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# The social and moral background of the eighth century prophets

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THE SOCIAL AND MORAL BACKGROUND

of the EIGHTH CENTURY PROPHETS.

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## THE SOCIAL AND MORAL BACKGROUND

### of the EIGHTH CENTURY PROPHETS.

Elisha, after carrying forward the social reformation which had been begun by Elijah, for more than a half-century, has now fallen asleep, and to-day, he rests from his labor waiting for the general resurrection of the just, and the righteous. This holy man had seen much of evil visited upon his countrymen. All their territory which lay beyond the Jordan had been taken from them. Hazael, and his Syrians and bands of Moabites, had frequently raided Western Palestine and had come even to the gates of Samaria, itself. Such, then, was the peril of the nation. But the life of Elisha was spent in the defense of his nation and so highly was he estimated by his countrymen when he died, they called him, "Israel's chariot and the horsemen thereof;" for when Elisha had fallen sick unto death, Joash, standing by the bedside with tears streaming from his eyes, lifted up his voice as he exclaimed, "O my father, my father the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof." In military vigilance and political insight, he was incessant. And although he died before his reformation was complete, he left behind the sign of a better day, a day of victory. It was when partial victory had been won and peace reigned for a short period, that prophecy, unfettered, turned the light upon the existing

2) society of the national life, so that the people were no longer absorbed in their own borders but they had the first chance to direct their gaze outward and thus recognize the great world and its moral foundation and moral order of which they were an integral part or a small fraction of the immense whole.

The constant inroads made upon Israel from time to time had now ceased, and by the time of Amos (760 B.C.) a generation had grown up who knew nothing of war or defeat. Jeroboam II had restored peace in Israel and Uzziah had done the same for Judah. He had pushed north to the Red Sea, while Jeroboam had taken Syrian towns, ~~and~~ Uzziah had captured Palestine. Thus, in these 40 years of peace, were the people reminded of the days of Solomon's reign. Agriculture survived; for it is said of Uzziah that he loved husbandry. This was a period of commerce and luxury. Hosea speaking of the northern kingdom of this period said, "He is a merchant, the balances of deceit are in his hand; he loveth to oppress (Hosea 12:7). This is a busy time, men are hurrying to be rich. During the prophecy of Elisha, the people are cut-throats, assassins, warriors, and blood-drinkers. Nations were incessantly flying at each others throats, chaos and confusion are everywhere. And so when Amos comes upon the scene, he exposes the restlessness, greed, oppression, and indifference on the part of the rich in their dealing with the

3) poor of the community. The rich are purely selfish and their nerve of moral regard for others has been severed. There are rapid increases of city and town life. Every document up to 720 B.C. speak of buildings. There are vast palaces built of money extorted from the poor, the widows, and fatherless. There are summer-houses and winter-houses and houses overlaid with ivory. When the earthquakes come and destroy the houses of brick in a <sup>le</sup> ~~page~~, the rich, to be revenged, exclaim, "The brick has fallen but we will rebuild houses of stone." "The sycamores are cut down but we will change them into cedars. The spectacle is a characteristic city life. There are the crowded walls and recklessness and fickleness, which are subject any time to panic and destrudtion. Luxury is everywhere. Here dwell, adject poverty and brilli- and wealth, side by side.

There was only a half-century between Elisha and Amos and during this time, Israel was sucessively rising and falling. It was now upon the crest of the wave and then in the trough. Up to the beginning of the 8th eentury, Israel was nothing more than a band of fighting husbandmen. It was not until Jerchoam II took the reigns of government that ~~divilization~~ is the <sup>true</sup> ~~time~~ sense appeared in Israel. When Israel crossed the Jordannand exchanged a nomadic for an agricultural life, another step was taken for a rise in Israel's religion. When Israel entered Canaan, she came among new temptations. !

4)

They are among people who drink <sup>W</sup> wine as water and whose idols are regarded the superiors of Israel's Jehovah. The Jehovah who had even conquered the land of Canaan for this people. And ~~so~~ the change, from the agricultural to the merchantile and civil life, likewise has its danger of moral degradation. There is a closer union with the heathen nations and their cults. There was the tmptation of rapid wealth, which all men should strive to secure but the ends and means must be justifiable; and there was the danger of an equally increasing poverty. The rulers, in their clamor for gain and riches forgot their duty to society as a whole and as society and refinement increased, in a like proportion did cruelty increase. The more independent and wealthy classes abandoned the poor people and had no hummanitarian feelings for the real woes and absolute necessities of the starving and naked millions. Yet, there was an abstract and sanguin patriotism but the patriots were blind to the social evils and sins of the individuals of whom society was and is always composed and apart from whom, society is a mere abstraction. Religious zeal was on the increase, but the people misunderstood God. The faith of people was optimistic irrespective of the moral eyesight or insight. There was no sympathy, which is an important factor in the social order. There was no clear <sup>s</sup>sense of duty to each other as children of a common father.

Thus it begins to appear what makes the 8th century

5) prophets so modern. Elisha puts us back in the time when America was struggling for freedom or when the wars of Wallace and Bruce were flooding the land with blood and tears. When we stand with Amos upon the planes of Tekoa, we are standing among the exact condition not of the 8th century alone, but the condition of the 20th century A.D. 2720 years, with the light which Jesus has brought and the history of broadening and deepening experience, have not changed men's sinful souls but a little. Men still fail to see God immanent in the world as well as standing behind the curtain of the drama of life, and watching human beings play their parts upon the stage of life. Since the time of Amos, Jesus has <sup>e</sup>some teaching the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and He has given rules for every legitimate business upon the planet, still men's eyes are blinded by material and selfish ends. Men generally admit the fatherhood of God, but the alienation of man, and will not admit that we are one another's keeper. But the conception of Israelites in such matters is not to be wondered at when once their conception of Jehovah is known. Their relation to Jehovah was a supposed natural one, in which ethical and religion were as far removed from each other as Sheol beneath and the starry heavens above. It is, indeed, very difficult for us in this age to see any moral basis in such a conception of God at all. ~~Is~~ there were any moral conceptions in Israel during this 8th century,

6) according to the prophets of this age, ~~Israel~~ they were completely put under foot by the nation. The conduct or the ethical life of a nation or individual inevitably reveals the religious status. It cannot be said truthfully that there were <sup>no</sup> signs of moral conception in the early forms of Israelitish society, such as the clan, tribe, and family, but during this period of forty-years reign of peace, such conceptions seem to have *perished* from their minds. There was nothing more wise and delightful for them than to recant the deeds of their fore-fathers. Canaan <sup>had</sup> ~~God~~ been promised them through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This promise had been sealed by a covenant which could not be broken. Jehovah was their Jehovah. He would do no good nor could He do any evil. He requited of them only sacrifice. And so, they throng to Bethel, Beersheba, Dan, and Gilgal with sacrifice and festival.

Bethel was the chief scene of northern Israel. It was the proper city for the ancient shrine. It was a convenient market as well; situated on the frontier and at the convergence of many roads, traders from the east met half way with the traders from the west. Wool-growers of Moab and the wool-growers of the Judaen desert met the merchants of Phoenicia and the coast of Philistine. Here Jacob slept one night, a fugitive, and saw in a vision the ladder with God's messengers ascending and descending. This sanctuary at Bethel was the

7) house of God, the house of the king, and the house of the kingdom. At all these sanctuaries, Israel sought Jehovah who had brought them out of Egypt and out of the house of bondage. At Bethel, Jehovah was a golden calf, and so the people have calf-morals and calf sociology. In this purely animal plane, they sting, bite, scratch, gore one another and die, and this the appropriate eulogy, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes." They had no soul and so there was nothing real left.

Zion, containing the ark, was the true expression of Jehoval worship, but at all other places, Jehovah worship was connected with image-worship. This gave the first inspiration to prophecy. The prophets saw a <sup>corruption</sup> ~~conception~~ of Jehovah <sup>worship</sup> and cried out against it. The ritual of Jehovah had been reduced to the cult of Baalism. The foulest temples, of Canaanitish ritual, those inspired by wine and sexual passions were licensed in the sancturies of Israel. To such Hosea and Amos witness. The most diabolical evil wrought was done in the name of Jehovah. *Scrupleless* liberality was everywhere. Tithes were paid, regularly to Jehovah, from a purely legal standpoint. Sabbaths and new-moons as days and periods of rest and worship were scrupulously adhered to. This was absolute scrupulosity in its extreme type, and it was absolutely void of the least true spirit of the occasion. Prescribed festivals were held at regular times and multitudes of

8) zealous devotees gathered at these festivals , rivaling each the other in the amount of free-will offering (Amos 4:4). Pilgrimages were made to the sacred shrines, and these pilgrimages were as sacred <sup>as</sup> the way to Mecca appears to the pious Moslem to-day. In all of this, there was a high conception of legality, but all social and moral conceptions, between Israel and Jehovah and between man and man, was wanting. If there were such conceptions of high moral standards, they did not appear in the social order of the 8th century B.C. Amos said, "Ye seek Jehovah's sanctuaries, but Jehovah, ye do not seek." Hosea said, "Ye do not know Jehovah." There is nothing ~~stronger~~ <sup>stronger</sup> in the social and moral conceptions of a people or nation where their conception of God is known. The mass of Israel's people, their priests, and false prophets regarded Jehovah as a Semetic deity- He was only a patron deity as history had revealed. He had conquered their enemies in the past and He must help them in the future. They worshiped Jehovah as a golden calf, or as an ox, and so they people must have ox ethics and ox sociology. A nation or individual never rises above its conception of the Divine <sup>2</sup> being. Thus we must justify the social and moral condemnation of Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah. Human beings should dwell on the human plane and not on the animal plane. Thus the low religious conception of Israel is an adequate explanation for its social and moral status during its 40 years

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9) of peace and prosperity. Such religious conceptions had no message for the mercenary life of this period. Injustice and fraud were inbedded, even in the precincts of the holy sanctuaries. Magistrates and priests were crazy with the love of gain and there was nothing too diabolical for them that they might have reward. More than once, do the prophets raise their voices against bribery. The judges took bribes, the priests drank wine, and slept on the plédged garments of the religious offenders. Mamon was uppermost in the minds of the people Israel wandered father and father from Jehovah. They were visited by earthquakes, droughts, famines, pestilences, etc. Whether these were retributions or not, I am not deciding. I am only concerned, in this, with the facts. The greed of gain has illuded the sinful soul of man from the earliest record in Assyria and Babylonia even to the present day. Men have always hastened to be rich. This is nothing more nor less than just, but the end and means have not always been justifiable. If it had not been for the greed of gain, I doubt seriously if America would have been discovered by Columbus.

With the preceding facts in mind, we may enter the messages of the 8th century prophets feeling that their warnings are not alone to the people 800 years before Christ, but that they speak to us of the 20th century, even in the present day, to us who are still alive. Since that time Jesus

- 10) Christ has come and rationalized men's deeds and has given the true light which shineth more and more even unto the perfect day. What a shame and condemnation upon us who now live in the moral and social light of Jesus Christ.

#### THE LIFE OF AMOS.

Tekoa was the home of Amos. Whether he was born in Tekoa, no one knows, but during his prophetic period, he evidently lived in this city. Tekoa is a town in the tribe of Judah, ten miles south of Jerusalem and five miles south of Bethelhem, and it is situated on a detached hill 2700 feet high. To the north and east, are wonderful views, but the west and south are closed in by hills. The town is of renown, historically, but its crowning glory is its connection with the prophet Amos. It was an unmitigated wilderness in an environment abounding in emptiness and stillness. Thus, it was naturally fitted to develop the human being who was to possess, in the fullest manner, the power, of observation and reflection, the austere habits of the recluse, and the un pitying sharpness of the censor of his country's fault and vice. Amos, on the planes of Tekoa, looked constantly out upon a desolate, dreary and savage world. No mention is made of his parents and there is no pedigree. His circumstances of life were peculiar and uncommon, but his influence upon the society of Israel was tremendous.

11) All students or scholars, of Amos, agree that he delivered his sermons some where about 765-750 B.C. This is a period of ease; the people are free from Assyrian ravages; the religious situation is intense, and the social situation is one of wealth, debauchery, luxury, and oppression. The women are taking their full share. Ivory houses and continual feasting give us one picture of the age; while robbing, adultery, and murder give another picture of the social and moral conditions; still another picture is given in the lack of brotherhood and *infatuation* between the people; lastly we hear of earthquakes and destructions which tradition recognized and substantiated as retributions of a Divine anger.

Amos is not a prophet by profession nor is he a member of a pre-prophetic band. He is a dresser of sycamore trees and a keeper of sheep. While he was tending his trees and flock, Jehovah called him to bear a message to the sinners at Bethel. Amos was a common, plain man of the people. All around his country the nations were at war but Judah and Israel were enjoying a period of peace. At Bethel, religious feasts were occasions for reveling in which the strongest got the most but paid the dearest for it. Drunkenness, gluttony, violence, and impurity grow rapidly even in the face of religious exercises. These became institutions, *originating* ~~unacquainted~~ in religion, and they grew to be fairly diabolical. This same practice is an open shame in, especially, the large cities

12) of to-day the world over. In judging the people of the 8th century, we must not forget that whenever good be found there dwells evil also and vice versa. So then, in this period when all seems to be a solid mass of social and moral chaos, there are the seers such as Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah who lift up their voices and sound a note of warning, this has been true in all ages. The world has had its Luther, Wycliff, John Knox, Chas. Sumner, and Whittier. Such men are not usually popular. They are recorded as idealists or enthusiasts. So the common mass termed the 8th century prophets. The underlying fact is that evil will not bear the light. In my boyhood, I delighted to wander into the meadow and turn over old logs of wood to see the heterogenous mass of living creatures scamper away for a hiding place. This is just as true in the higher forms of human society. Evil is too sensitive for the light.

#### THE MESSAGE OF AMOS.

We take the little book of Amos. We have in our hand the first written sermon on record. He is the first among the library prophets. He first preached these sermons at Bethel and on returning home, he committed them to written form; for he was conscious of their importance to the succeeding generations. We open the book. The year is 760 or 765 B.C./ It is in the autumn, it is evening on the open market-place of the royal city and sanctuary in the kingdom of Israel.

13) The evening leveling rays are striking across the palaces and house-tops, and the market square is rapidly growing dusky and darkness is slowly creeping over the city walls. The camp fires begin to throw their beams and shadows across the gathered herds. The shepherds and merchants from afar, after a day of toil and care, are quieting for rest. The wealthy, who have been laying upon their couches of ivory with damask cushions, rising and eating the choicest of the flock all day, now arise, anoint themselves with the choicest oil and come forth to the evening feast and sacrifice in pomp, splendor, power and riches. They assemble; the music and song begin, but just as the festal mirth is at its highest merriment, an unknown, plain looking man, from Tekoa, pushes his way through the crowd of merrymakers. A divine spark is in his eye and a holy gravity suffuses his countenance. Room is made for him with sly and involuntary looks and before the people know what is happening, he drowns and brings to silence the festival songs and music by the piercing and mournful cry of his lamentation. It is a poem in the form of a funeral dirge. The cadence is melodious. This song reminds every one who hears it of the most sad moments of his life, as he stood, weeping for the last time at the bier of his father, mother, or friend. It is Israel's funeral dirge. He shouts among the merry crowd around him:

"The virgin of Israel is fallen,

14)

She shall no more arise,  
She is forsaken upon the land,  
There is none to raise her up."

At these words, the assembly is seized with amazement and consternation. They soon learn that this man is the dresser of sycamore trees, and <sup>an</sup>herdsman. He is <sup>h</sup>ridiculed and spoken evil of. But Amos sees voluptuaries and debauchers. He sees useless there is a speedy reform destruction must come, and so he does not cease to raise his voice. The rich <sup>p</sup>volutuaris are extorting from the poor and oppressing them; they are storing up in their palaces oppression and tyranny. Justice is turned into worm-wood and righteousness is trodden under foot. A bribe is taken against the just and the poor people are sold for the price of a pair of shoes: The rulers are wicked and corrupt. Amid the songs and merriment Amos said, "Let justice run down as the waters and righteousness as the mighty stream." "Hate evil and love the good." "Seek Jehovah and live." The people turn a deaf ear and rush on to their death as a horse rushes into the battle.

The sermons against Israel (Ch 1:1-2:3), give Amos' own picture of the social and moral condition of Israel. The wrongs are cruel <sup>a</sup>invasions of one tribe by another; one tribe is hunting slaves even among neighbors of its own blood; implacable hatred is everywhere; there is a brutal grasp of land; there are sacrilege and irreverence. And so, Amos

15) turns to Israel and cries, "The Assyrians destroyer is coming. Yahweh is leading him hither." "Just as sure as Yahweh roared from Zion and Jerusalem, he will as surely roar from <sup>from</sup> your midst; for you are adding wrong to wrong, and injury to injury. (Ch 2:6-16), this section is more pointed. Israel has turned from righteousness and is robbing the non-resisting poor of their few rods of land. All human sympathy is quenched in greed that pants after the handful of dust which the mourners throw upon their heads. Men are taking advantage of unfortunate girls and <sup>and</sup> maidens. They plunder those who bring their <sup>little</sup> gifts of garments, or victuals to the shrine as tokens of atoning for their sins. The tax-gathers are robbers, cruelty is highhanded and there is no fear of retribution. The worst of all is that these sins were in the house of God where universal good-will and mutual love should reign supreme.

The third oracle, (Ch 3:1-8), opens with the announcement, "Hear ye this." Israel has claimed to be by Jehovah's; they are one with Him in joy, danger and aim, and so Amos reminds them that they should be one also in plan and purpose. He asks, "Are there any unconcerned and see no reason to be alarmed?" "On yonder horizon, see the <sup>a</sup>black cloud of destruction rising." "List to the lion, he is roaring from the slopes of Lebanon." Amos is not unreasonable; for Jehovah has spoken and he can but announce Jehovah's

16) message.

The fourth oracle, (Ch 3:9-4:3) gives the sentence of Jehovah upon Israel. The sins of the people are so wide and commonly known that the outside nations are summoned to witness the terrible condition of society. The denunciation of Amos must go from the hill-top of Samaria to the coast of the Philistines. It must run like a mighty stream down the canaan road even to the palace gate of the king in Egypt. The surrounding nations are called to witness God destroying the nation whom he has chosen above all other nations of the earth. What a pathetic scene. From the highest luxury, they shall fall to the lowest extremity. See them rolling upon their ivory beds in nastiness and filth, then see them hang like a torn shred from the fangs of the ravenous wolfe, Assyria. Jehovah is the Lord of Lost; Jehovah is his name and the day for the <sup>declaration</sup> ~~dedavation~~ of <sup>over-</sup> his worship is neigh at hand even at the door, even women, who are the synonyms for tenderness and mercy, are instigators to crime and they are taking an equal share in drunken revelry.

The fifth section (Ch 4:4-13) show that the selfish people thought Jehovah was so well pleased with their gluttony until He was present in person at their feasts in the temples and sancturies. Jehovah blesses and scourges Israel and still Israel will not return to Him.

The sixth oracle (Ch 5:1-15) is the climax. They are

17) now beginning to feel the force of Amos' arguments. They see their dreadful condition, and with outspread arms, lamentation, and weeping, they run to him to tell them how to save themselves. Amos replies, "Seek not the ancient shrines but seek Jehovah and live."

The seventh section ((Ch 5:16-6:14) introduces us to a two-fold cry of woe. There are those who look for the day of Jehovah when all will be made right, but these did not know that this day would be a day of blessing to the righteous only and a curse to the wicked. This fact Amos told them. In that day, Amos said justice would run down as water and righteousness as the mighty stream. On the other hand there are those who laugh at the idea of a judgment day, but Amos replies, "Jehovah has sworn that Godless-ness shall surely go down to ruin."

In the eighth section (Ch 7-8:3) Jehovah has been gracious in answering prayer, but now His grace is exhausted. There can be no forgiveness for Israel. Her sins are too many and grievous to be forgiven. These last and stinging words awake the slumbering priest Amaziah. He warns Amos of his danger in prophesying the destruction of Jeroboam's kingdom and also demands him to flee away into his own homeland and preach. But Amos does not recant; for he has a clear insight and personal fellowship with Jehovah who is speaking through him.

18) This brings us to the last section of oracles, (Ch 8:4-10:10). There arises a cry of indignation at the suffering of human beings. There shall surely come a day of retribution and the people will be reminded of Egypt's story of the sloughter of the first-born. Amos' voice must be heard from Dan to Beer<sup>A</sup>sheba before the end of time. Thus we come to the end of the sayings of the greatest prophet in Israel. He saw evils in abundance around him in Samaria; there were selfish hurt to woman-hood, girl-hood, gluttony, oppression, injustice, luxury, irreverence and all manner of wickedness, and now Jehovah demanded their lives at the hand of Assyria. Justice, Jehovah demands.

#### HOSEA.- 740-720 B.C.

The fact<sup>S</sup>s of the life of Hosea, are quite different from the facts of the life of Amos. He was evidently of the northern kingdom and uttered his sermons during the reign of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He has a wide range of political affairs both local and foreign. He was evidently of the common folk and protected their interests. In the main, the date and circumstances of his life and work are settled. The times are prosperous as they were in the time of Amos. Evidence of wealth and ease are everywhere and punishments are still in the future. In the later utterances of this prophet, the <sup>scene</sup> same is somewhat different. Law-

19) lessness is prevailing. The panic-stricken rulers are vacillating between Assyria and Egypt for aid. Political dissolution has already begun. The powerlessness of kings is generally recognized. The religious and political leaders are the worst violators of the laws. Conspiracies and revolutions are rife and anarchy is prevailing. Amos saw the crisis far in the misty future while Hosea actually lives among the dissolving social order. In Amos, the evils were largely limited to the ruling classes, while in Hosea it is not so. Amos speaks as a visitor into a country of loose social order while Hosea speaks as a citizen of this same county and more thoroughly acquainted with the social order and moral condition of the people than was Amos.

The call of Hosea was a tragedy in his domestic relation. He marries Gomer who afterwards proves unfaithful to him. Her first son is born and Hosea is not his father; a daughter is born and another man is her father; still one more son is born whom Hosea said was not his kin. The woman, whom Hosea loved, now leaves home and becomes the slave-concubine of some other man. But Hosea will not let her go. He loves her and thus purchases her for a slaves' price, brings her back to her former home, and puts her under a severe course of punishment. She was shut off from intercourse with any man, even Hosea her legitimate husband. In this relation, he recognizes the marriage relation between Jehovah and

20) Israel.

Amos was a stern moralist, while Hosea is a man of religious affection. Amos sees the divine will of Jehovah demanding justice, while Hosea has a vision of the loving heart of Jehovah grieving over His straying children. The character of Hosea was strong, complex, emotional, and religious.

The special interest of Hosea's message may be summed up in the following clauses : 1st, the personal element enters so largely that one can but feel that his message is not so much a political or religious messages as it is the man himself; 2nd, the book is a supplement to the book of Amos, and both together give a complete conception of God. Amos is justice; Hosea is love; 3rd, the destruction of *Israel* predicted by Amos more than ten years before is rapidly approaching and in less than a dozen years all will be over.

The book of Hosea is as complex as his nature is and so no attempt at a systematic division of chapters, will be made. He, strenuously, condemns all the evils which Amos condemns, but chiefly he condemns sexual unfaithfulness, civil quarrelling, irreverence towards governmental orders, baseness of the priests, and religious officers. When we open the book, we are amazed. The conditions of society are so rotten that Hosea prays for God to give to Ephraim a miscarrying womb and dry breasts, so that fresh offerings

21) of calamity and misery might not be born.

"When Israel was a child, I loved him <sup>and</sup> ~~as~~ called him as my son out of Egypt. But the more I called, the more he went from me. He sacrificed unto Baalim and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim to walk, taking him in my arms. But he knew not that I meant good with him. I drew him with words of love, and I was to him as those that take off the yoke and I ~~set~~ meat unto him, yet he will return into Egypt, and Asshur be his king."

#### ISIAH. 740 B.C.

In 722 B.C. Samaria fell with a mighty clash and Judah succeeded it. Of the Judean prophets, Isaiah was the greatest. Amos and Hosea were men from the common walks of life while Isaiah, the son of Amos, is an aristocrat. He was of noble blood and a priest of the king's house. He received his prophetic call in the last years of the reign of Uzziah. He prophesied in Jerusalem during the reign of Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. Jerusalem was the chief scene of his activity.

Opening his book, we find that he condemns all the sins mentioned by the previous prophets. But in him we find a wider range of condemnations and a clear insight into the problem of evil. As years pass his insight grows deeper. The range of condemnations changes and progresses ~~is~~ in extent and correctness. In the beginning of his prophecy, he

22) argues chiefly against luxury, then hautiness, excessive drunkenness and gluttony at the sacrificial feasts. Yes, Isaiah speaks against all the social and moral evils which Hosea and Amos condemned and he goes one step beyond them when he strikes a severe blow at land monopolies. He also diverges from Amos and Hosea in exhorting Israel to faith in Jehovah. He sees very clearly the destruction of Israel, without Israel repants. God is a potter and men are the clay. The clay cannot escape the potter's hand. The warrior's spear will be beaten into pruning hooks and their shields will be turned into plough-shares. In the time of extreme peril, Isiah, seated at the tiller, guides with the divine compass the little ship of his fatherland through the rocks and breakers of a wild and stormy period. Looking into the future he keeps up Israel 's courage by pointing them to a Coming One whose blood would wash away their sins . For two impending crises, Isiah saved his people.

#### MICAH.- 720-719.B.C.

Micah was a contempory of Isiah and evidently uttered his prophecy before Samaria was destroyed. His home was a small town in the marine plane, Moresheth, which was a dependency of Gath. The writings of the prophet make obvious his position and the surrounding conditions. Micah was of the social order of Amos and Hosea. As to the evils which

23) he condemns, Amos lives anew in him. The princes of Judah hate good but love evil; oppression is severe. They pluck of the skin from the people, and the flesh from off the <sup>the</sup> bones, they eat the flesh of the people; they flay their skin from off them, in pieces, as for the <sup>fat</sup> and the flesh is <sup>put</sup> into a caldron. Yes, these are very wicked times especially among the rulers and those in authority. A parallel condition exists to day in the Congo Free State under the merciless hand of King Leapold II. Micah can see only righteousness in Jehovah who will certainly punish. He sees the sins of the blood-sucking nobility of Jerusalem, and so, he suffers his cry to be neither silenced nor repressed. These sins can only be atoned for by the destruction of Jerusalem. History has proved Micah, Isiah, Amos, and Hosea to be true. <sup>115</sup> ~~115~~ years after the time of Isiah, Jerusalem was reduced to a heap of ruins, the temple was a smoking pile and the people were led away into Babyonian captivity.

#### MODERN EXAMPLES OF THE 8th CENTURY PROPHETS

The conditions 8 centuries before Christ and the 20th century after Christ must be judged from <sup>completely</sup> ~~concepts~~ different standpoints. The one has the background of superstition and ignorance; the other has for its background the light and life of Jesus Christ.

#### MODERN SOCIAL EVILS.

Mercenary sexual debauchery is now a live wire in univer-

24) al sociology. There is as much of this diabolical work now going on among men women and children as there was 8 centuries before Jesus came. Traffic in white girl slaves is not an uncommon practice in our leading American cities even to-day. Though various <sup>h</sup>schemes, young souls and old too for that matter are entrapped in houses of ill-fame and there imprisoned to spend lives of shame and misery unless relief comes from the Watch and Ward Society or some other benevolent source. 60,000 girls each year go into a life of prostitution and 300,000 men mostly married patronize these houses.

#### SALOON.

The saloon sounds the death knell of uncleanness and misery. Annexed to the saloon are the dance halls where young men and woken assemble night after night and mingle with persons brutalized by lust and drink. "Speak-easies" and "smoking parlors" also abound as annexes to the saloons. Here young men and women sit about tables, drink and smoke while the atmosphere fairly reeks with foul jests and impure talk. Tons and tons of obscene literature are poisoning the minds of young women and men daily, arousing their passions, and starting them on the downward path.

#### SIN IN THE EMPIRICAL SENSE.

The human heart is ever sinful. Society is not a constant fixed quantity, but it is the aggregate of individuals—changing lives. Thus, there is a constant progress

25) in the social realm from homogeneity to heterogeneity.

As society becomes more and more changed and complex, sin also changes its form but is none the less sin. The mutualism of our manner of life determines the character of our modern social and moral evils. Our most vital interest must be trusted to others. For example, the water main is our well, the trolley-cars are our carriages, the bankers safe is our old stocking, the policeman's billy is our fists, the inspectors of food, drugs, gas, factories, tenements, and insurance are substituted for our eyes, and nose. We must rely upon others to look after our drains, invest our savings, nurse our sick and educate our children. The meat monopoly butchers our pigs, the oil trust moulds our candles, the sugar monopoly boils our sorghum, the coal trust chops our wood, the barb-wire company splits our rails. These are all open doors for the wicked and snares for the weak. The clamor for wealth is leading men to put morality underfoot.

The people have falsified balances in their hand, the hire of laborers are kept back/ There are counterfeitings, smugglings, treason, forgery and embezzlements. In America the awful sin of bloody crime is on the increase. In 22 years, Christian America has lynched over 3,300 human beings sending many of them to innocent, premature graves. Moral vengeance, the lynching of the personality rather than the person, is the characteristic rôle of the American public.

26) There is a social slowness to lynch the <sup>a</sup>magnate who puts away his toil-worn wife for the sake of a soubrette. The props of morality are as weak to-day and more corrupt than in the 800 years before Christ came.

On every hand one sees moral compromise, in law, politics, legislatures, and even in, so called, religious assemblies. News paper editors, give the front pages of their papers to announce assaults, rapes, suicides, elopements, or some hotel scandal, while the outcomes of religious meetings are placed on the last page of the paper in some neglected column, and mobs are constantly incited to bloody raids. These things are clear evidences of the social and moral status of the mass of people. These things are looked upon as not immoral and certainly they are not publicly denounced.

The pick-pocket, the user of railway rebates, who enriches himself illegally, the man who murders with adulterous <sup>atrocious</sup> instead of a club, or burglarizes with a "rake-off" instead of a deck of cards is in no sense regarded as an immoral man. This is all a part of the game and an <sup>age</sup>eye when the fittest must survive. This <sup>isn't</sup> fellow with a silk hat and long coat stalks around in the highest ranks of society branded as a wealthy slick gentleman. No one smells the buzzard under his stolen plumes. Society like Titania, has its eyes anointed with the juices of prejudice and ignorance. In this extatic state, the <sup>a</sup>face of the mule ~~is~~

27) is exceedingly beautiful with its big eyes and long, tapering and soft ears. Presently we shall awake to find we have been loving and caressing an "Ass."

Justice must run  
down as water and righteousness as the mighty stream.

If you would see modern examples of the social and moral back-ground of the eighth century prophets, pick up your eyes and look upon the fields, for they are white unto the harvest.

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J.W. Jackson,

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