ourſelves in a ſimilar predicament with **thoſe who con**ſulted the ſcattered leaves of the Sibyl.

As a ſpecimen of Hoſea’s ſtyle, we select the follow­ing beautiful pathetic paſſage:

How ſhall I reſign thee, O Ephraim!

How ſhall I deliver thee up, O Iſrael!

How ſhall I reſign thee as Admah!

How ſhall I make thee as Zeboim!

My heart is changed within me;

I am warmed alſo with repentance towards thee.

I will not do according to the fervour of my wrath;

I will not return to deſtroy Ephraim:

For I am God, and not man;

Holy in the midſt of thee, though I inhabit not thy cities.

Concerning the date of the prophecy of Joel there are various conjectures. The book itſelf affords nothing by which we can diſcover when the author lived, or upon what occaſion it was written. Joel ſpeaks of a great famine, and of miſchiefs that happened in conſequence of an inundation of locuſts; but nothing can be gathered from ſuch general obſervations to enable us to fix the period of his prophecy. St Jerome thinks (and it is the general opinion) that Joel was contemporary with Hoſea. This is poſſibly true; but the founda­tion on which the opinion reſts is very precarious, *viz.* That when there is no proof of the time in which a prophet lived, we are to be guided in our conjectures reſpecting it by that of the preceding prophet whoſe epoch is better known. As this rule is not infallible, it therefore ought not to hinder us from adopting any other opinion that comes recommended by good reaſons. Father Calmet places him under the reign of Joſiah, at the ſame time with Jeremiah, and thinks it probable that the famine to which Joel alludes, is the same with that which Jeremiah predicted ch. viii. 13.

The ſtyle of Joel is essentially different from that of Hoſea; but the general character of his diction, though of a different kind, is not leſs poetical. He is elegant, perſpicuous, copious, and fluent; he is alſo ſublime, ani­mated, and energetic.@@ In the firſt and second chapters he diſplays the full force of the prophetic poetry, and ſhows how naturally it inclines to the uſe of metaphors, allegories, and compariſons. Nor is the connection of the matter leſs clear and evident than the complexion of the ſtyle: this is exemplified in the diſplay of the impending evils which gave riſe to the prophecy; the exhortation to repentance; the promiſes of happineſs and ſucceſs both terreſtrial and eternal to thoſe who be­come truly penitent; the reſtoration of the Israelites; and the vengeance to be taken of their adverſarics. But while we allow this juſt commendation to his perſpicuity both in language and arrangement, we muſt not deny that there is ſometimes great obſcurity obſervable in his ſubject, and particularly in the latter part of the prophecy.

The following prophecy of a plague of locuſts is de­scribed with great sublimity of expreſſion;

**Tor a nation hath gone up on my** land,

Who are ſtrong, and without number:

They have destroyed my vine, and have made my fig-tree a broken branch.

They have made it quite bare, and cast it away: the branches thereof are made white.

The field is laid waste; the ground mourneth@@\*,

Amos was contemporary with Hoſea. They both began to prophecy during the reigns of Uzziah over Judah, and of Jeroboam II. over Iſrael. Amos ſaw his firſt viſion two years before the earthquake, which Zechariah informs us happened in the days of Uzziah. See Amos.

Amos was a herdſman of Tekoe, a ſmall town in the territory of Judah, and a gatherer of ſycamore fruit. In the simplicity of former times, and in the happy cli­mates of the Eaſt, theſe were not conſidered as diſhonourable occupations. He was no prophet (as he in­formed Amaziah @@†), neither was he a prophet’s ſon, that is, he had no regular education in theſchools of the prophets.

The prophecies of Amos consiſt of several diſtinct diſcourſes, which chiefly reſpect the kingdom of Iſrael; yet ſometimes the prophet inveighs againſt Judah, and threatens the adjacent nations, the Syrians, Philiſtincs, Tyrians, Edomites, Ammonites, and Moabites.

Jerome calls Amos “rude in fpeech, but not in knowledge @@‡;” applying to him what St Paul modeſtly profeſſes of himſelf @@§. “Many (says Dr Lowth) have followed the authority of Jerome in ſpeaking of this prophet, as if he were indeed quite rude, ineloquent, and deſtitute of all the embelliſhments of composition. The matter is, however, far otherwiſe. Let any perſon who has candour and perspicacity enough to judge, not from the man but from his writings, open the volume of his predictions, and he will, I think, agree with me, that our ſhepherd ‘is not a whit behind the very chief of the prophets @@‖. He will agree, that as in fublimity and magnificence he is almoſt equal to the greateſt, ſo in ſplendour of diction and elegance of expreſſion he is ſcarcely inferior to any. The ſame celeſtial Spirit in­deed actuated Iſaiah and Daniel in the court and Amos in the ſheep-folds; conſtantly ſelecting ſuch interpreters of the divine will as were beſt adapted to the occaſion, and ſometimes ‘from the. mouth of babes and ſucklings perfecting praiſe:’ occaſionaliy employing the natural eloquence of ſome, and occaſionaliy making others elo­quent.”

Mr Locke has observed, that the compariſons of this prophet are chiefly drawn from lions and other animals with which he was most accuſtomed; but the fineſt images and alluſions are drawn from ſcenes of nature. There are many beautiful passages in the writings of **A**mos, of which we ſhall preſent one ſpecimen:

Wo to them that are at eaſe in Zion,

And trust in the mountains of Samaria;

Who are named chief oſ the nations,

To whom the houſe of Iſrael came:

Pass ye unto Calneh and ſee,

And from thence go to Hamath the Great;

Then go down to Gath of the Philiſtines;

Are they better than theſe kingdoms?

Or their borders greater than their borders?

Ye that put far away the evil day,

And cauſe the feat or violence to come near;

That lie upon beds of ivory,

And ſtretch yourſelves upon couches;

That eat the lambs out of the flock,

And the calves out of the midſt oſ the ſtall;

That chant to the found of the viol,

And like David devise instruments of music:

@@@ [mu] Lowth on Hebrew Poetry, Sect. 21.

@@@[mu]\* Joel i. 6, 7, 10, &c.

@@@[m]† Amos vii. 25.

@@@[m]‡ Proaem Comment. in Amos.

@@@[m]§ 2 Cor. xi. 6.

@@@[m]‖ 2 Cor. zi. 5.