain shall drop through:

*and the little house with clefts*; so that it shall fall to ruin; that is, he shall smite the houses both of great and small, of the princes, and of the common people, either with an earthquake, so that they shall part asunder and fall; or, being left without inhabitants, shall of course become desolate, there being none to repair their breaches. Some understand, by the “great house”, the ten tribes of Israel; and, by the “little house”, the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin; to which sense the Targum seems to incline,

“he will smite the great kingdom with a mighty stroke, and the little kingdom with a weak stroke.”

**Ver. 12.** *Shall horses run upon the rocks? or will [one] plough [there] with oxen?* etc.] Will any man be so weak and foolish, to propose or attempt a race for horses upon rocks, where they and their riders would be in danger of breaking their necks? or would any man act so unwise a part, as to take a yoke of oxen to plough with them upon a rock, where no impression can be made? as vain and fruitless a thing it would be to attempt to bring such persons under a conviction of their sins, and to repentance for them, and reformation from them, who are given up to a judicial hardness of heart, like that of a rock, as are the persons described in the next clause; or as such methods with horses and oxen would be contrary to all the rules of reason and prudence, so as contrary a part do such persons act whose characters are next given, and there is no probability of bringing them to better sense and practice of things;

*for ye have turned judgment into gall, and the fruit of righteousness into hemlock*; that which would be beneficial to a nation, than which nothing is more so, as the exercise of justice, and judgment, into that which is bitter and pernicious to it, as injustice and oppression; (see <sup><1087></sup>Amos 5:7).

**Ver. 13.** *Ye which rejoice in a thing of nought*, etc.] In their wealth and riches, which are things that are not, because of the uncertainty of them; and, in comparison of true riches, have no solidity and substance in them, (<sup><303B></sup>Proverbs 23:5); or in any of the things of this world, the lusts of it, the honours of it, human wisdom or strength; all are things of nought, of no worth, give no satisfaction, and are of no continuance, and not to be gloried in, (<sup><240Z></sup>Jeremiah 9:23); or in their idols, for an idol is nothing in the world, (<sup><403E></sup>1 Corinthians 8:4); and yet they rejoiced in them, (<sup><4074></sup>Acts 7:41); or in their own works of righteousness, as men of a pharisaical temper do, as these people were; these indeed are something, when done in obedience to the will of God, and according to that, and from right principles, and in the exercise of faith and love, and with a view to the glory of God, and as they are evidences of true grace, and profitable to men, and tend to glorify God, and serve the interest of religion; but they are things of nought, and not to be rejoiced and gloried in, in the business of justification before God, and in the affair of salvation: the same may be said of a mere outward profession of religion depended on, and all external rites and ceremonies, or submission to outward ordinances, whether legal or evangelical. The phrase may be rendered, “in that which is no word”<sup>f177</sup>; is not the word of God, nor according to it; indeed everything short of Christ and his righteousness, and salvation by him, are things of nought, and not to be rejoiced in, (<sup><510B></sup>Philippians 3:3-5 <sup><5004></sup>4:4);

*which say, have we not taken to us horns by our own strength?* by which we have pushed our enemies, got victory over them, and obtained power, dominion, and authority; all which horns are an emblem of. So Sanchoniatho<sup>f178</sup> says, Astarte put upon her own head a bull’s head, as an ensign of royalty, or a mark of sovereignty; by which, as Bishop Cumberland<sup>f179</sup> thinks, is plainly meant the bull’s horns, since it is certain that a horn, in the eastern languages, is an emblem or expression noting royal power, as in (<sup><0920></sup>1 Samuel 2:10); and in other places; (see <sup><2024></sup>Daniel 7:24); thus the kings of Egypt wore horns, as Diodorus relates; and perhaps for the same reason the Egyptians adorned Isis with horns<sup>f180</sup>. And all this they ascribed not to God, but to themselves. The Targum interprets “horns” by riches; but it rather signifies victory<sup>f181</sup>, and power and government, which they took to themselves, and imputed to their own strength, valour, and courage: very probably here is an allusion to their ensigns, banners, shields, or helmets, on which horns might be figured or engraven, being the arms of Ephraim, the son of Joseph, the chief of the

ten tribes, who are here spoken of Ephraim is often put for the ten tribes, or the kingdom of Israel; and Joseph, whose son he was, “his glory [was] like the firstling of a bullock, [and] his horns” are said to be like “the horns of unicorns: with them”, it is promised, “he shall push the people together, to the ends of the earth, and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh”, (<sup><del>4337</del></sup>Deuteronomy 33:17); and it may be, as the lion seems to be the ensign of the tribe of Judah, to which he is by Jacob compared; so the ox or the unicorn might be the ensign of the tribe of Ephraim: and so the ancient Jews, as Aben Ezra on (<sup><del>4411</del></sup>Numbers 2:2); observes, say, that the form of a man was on the standard of Reuben; and the form of a lion on the standard of Judah; and the form of an ox on the standard of Ephraim, etc. and others<sup>f182</sup> of them say that the standard of Joseph was dyed very black, and was figured for the two princes of Ephraim and Manasseh; upon the standard of Ephraim was figured an ox, because “the firstling of a bullock”; and on the standard of Manasseh was figured an unicorn, because “his horns are like the horns of unicorns”. Now the Israelites, or those of the ten tribes, at the head of which Ephraim was, set up their banners, not in the name of the Lord, but in their own strength; and attributed their conquests and dominions to their own conduct and courage, the horns of their own strength, and not to God<sup>f183</sup>. And this also is the language of such persons, who ascribe regeneration and conversion, faith, repentance, the cleansing of a man’s heart, and the reformation of his life, yea, his whole salvation, to the power and strength of his free will, when man has no strength at all to effect any of these things; these are all vain boasts, and very disagreeable and offensive to the Lord; and for such like things persons stand here reproved by him, and threatened with woes; for woe must be here supplied from (<sup><del>3001</del></sup>Amos 6:1).

**Ver. 14.** *But, behold, I will raise up against you a nation, O house of Israel, saith the Lord, the God of hosts,* etc.] The Assyrian nation, under its king, Shalmaneser; who invaded Israel, came up to Samaria, and after a three years’ siege took it, and carried Israel captive into foreign lands, (<sup><del>4275</del></sup>2 Kings 17:5,6);

*and they shall afflict you;* by battles, sieges, forages, plunders, and burning of cities and towns, and putting the inhabitants to the sword:

*from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of the wilderness;* from Hamath the less, said by Josephus<sup>f184</sup> and Jerom<sup>f185</sup> to be called Epiphania, in their times, from Antiochus Epiphanes; it was at the entrance on the land

of Israel, and at the northern border of it; so that “the river of the wilderness”, whatever is meant by it, lay to the south; by which it appears that this affliction and distress would be very general, from one end of it to the other. Some, by this river, understand the river of Egypt, at the entrance of Egypt in the wilderness of Ethan; Sihor or Nile; which, Jarchi says, lay southwest of Israel, as Hamath lay northwest of it. And a late traveller<sup>f186</sup> observes, that the south and southwest border of the tribe of Judah, containing within it the whole or the greatest part of what was called the “way of the spies”, (~~0210~~Numbers 21:1); and afterwards Idumea, extended itself from the Elenitic gulf of the Red sea, along by that of Hieropolis, quite to the Nile westward; the Nile consequently, in this view and situation, either with regard to the barrenness of the Philistines, or to the position of it with respect to the land of promise, or to the river Euphrates, may, with propriety enough, be called “the river of the wilderness”, (~~3164~~Amos 6:14); as this district, which lies beyond the eastern or Asiatic banks of the Nile, from the parallel of Memphis, even to Pelusium, (the land of Goshen only excepted,) is all of it dry, barren, and inhospitable; or if the situation be more regarded, it may be called, as it is rendered by the Septuagint, the western torrent or river. Though some<sup>f187</sup> take this to be the river Bosor or Bezor, that parts the tribes, of Judah and Simeon, and discharges itself into the Mediterranean between Gaza, or rather Majuma, and Anthedon. Though Kimchi takes this river to be the sea of the plain, the same with the Salt or Dead sea, (~~0887~~Deuteronomy 3:17); which may seem likely, since Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel, under whom Amos prophesied, had restored the coast of Israel, from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, (~~1245~~2 Kings 14:25); with which they were elevated, and of which they boasted; but now they should have affliction and distress in the same places, and which should extend as far.