

*AN ADDITIONAL NOTE TO AMOS V. 8.*

IN the EXPOSITOR for April I gave some reasons for thinking that Amos iv. 13 and v. 8 were descriptions not of Jahwe's creative energy, but of His coming to judge His people in the dark thunderclouds. One of the clauses in v. 8, as commonly translated, is at first sight inconsistent with this view, and I think I ought in justice to give an explanation.

הַפְּךָ לִבְקָר צְלָמוֹת וַיּוֹם לִילָּה הַחֲשִׁיךְ In Amos v. 8 the words are rendered in the English versions, “(Seek him that . . .) turneth the shadow of death into the morning and maketh the day dark with night.” The reader naturally thinks of the normal alternation of day and night, sunrise and sunset. But quite apart from my theories about the thunderstorm, this rendering is exposed to a grammatical objection which, trifling as such a thing may seem, is often the surest critical weapon we possess. The second of the words quoted above is pointed with the article (בְּקָר not לִבְקָר), and this is confirmed by the LXX., which has εἰς τὸ πρωῒ. Now when a thing is turned into something else, that something else does not have the article in Hebrew. God “turned the sea into dry land” (Ps. lxvi. 6), not into the dry land; He “turned the curse into a blessing” (Deut. xxiii. 6, Neh. xiii. 2); Moses’ rod had been “turned into a serpent” (Exod. vii. 15); “they change night into day” (Job xvii. 12), not into the day. There are some twenty-five or thirty instances of this kind of sentence in the Hebrew Bible, including Amos v. 7, vi. 12, viii. 8, and not once is the בְּ pointed with the article.

The words הַפְּךָ לִבְקָר צְלָמוֹת therefore do not mean, “He turneth darkness into morning,” but

“*He turneth back darkness at morning,*”  
i.e. brings back again in the morning the darkness of night.  
There is an exact linguistic parallel to this in Exodus x. 19

(וַיְהִי פָּקֹד יְהוָה רוח יִם). The east wind had brought the locusts upon the land of Egypt, but Jahwe *brought back* a west wind (which had been, so to speak, blown away by the easterly gale), and the locusts were taken off in the direction from whence they came.

Thus the reference to the production of light out of darkness disappears from Amos v. 7 in a correct translation and the whole verse speaks of the God of the storm, the Maker of the rain constellations, Who darkens the morning with the blackness of night when He “ calleth for the waters of the sea and poureth them out upon the face of the earth.”

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JÜLICHER ON THE NATURE AND PURPOSE  
OF THE PARABLES.

(Concluded.)

(ii.) BUT the most important of the parables of Jesus do not fall within the above category, viz., the well-known parables in narrative form. Not that this form, in itself, would exclude them from the class of similitudes. Within the limits of our definition we might quite well have a similitude in narrative form, supposing that the object of the speaker were to illustrate some actual fact of the past. But evidently this is not the case with the parables to which we refer. The illustrative portion gives a narrative of some past occurrence, but the saying, in the interest of which the story is told, refers not to the past but to the present or the future. For instance, in Matthew xxv. 1 sqq. we have a story of ten virgins, whose different experience is related; but the parable concludes with a warning for the future: “Watch, therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.” The parallelism between “fact” and “illustration,” which we noted in similitude, no longer