REV. DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

The Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "The Brilliancy of Religion."

TEXT: *"The crystal cannot equal it."*—Job xxviii., 7.

Many of the precious stones of the Bible have come to prompt recognition. But for the present I take up the less valuable crystal. Job, in my text, compares saving wisdom with a specimen of topaz. An infidel chemist or mineralogist would pronounce the latter worth more than the former, but Job makes an intelligent comparison, looks at religion and then looks at the crystal and pronounces the former as of superior value to the latter, exclaiming, in the words of my text, "The crystal cannot equal it."

Now, it is not a part of my sermonic design to depreciate the crystal, whether it be found in Cornish mine or Hartz mountain or Mammoth Cave or tinkling among the pendants of the chandeliers of a palace. The crystal is the star of the mountain; it is the queen of the cave; it is the eardrop of the hills; it finds its heaven in the diamond. Among all the pages of natural history there is no page more interesting to me than the page crystallographic. But I want to show you that Job was right when, taking religion in one hand and the crystal in the other, he declared that the former is of far more value and beauty than the latter, recommending it to all the people and to all the ages, declaring, "The crystal cannot equal it."

In the first place, I remark that religion is superior to the crystal in exactness. That shapeless mass of crystal against which you accidentally dashed your foot is laid out with more exactness than any earthly city. There are six styles of crystallization, and all of them divinely ordained. Every crystal has mathematical precision. God's geometry reaches through it, and it is a square, or it is a rectangle, or it is a rhomboid, or in some way it hath a mathematical figure. Now, religion beats that in the simple fact that spiritual accuracy is more beautiful than material accuracy. God's attributes are exact God's law exact. God's decrees exact God's management of the world exact—never counting wrong, though He counts the grass blades, and the stars, and the sands, and the cycles. His providences never dealing with us perpendicularly when those providences ought to be oblique, nor lateral when they ought to be vertical. Everything in our life arranged without any possibility of mistake. Each life a six sided prism. Born at the right time, dying at the right time. There are no "happen so's" in our theology. If I thought this was a slipshod universe I would go crazy. God is not an anarchist. Law, order, symmetry, precision, a perfect square, a perfect rectangle, a perfect rhomboid, a perfect circle. The edge of God's robe of government never frays out. There are no loose screws in the world's machinery. It did not just happen that Napoleon was attacked with indigestion at Borodino so that he became incompetent for the day. It did not just happen that John Thomas, the missionary, on a heathen island, waiting for an outfit and orders for another missionary tour, received that outfit and those orders in a box that floated ashore, while the ship and the crew that carried the box were never heard of. The barking of F. W. Robertson's dog, he tells us, led to a line of events which brought him from the army into the Christian ministry, where he served God with world renowned usefulness. It did not merely happen so. I believe in a particular providence. I believe God's geometry may be seen in all our life more beautifully than in crystallography. Job was right. "The crystal cannot equal it."

Again I remark that religion is superior to the crystal in transparency. We know not when or by whom glass was first discovered. Beads of it have been found in the tomb of Alexander Severus. Vases of it are brought up from the ruins of Herculaneum. There were female adornments made out of it three thousand years ago—those adornments found now attached to the mummies of Egypt. A great many commentators believe that my text means glass. What would we do without the crystal? The crystal in the window to keep out the storm and let in the day; the crystal over the watch defending its delicate machinery, yet allowing us to see the hour; the crystal of the telescope, by which the astronomer brings distant worlds so near he can inspect them. Oh, the triumphs of the crystals in the celebrated windows of Rouen and Salisbury!

But there is nothing so transparent in a crystal as in our holy religion. It is a transparent religion. You put it to your eye and you see man—his sin, his soul, his destiny. You look at God and you see something of the grandeur of His character. It is a transparent religion. Infidels tell us it is opaque! Do you know why they tell us it is opaque? It is because they are blind. The natural man receiveth not the things of God because they are spiritually discerned. There is no trouble with the crystal; the trouble is with the eyes which try to look through it. We pray for wisdom, Lord, that our eyes might be opened. When the eye salve cures our blindness then we find that religion is transparent.

It is a transparent Bible. All the mountains of the Bible come out—Sinai, the mountain of the law; Pisgah, the mountain of prospect; Olivet, the mountain of instruction; Calvary, the mountain of sacrifice. All the rivers of the Bible come out—Hidekel, or the river of paradisaical beauty; Jordan, or the river of holy chrism; Cherith, or the river of prophetic supply; Nile, or the river of palaces, and the pure river of life from under the throne, clear as crystal. While reading this Bible after our eyes have been touched by grace we find it all transparent, and the earth rocks, now with crucifixion agony and now with judgment terror, and Christ appears in some of His two hundred and fifty-six titles, as far as I can count them—the bread, the rock, the captain, the commander, the conqueror, the star, and on and beyond any capacity of mine to rehearse them. Transparent religion!

The providence that seemed dark before becomes pellucid. Now you find God is not trying to put you down. Now you understand why you lost that child, and why you lost your property; it was to prepare you for eternal treasures. And why sickness came, it being the precursor of immortal juvenescence. And now you understand why they lied about you and tried to drive you hither and thither. It was to put you in the glorious company of such men as Ignatius, who, when he went out to be destroyed by the lions, said: "I am the wheat, and the teeth of the wild beasts must first grind me before I can become pure bread for Jesus Christ;" or the company of such men as Polycarp, who, when standing in the midst of the amphitheatre waiting for the lions to come out of their cave and destroy him, and the people in the galleries jeering and shouting: "The lions for Polycarp," replied: "Let them come on," and then stooped down toward the cave where the wild beasts were roaring to get out: "Let them come on." Ah, yes, it is persecution to put you in glorious company; and while there are many things that you will have to postpone to the future world for explanation, I tell you that it is the whole tendency of your religion to unravel and explain and interpret and illumine and irradiate. Job was right. It is a glorious transparency. "The crystal cannot equal it."

I remark again that religion surpasses the crystal in its beauty. That lump of crystal put under the magnifying glass of the crystallographer, and he sees in it indescribable beauty—snowdrift and splinter of hoar frost and corals and wreaths and stars and crowns and castellations of conspicuous beauty. The fact is that crystal is so beautiful that I can think of but one thing in all the universe that is so beautiful, and that is the religion of the Bible. No wonder this Bible represents that religion as the daybreak, as the apple blossoms, as the glitter of a king's banquet. It is the joy of the whole earth.

People talk too much about their cross and not enough about their crown. Do you know the Bible mentions a cross but twenty-seven times, while it mentions a crown eighty times? Ask that old man what he thinks of religion. He has been a close observer. He has been culturing an æsthetic taste. He has seen the sunrises of half a century. He has been an early riser. He has been an admirer of cameos and corals and all kinds of beautiful things. Ask him what he thinks of religion, and he will tell you, "It is the most beautiful thing I ever saw." "The crystal cannot equal it."

Beautiful in its symmetry. When it presents God's character it does not present Him as having love like a great protuberance on one side of His nature, but makes that love in harmony with His justice—a love that will accept all those who come to Him, and a justice that will by no means clear the guilty. Beautiful religion in the sentiment it implants? Beautiful religion in the hope it kindles! Beautiful religion in the fact that it proposes to garland and enthrone and imparadise an immortal spirit. Solomon says it is a lily, Paul says it is a crown. The Apocalypse says it is a fountain kissed of the sun. Ezekiel says it is a foliaged cedar. Christ says it is a bridegroom come to fetch home a bride. While Job in the text takes up a whole vase of precious stones—the topaz, and the sapphire, and the chrysoprasus—and he takes out of this beautiful vase just one crystal, and holds it up until it gleams in the warm light of the eastern sky, and he exclaims, "The crystal cannot equal it."

Oh, it is not a stale religion, it is not a stupid religion, it is not a toothless hag, as some seem to have represented it; it is not a Meg Merrilies with shriveled arm come to scare the world. It is the fairest daughter of God, heiress of all His wealth. Her cheek the morning sky; her voice the music of the south wind; her step the dance of the sea. Come and woo her. The Spirit and the bride say come, and whosoever will, let him come. Do you agree with Solomon and say it is a lily? Then pluck it and wear it over your heart. Do you agree with Paul and say it is a crown? Then let this hour be your coronation. Do you agree with the Apocalypse and say it is a springing fountain? Then come and slack the thirst of your soul. Do you believe with Ezekiel and say it is a foliaged cedar? Then come under its shadow. Do you believe with Christ and say it is a bridegroom come to fetch home a bride? Then strike hands with your Lord the King while I pronounce you everlastingly one. Or if you think with Job that it is a jewel, then put it on your hand like a ring, on your neck like a bead, on your forehead like a star, while looking into the mirror of God's Word you acknowledge "the crystal cannot equal it."

Again, religion is superior to the crystal in its transformations. The diamond is only a crystallization of coal. Carbonate of lime rises till it becomes calcite or aragonite. Red oxide of copper crystallizes into cubes and octohedrons. Those crystals which adorn our persons and our homes and our museums have only been resurrected from forms that were far from lustrous. Scientists for ages have been examining these wonderful transformations. But I tell you in the gospel of the Son of God there is a more wonderful transformation. Over souls by reason of sin black as coal and hard as iron God by His comforting grace stoops and says, "They shall be Mine in the day when I make up My jewels."

"What," say you, "will God wear jewelry?" If He wanted He could make the stars of heaven His belt and have the evening cloud for the sandals of His feet, but He does not want that adornment. He will not have that jewelry. When God wants jewelry He comes down and digs it out of the depths and darkness of sin. These souls are all crystallizations of mercy. He puts them on, and He wears them in the presence of the holy universe. He wears them on the hand that was nailed, over the heart that was pierced, on the temples that were stung. "They shall be Mine," saith the Lord, "in the day when I make up My jewels." Wonderful transformation! "The crystal cannot equal it." There she is, a waif of the street, but she shall be a sister of charity. There he is, a sot in the ditch, but he shall preach the gospel. There, behind the bars of a prison, but he shall reign with Christ forever. When sin abounded grace shall much more abound. The carbon becomes the solitaire. "The crystal cannot equal it."

Now, I have no liking for those people who are always enlarging in Christian meetings about their early dissipation. Do not go into the particulars, my brothers. Simply say you were sick, but make no display of your ulcers. The chief stock in trade of some ministers and Christian workers seems to be their early crimes and dissipations. The number of pockets you picked and the number of chickens you stole make very poor prayer meeting rhetoric. Besides that, it discourages other Christian people who never got drunk or stole anything. But it is pleasant to know that those who were farthest down have been brought highest up. Out of infernal serfdom into eternal liberty. Out of darkness into light. From coal to the solitaire. "The crystal cannot equal it."

But, my friends, the chief transforming power of the gospel will not be seen in this world, and not until heaven breaks upon the soul. When that light falls upon the soul then you will see the crystals. Oh, what a magnificent setting for these jewels of eternity! I sometimes hear people representing heaven in a way that is far from attractive to me. It seems almost a vulgar heaven as they represent it, with great blotches of color and bands of music making a deafening racket. John represents heaven as exquisitely beautiful. Three crystals. In one place he says, "Her light was like a precious stone, clear as crystal." In another place he says, "I saw a pure river from under the throne, clear as crystal."

In another place he says, "Before the throne there was a sea of glass clear as crystal." Three crystals! John says crystal atmosphere. That means health. Balm of eternal June. What weather after the world's east wind! No rack of storm clouds. One breath of that air will cure the worst tubercle. Crystal light on all the leaves. Crystal light shimmering on the topaz of the temples. Crystal light tossing in the plumes of the equestrians of heaven on white horses. But "the crystal cannot equal it." John says crystal river. That means joy. Deep and ever rolling. Not one drop of the Thames or the Hudson or the Rhine to soil it. Not one tear of human sorrow to imbitter it. Crystal, the rain out of which it was made. Crystal, the bed over which it shall roll and ripple. Crystal, its infinite surface. But "the crystal cannot equal it." John says crystal sea. That means multitudinously vast. Vast in rapture. Rapture vast as the sea, deep as the sea, strong as the sea, ever changing as the sea. Billows of light. Billows of beauty, blue with skies that were never clouded and green with depths that were never fathomed. Arctics and Antarctics and Mediterraneans and Atlantics and Pacifics in crystalline magnificence. Three crystals—crystal light falling on a crystal river; crystal river rolling into a crystal sea. But "the crystal cannot equal it."

"Oh," says some one, putting his hand over his eyes, "can it be that I who have been in so much sin and trouble will ever come to those crystals?" Yes, it may be—it will be. Heaven we must have, whatever else we have or have not, and we come here to get it. "How much must I pay for it?" you say. You will pay for it just as much as the coal pays to become the diamond. In other words, nothing. The same Almighty power that makes the crystals in the mountains will change your heart which is harder than stone, for the promise is, "I will take away your stony heart and I will give you a heart of flesh."

"Oh," says some one, "it is just the doctrine I want. God is to do everything, and I am to do nothing." My brother, it is not the doctrine you want. The coal makes no resistance. It hears the resurrection voice in the mountain, and it comes from crystallization, but your heart resists. The trouble with you, my brother, is the coal wants to stay coal. I do not want you to throw open the door and let Christ in. I only ask that you stop bolting it and baring it. Oh, my friends, we will have to get rid of our sins. What will we do with our sins among the three crystals? The crystal atmosphere would display our pollution. The crystal river would be befouled by our touch. The crystal sea would whelm us with its glistening surge. Transformation now or no transformation at all.

Give sin a full chance in your heart and the transformation will be downward instead of upward. Instead of a crystal it will be a cinder. In the days of Carthage a Christian girl was condemned to die for her faith, and a boat was bedaubed with tar and pitch and filled with combustibles and set on fire, and the Christian girl was placed in the boat, and the wind was off shore and the boat floated away with its precious treasure. No one can doubt that boat landed at the shore of heaven.

Sin wants to put you in a fiery boat and shove you off in an opposite direction—off from peace, off from God, off from heaven, everlastingly off; and the port toward which you would sail would be a port of darkness, and the guns that would greet you would be the guns of despair, and the flags that would wave at your arrival would be the black flags of death. O, my brother, you must either kill sin or sin will kill you. It is no wild exaggeration when I say that any man or woman that wants to be saved may be saved. Tremendous choice! A thousand people are choosing this moment between salvation and destruction, between light and darkness, between heaven and hell, between charred ruin and glorious crystallization.

A Miraculous City.

Until the end of 1886, writes a correspondent of the London *Graphic*, Johannesburg, South Africa, could not boast a postoffice. Now it has a population of some 20,000, comprised of a motley crowd drawn from every nation under the sun, as a walk through the stone-built streets of the town soon shows. There is the original Boer, born and bred in the country, rough of manner, careless of dress, with long, lank hair and dress, master of the situation for the present; the occasional Britisher, who bears him little good will, and who has come out, it may be, as a wealthy speculator or as a rough Cornish prospector—perhaps simply just to look round and see what is to be seen; the Dutch vrow, broad and solid of build and solid of feature; the Arab merchant or peddler, come up from the coast, and ever ready to cheat you; Malays and Hindoo coolies, who have found their way from Natal; and the ubiquitous Chinaman, who puts in an appearance everywhere in new countries where there is a livelihood to be picked up by odd jobs. We have, too, on view specimens of the Hebrew broker and of the stranded actor, shabby and disconsolate. One meets, too, Kaffir ladies, dressed more or less after European fashions in finery of gorgeous hues; while, of course, bushman house-boys are seen everywhere, with occasionally one or two wandering minstrels, who owe their black faces to nature, not to burnt cork, with their marimba or piano, a species of instrument common to many African tribes—really a kind of harmonicon, strips of hard wood taking the place of glasses, with gourds beneath to increase the resonance. The African minstrels manage somehow to produce tunes that, though quaint, are catching.

Attar of Roses.

Tradition hath it that attar of roses was first used by Nourjehan, Moore's Nourmahal, otherwise "Light of the Harem." Walking one day in her garden, through which ran a canal of rosewater, she spied upon its surface oily particles that excited her curiosity. In sheer idleness she collected them; found them so deliciously fragrant that she at once cried for more, with the result of setting up a new industry among her husband's loyal subjects. Once the precious essence was worth its weight in diamonds; now it fetches but $5 the ounce.

Turkey supplies the most and purest of it. That which comes from India is usually adulterated with oil of lemon grass. Bulgaria is the Turks' greatest rose garden. There, upon the long, cool north hill slopes he plants the hundred leaf rose and tends it assiduously. The plant is fickle and capricious as any coquette. Upon one hill it will bloom and broaden magnificently, yet wholly lack scent, while on another not half a mile away it will fairly intoxicate you with its perfume.

May is the time of harvest. Then there are flowers by the million. They must be picked before sunrise, as soon as they open, else they lose more than half their sweetness.

The leaves are put into clay stills with twice their own weight of water. What passes over is the rosewater of commerce. The attar floats on top in oily globules that are hardened by exposure to the cool night air, then skimmed off. Sixty pounds of good leaves will yield an ounce of attar.—*San Francisco Examiner.*

A Mummified Rat.

It was only a rat. But it was an uncommonly wonderful rat. It was the mummy of a rat, and no one knows how many ages ago it made the feminine Toltec wish she were somewhere else.

It was a real Toltec rodent, for it came from the eastern side of the Sierra Madre Mountains in Mexico, and about 200 miles south of Deming. A Mexican archæologist while traveling between Corralitos and Casas Grandes came across a hermetically sealed cave at an elevation of nearly 7000 feet. The cave was vast in extent and proved to be a veritable sepulchre filled with the mummified bodies of dead Toltecs. Among them was the well-preserved body of a rodent. The flesh had not sunken much upon the bones and was in an excellent state of preservation. It has a dark brown appearance. In size it does not differ from a plain, ordinary, everyday rat. But it is, just the same, and it is on exhibition in the room of the Mining Bureau.

The floor of the cave in which the discovery was made was as smooth as a board, but the sides were rough and rugged and the vault was covered with stalactities.—*San Francisco Examiner.*

A Frog Farmer.

O. H. Carpenter, of Gaylord, Mich., has bought a section of land which he will make into a frog farm. It is in the southern end of Otsego County, and contains several marshy lakes. He has sent for some pedigreed frogs from New Jersey with which to start his ranch. He has been in the business for some years, but now plans a wholesale affair.—*Boston Transcript.*

THE CORPSE MOVED.

And the Story of It Sent Four Victims to Hang.

Law reports of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries contain numerous references to supernatural occurrences in the court and on the scaffold. One of the most remarkable records of this kind is connected with a murder trial which took place in England early in the reign of the first Charles. Sir John Maynard, one of the first lawyers of the century, is the authority for the supernatural events of the trial, and in his quaint preface to his notes he says he "thought good to report the evidence which was given, which many did hear that the memory thereof might not be lost by miscarriage of papers otherwise." One Johan Norkett, a farmer's wife, had died, and at the coroner's 'quest evidence was given proving that the woman's throat had been cut from ear to ear. At first the jury favored a verdict of felo de se, and the body was interred. But rumors became general pointing to foul play, and the body was exhumed.

Thirty days after the death the jury assembled before the body and four suspected persons were brought in. The only evidence against the prisoners was that they had slept in an adjoining room and that no one had passed through that room; "therefore, if she did not murder herself, they must be the murderers." What took place at the remarkable post-mortem inquiry may best be described in the words of a witness at the subsequent trial, who was described as "an ancient and grave person, minister to the parish where this murder was committed." This estimable gentleman said: "They [the prisoners] did touch the dead body, whereupon the brow of the dead, which was before a livid color, began to have dew of gentle sweat arise upon it, which increased by degrees till the sweat ran down in drops upon the face; the brow turned and changed to a lively color, and the dead opened and shut one of her eyes and shut it again, which she did three several times. She likewise thrust out the ring or marriage finger three times and pulled it in again, and the finger dropped blood on the ground."

Naturally enough such remarkable evidence as this was received with some suspicion by the court, although the witness, to again quote Sir John Maynard, "was a reverend person, about 70 years of age, as could be guessed. His testimony was delivered gravely and temperately, but to the great admiration of the auditory." Ample confirmation of an obviously impartial character, was, however, forthcoming, and the "admiration" changed to horror, so much so that the prisoners were convicted and two of them suffered death at the hand of the common hangman. Neither of the victims, one of whom was an aged woman, could ever be prevailed upon to confess any complicity in the crime.

A DREAM DID IT.

How a Murderer Was Caught and Convicted.

In 1751 an Irish murderer was convicted largely upon dream evidence. A Waterford publican named Rogers dreamed one night that he saw a man murder another man on a green spot on the summit of an adjoining mountain. He was able next day to describe both men with perfect accuracy and did so to many of his friends. One of the men was exceptionally strong, the other weak and puny, but it was the latter who, in the vision committed the murder. Rodgers persuaded the parish priest to accompany him to the spot, which he found without difficulty but there seemed to be no traces of murder or struggle. Hence Rogers got rather laughed at. Next day however two men entered the saloon, and Mrs. Rodgers at once recognized them from her husband's description as the heroes in the vision. Much alarmed, she fetched her husband, who was also certain they were the two men. When they rose to leave Rogers begged the one he expected to be murdered to remain, but without avail. He nearly fainted with fright after the men had left, and finally persuaded a neighbor to accompany him to the green spot on the hill, where sure enough, the tragedy of the dream had taken place in reality.

The murderer was tracked and caught and Rogers was the principal witness. His recital of his dream was so vivid that the prisioner at once confessed, adding that he killed his companion exactly as foretold in the dream. The weapon used was a knife, and as eight stabs were seen by Rogers in his vision, so the murderer admitted that he drove his knife up to the handle in his companion's body exactly that number of times.

Politeness vs. Policy.

Lawyer (entering cell): "How are you feeling this morning?" Murderess: "Very well, thank you." Lawyer (furiously): "Very well? What the deuce do you mean by having such brutal, rugged, good health when you know that your life depends on your delicate condition?"

A Lucky Prisoner.

"Old Lawyer: "I can not take your case. Circumstantial evidence is so strong against you that it will be impossible to prove your innocence." Prisoner: "But I am not innocent. I am guilty." "Oh! Then maybe I can clear you."

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON.

SUNDAY, MAY 3, 1891.

Israel Often Reproved.

LESSON TEXT.

(Amos 4 : 4-13. Memory verses: 6-8.)

LESSON PLAN.

TOPIC OF THE QUARTER: *Sinning and Serving.*

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER: *Godliness is profitable unto all things.*—1 Tim. 4 : 8.

LESSON TOPIC: *Reproof Without Amendment.*

LESSON OUTLINE:
1. Israel's Iniquities, vs. 4, 5; 1. c. vs. 6, 8-11.
2. Israel's Reproofs, vs. 6-11.
3. Israel's Penalties, vs. 12, 13.

GOLDEN TEXT: *He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.*—Prov. 29 : 1.

DAILY HOME READINGS:

M.—Amos 4 : 4-13. Israel often reproved.
T.—Amos 3 : 1-15. Wrath toward Israel.
W.—1 Kings 12 : 25-33. The sin at Beth-el.
T.—Prov. 1 : 20-33. Penalty for disregarding reproof.
F.—Rom. 10 : 1-21. Penalty for disregarding reproof.
S.—Jonah 3 ; 1-10. Amendment under reproof.
S.—Luke 15 : 11-24. Amendment under reproof.

LESSON ANALYSIS.

I. ISRAEL'S INIQUITIES.

I. Idols Worshiped:

Come to Beth-el, and transgress (4)
Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen (Judg. 10 : 14).
He set the one in Beth-el....And.... the people went to worship (1 Kings 12 : 29, 30).
And this thing became sin (1 Kings 13 : 34).
My holy name shall ye no more profane....with your idols (Ezek. 20 : 39).

II. Transgressions Multiplied:

Come...., to Gilgal, and multiply transgression (4).
Amon trespassed more and more (2 Chron. 33 :23).
He....multiplieth his words against God (Job 34 : 37).
Our transgressions are multiplied before thee (Isa. 59 : 12).
Thou hast multiplied thine abominations (Ezek. 16 ; 51).

III. Return Refused:

Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord (11).
They have refused to return (Jer. 5: 3).
Yet he turned not to me, saith the Lord (Hag. 2: 17).
But ye say, Wherein shall we return? (Mal. 3: 7).
Yet they have not returned unto the Lord their God (Hos. 7: 10).

1. "Come to Beth-el, and transgress." (1) Seeming permission to sin; (2) Actual condemnation of sin.
2. "For this liketh you, O ye children of Israel." (1) Israel's wrong preferences; (2) Jehovah's complete knowledge; (2) Jehovah's pointed accusation.
3. "Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." (1) Israel's departure; (2) Israel's persistence; (3) Jehovah's lament.

II. ISRAEL'S REPROOFS.

II. Reproved by Famine:

I also have given you....want of bread (6).
The Lord hath called for a famine (2 Kings 8: 1).
They are gaunt with want and famine (Job 30: 3).
I will send a famine in the land (Amos 8: 11).
There arose a mighty famine in that country (Luke 15: 14).

II. Reproved by Pestilence:

I have sent among you the pestilence (10).
I had....smitten thee and thy people with pestilence (Exod. 9: 15).
The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee (Deut. 28: 21).
He....gave their life over to the pestilence (Psa. 78: 50).
I have punished Jerusalem....by the famine Jer. 44: 13).

III. Reproved by Calamity:

I have overthrown some,....as.... Sodom and Gomorrah (11).
The day of their calamity is at hand (Deut. 32: 35).
I also will laugh in the day of your calamity (Prov. 1: 26).
The day of their calamity is come (Jer. 46: 21).
Shall evil befall a city, and the Lord hath not done it? (Amos 3: 6).

1. "I also have given you cleanness of teeth." (1) A sinning people; (2) An angry God; (3) A severe penalty.—(1) Sin; (2) Suffering.
2. "I have smitten you with blasting and mildew." (1) God the object of sin; (2) Nature the instrument of penalty; (3) Man the recipient of wo.
3. "Ye were as a brand picked out of the burning." (1) The fires of penalty; (2) The deliverance of grace; (3)—The imperiled brand; (2) The saved brand.

III. ISRAEL'S PENALTIES.

I. Penalties Assured:

This will I do unto thee, O Israel (12).
In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die (Gen. 2 : 17).
The soul that sinneth, it shall die (Ezek. 18 : 4).
These shall go away into eternal punishment (Matt. 25 : 46).
The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6 : 23).

II. Preparation Counseled:

Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel (12).
Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die (2 Kings 20 : 1).
Kiss the son, lest he be angry, and ye perish (Psa. 2 : 12).
Seek the Lord while he may be found (Isa. 55 : 6).
Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. 3 : 2).

III. Jehovah Presented:

The Lord, the God of hosts, is his name (13).
I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward (Gen. 15 : 1).
God said unto Moses, I am that I am (Exod. 3 : 14).
I am the Lord, that doeth all these things (Isa. 45 : 7).
God is love (1 John 4 : 16).

1. "Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel." (1) The objects of God's threatenings; (2) The grounds of God's threatenings; (3) The scope of God's threatenings.
2. "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." (1) An appointed meeting; (2) A required preparation.—(1) God must be met; (2) Preparation must be had.
3. "The Lord, the God of hosts, is his name." (1) A name of unspeakable significance; (2) A name of momentous impressiveness.

LESSON BIBLE READING.

DIVINE REPROOFS.

From God the Father (Psa. 50 : 21 ; Isa. 51 ; 20).
From Christ the Son (Isa. 2 : 4 ; 11 : 3 ; Rev. 3 : 19).
From the Holy Spirit (John 16 : 7-11).
From the Scripture (2 Tim, 3 : 16, 17).
From God's ministers (Jer. 44 : 4 ; 2 Tim. 4 : 2).
From saints generally (Lev. 19 : 17 ; Eph. 5 : 11).
Beneficial to some (Psa. 141 : 5 ; Prov. 27 : 5, 6).
Despised by others (Prov. 9 : 8 ; 15 : 12).

LESSON SURROUNDINGS.

INTERVENING EVENTS.—Jeroboam II. was still king of Israel when Amos prophesied, but Uzziah (Azariah) had succeeded Amaziah as king of Israel. It is possible, therefore, that Jonah was still living when Amos came into Israel. The earthquake referred to in Amos 1 : 1, according to Josephus, occurred when Uzziah became a leper (2 Kings 15 : 5), as a punishment for his attempt to burn incense in the temple (2 Chron. 26 : 16-21). Reference is made to this earthquake in Zechariah 14 : 5; but its exact relative position in the reign of Uzziah cannot be determined. The main point to be noticed is that Israel under Jeroboam II. was externally very prosperous (2 Kings 14 : 25, 28), and that Judah also had made conquests under Uzziah (2 Chron. 26 : 5-15). It was during this period of success that Amos uttered his prophecies.

The book itself tells us that Amos was a herdsman of Tekoa (Amos 1 : 1); not a regular prophet, nor "one of the sons of the prophets" (Amos 7 : 14, 15). The language of his prophecies agrees with this account of his early history. He was divinely called to go to Beth-el in the northern kingdom, and prophesy against Israel. While there, his utterances aroused the enmity of Amaziah, the priest in charge of the idolatrous worship there. Amaziah accused him to Jeroboam of stirring up sedition, and bade the prophet return to Judah. The answer was a prediction of judgment upon Amaziah, Jeroboam, and Israel. It seems probable, however, that Amos did return to Tekoa, and the prophecy may have been put into writing after this return.

The book opens with a description of the prophet (Amos 1 : 1), and of the character of the prophecy (Amos 1 : 2). The judgments upon the neighboring nations are first announced, but neither Judah nor Israel will escape, though the threatenings against Israel are most severe (Amos 1 : 3 to 2 : 16). The main division of the prophecy (Amos 3 : 1 to 6 : 14) consists of a particular rebuke of the sins of Israel, of which the lesson forms a striking example.

PLACES.—Tekoa, the home of Amos, was a small town in Judah, five miles south of Bethlehem, twelve miles from Jerusalem (now called Tekua). It is mentioned several times in the Old Testament, and gave the name to a wilderness on the borders of which it was situated. The Tomb of Amos was pointed out there in the time of Jerome, the fifth century, and also as late as the fourteenth century. Beth-el has been frequently referred to in the Old Testament lessons. Its importance was due to the worship of the golden calf set up there by Jeroboam I. (1 Kings 12: 29-33). Gilgal is also named; but it is uncertain whether this was the Gilgal where Samuel judged, or the place mentioned in 2 Kings 2 as the seat of a school of the prophets. The latter was nearer Beth-el, and more likely to be the seat of idolatrous worship. It is now called "Jiljilia" (see Lesson Surroundings for February 15, 1891).

TIME.—According to the usual chronology, Uzziah's reign extended from B. C. 810 to 758, and that of Jeroboam II. from B. C. 825 to 784. Accordingly, the date of Amos is fixed at about B. C. 787. The time of Uzziah's becoming a leper is given in the margin of our English Bibles as about B. C. 765. This date does not admit of the view that the earthquake occurred at the same time. Davis places the earthquake about B. C. 750, and Uzziah's leprosy at the same time.

The lesson is largely a recounting of the coming judgments of God on Israel. These should have led to repentance; but the refrain is, "Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord." In verses 12 and 13 there is a brief declaration of further judgment, and also of Jehovah's sovereign power over nature and man.

A Calloway County (Mo.) man is the proud possessor of a gourd which was brought from Wales in 1692.

The smallest church in the world is at St. Lawrence, near Ventnor, Isle of Wight. It has a seating capacity of twelve people.