

THE HISTORY OF UTOPIAN THOUGHT

Joyce Oramel Hertzler

ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:
UTOPIAS



ROUTLEDGE LIBRARY EDITIONS:
UTOPIAS

Volume 5

THE HISTORY OF
UTOPIAN THOUGHT



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

THE HISTORY OF UTOPIAN THOUGHT

JOYCE ORAMEL HERTZLER

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published in 1923 by George Allen & Unwin, Ltd

This edition first published in 2020

by Routledge

2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge

52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 1923 Joyce Oramel Hertzler

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-0-367-35357-5 (Set)

ISBN: 978-0-367-85408-9 (Set) (ebk)

ISBN: 978-0-367-36281-2 (Volume 5) (hbk)

ISBN: 978-0-429-34511-1 (Volume 5) (ebk)

Publisher's Note

The publisher has gone to great lengths to ensure the quality of this reprint but points out that some imperfections in the original copies may be apparent.

Disclaimer

The publisher has made every effort to trace copyright holders and would welcome correspondence from those they have been unable to trace.

THE HISTORY OF UTOPIAN THOUGHT

BY
JOYCE ORAMEL HERTZLER, PH.D.

LONDON: GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN, LTD.
RUSKIN HOUSE, 40 MUSEUM STREET, W.C. 1

PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

**“Ah Love! could you and I with Fate conspire
To grasp the sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
Remould it nearer to the Heart’s Desire?”**

**Ninety-ninth quatrain of
Fitzgerald’s “Omar Khayyam”**



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

PREFACE

This book embodies two related and yet distinct types of sociological endeavor. It is a study in the history of social thought, a field which has only been receiving serious and widespread attention in recent years, and attempts to give an historical cross-section of representative Utopian thought. But it is also a study in social idealism, a study in the origin, selection and potency of those social ideas and ideals that occasional and usually exceptional men conceive, with particular emphasis upon their relation to social progress.

The merit that I can hope for this book lies in the fact that, to my knowledge, it is the first book that attempts to give an unprejudiced, systematic treatment of the social Utopias as a whole. Its errors and weaknesses are those which all trail blazers have; for that reason suggestion and criticism are invited.

I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to friends and colleagues for assistance of various kinds, to my wife for her painstaking aid in the verification of footnotes and the preparation of the manuscript, but above all to my teacher and colleague, Prof. E. A. Ross, for his constant encouragement, suggestion, and kindly criticism through the years this book has been in preparation.

J. O. HERTZLER

The University of Wisconsin,
Madison, Wisconsin.
September 4, 1922.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION.	1
PART ONE	
SOCIAL UTOPIAS: AN HISTORICAL REVIEW.	
CHAPTER II. THE ETHICO-RELIGIOUS UTOPIANS AND THEIR UTOPIANISM.	7
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Prophets as Forerunners of the Utopians. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduction. b. Amos. c. Hosea. d. Isaiah. e. Jeremiah. f. Ezekiel. g. Deutero-Isaiah. h. Summary of the Prophets. 2. The Apocalyptists. 3. The "Kingdom of God" and the Utopianism of Jesus. 4. Augustine and his "City of God." 5. Savonarola's Florentine Theocracy. 	
CHAPTER III. THE "REPUBLIC" OF PLATO.	99
CHAPTER IV. THE EARLY MODERN UTOPIAS	121
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Events antedating the Early Modern Utopians. 2. The "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More. 3. The Utopianism of Francis Bacon's "New Atlantis." 4. Campanella and his "City of the Sun." 5. Harrington's "Oceana." 6. Summary of the Early Modern Utopians. 	
CHAPTER V. THE UTOPIAN SOCIALISTS.	181
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction. 2. Morelly. 3. Babeuf. 4. Saint-Simon. 5. Fourier. 6. Cabet. 7. Blanc. 8. Owen. 9. Conclusion. 	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER VI. THE RECENT SOCIAL ANTICIPATIONS—THE PSEUDO-UTOPIAS.	225
1. Bellamy's "Looking Backward."	
2. Hertzka's "Freeland."	
3. Wells' "Modern Utopia."	

PART TWO

SOCIAL UTOPIAS: AN ANALYSIS AND CRITIQUE.

CHAPTER VII. THE UTOPIANS AND THEIR UTOPIAS.	257
1. Three classes of people with the social outlook: those with backlook, the look about you, and the forelook. Utopians of third class.	
2. Characteristics of the Utopians:	
a. Filled with divine discontent.	
b. Critics of their age.	
c. Intellectual originality and constructive imagination.	
d. Faith.	
e. Genius.	
3. The Utopians seeking a perfect state here and those expect- ing it hereafter are the same thing.	
4. Characteristics of Utopias:	
a. Result of social stress and tension.	
b. Inventions.	
c. Merely relative.	
5. Reasons why Utopias are ridiculed.	

CHAPTER VIII. UTOPIANISM AND THE RÔLE OF IDEAS AND IDEALS.	268
1. Utopianism defined.	
2. Utopias as expressions of idealism.	
3. As stimuli to the imagination.	
4. Ideas and ideals go back to individuals.	
5. Become slowly incorporated in social thought through sug- gestion and imitation.	
6. Final acceptance comes when society has caught up.	
7. Ideals are realized in fact.	
8. Tolerance of new ideas and idealists.	
9. Ideas guide and control.	
10. The social ideal.	
11. Utility of ideas and ideals.	
12. World might have progressed without Utopias but not so well.	

CHAPTER IX. THE UTOPIANISTIC CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILI- ZATION.	279
1. The value of an ideal depends upon its contribution to social betterment.	
2. Contributions:	
a. Utopianism of the Prophets and Jesus.	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
b. Utopianism of More.	
c. Utopianism of Owen.	
d. Utopias assisted men in avoiding social disaster.	
e. Breathed a fearlessness.	
f. Discovered a new criterion of human value.	
g. Appreciated social laws.	
h. Adaptationists.	
i. Determinism and free will.	
j. Social will.	
k. Eugenics.	
l. Equality of the sexes.	
m. Preventive medicine.	
n. Religious toleration and social religion.	
o. Social theory of property.	
p. Conception of social institutions: education, Bacon's House of Salomon, the State.	
q. Basic ideas of socialism.	
r. Sociology itself.	

CHAPTER X. THE LIMITED PERSPECTIVE OF THE UTOPIANS. 301

1. Could not have a perfect social perspective.
2. Limitations:
 - a. Did not grasp the necessity of a sound physical and economic basis.
 - b. Did not grasp the full significance of life:
Assumed men originally perfect.
Violated the instincts.
Did not see that life is a constant struggle.
Over-social view.
 - c. Failed to start with things as they are.
 - d. Did not use spirit of protest for reform purposes.
 - e. Considered their Utopias as the last word in perfectionment.
3. Social perfection an illusion; can only have social progress.
4. The passing of Utopias.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

THE HISTORY OF UTOPIAN THOUGHT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

At this moment in the history of the civilized world when social chaos and discontent are everywhere prevalent, men are analyzing social phenomena, groping about for causes, and seeking solutions for these very puzzling complications. This, however, is not the first time that the race has faced this problem; from the dawn of history at times men have known the same unrest, for it is in the nature of customs and institutions, regardless of the department of life with which they are connected, to become antiquated and corrupt; so its men of intelligence and social spirit, its prophets of all time, have devoted their talents to devising instruments of change for the better.

In the literature of social thought a numerous, but much neglected and ridiculed section consists of the so-called social utopias, which confine themselves wholly to the problem outlined briefly above. The word "Utopia" itself has its origin in the name of the ideal social state conceived and dramatically described by the Englishman, Sir Thomas More, in a book in dialogue form written in Latin in the years 1515-1516, published by Froben at Louvain, later translated and circulated throughout Europe. It is the distinctive characteristic of this work which has caused its name to become the general term for imaginary ideal societies. And that distinctive feature is this: More depicted a perfect, and perhaps unrealizable, society, located in some nowhere, purged of the shortcomings, the wastes,

and the confusion of our own time and living in perfect adjustment, full of happiness and contentment.

The Utopias seemingly have never been taken very seriously,¹ nor have scholars paid them much attention. The history of literature casts them outside as curiosities or as belonging in the field of politics or statescraft; political science has given little heed to them because they are held to be fantastic and unscientific. Religion and theology have dealt with a few, but the bulk of them have fallen without the religious field, strictly speaking. It has remained for sociology, with its limitless human interest, to examine them and appraise them in the light of later social idealism.

Among these Utopias we find in most cases searching analyses of current social situations, lucid and fascinating anticipations of a better or perfect society to come, and a presentation of instruments and principles of social progress which men of succeeding epochs have sometimes adopted and used in promoting improvement. While there is in them much that is naïve and useless from the point of view of the present, they breathe a spirit and offer suggestions which the socially minded evolutionist and the philosophical historian of to-day cannot overlook.

It is the object of the first part of this work to analyze some of the more representative and better known social Utopias, examining their social background and portraying briefly their singular features, but devoting the major portion of the exposition to a careful study of the agencies and principles whereby this social perfection was to be attained. Behind the Utopias lies the utopian spirit, that is, the feeling that society is capable of improvement and can be made over to realize a rational ideal. We propose to trace it historically from its first prominent expression. Since we find the first and most significant ideas of this kind in these Utopias, we have called this spirit "utopianism," meaning thereby *a conception of social improvement*

¹ "Utopias are generally regarded as literary curiosities which have been made respectable by illustrious names, rather than as serious contributions to the political problems which troubled the age at which they appeared." Smith, "Harrington and his 'Oceana,'" p. 12.

either by ideas and ideals themselves or embodied in definite agencies of social change. From the earliest Hebrew prophets on we have more or less conscious ideals of this kind expressed, and the means whereby such rebuilding is to take place indicated with varying degrees of definiteness. We will treat of the theorizings of people as widely diverse in their training, views, and purposes as are the means proposed to bring in their ideal states.

In the second part of this work we will appraise and analyze the Utopias, their writers, and their utopianism and the rôle of ideas and ideals contained therein. This program also demands an investigation as to any contributions they have made in human advance, and any visible influence of their potency. Of course, it also necessitates an analysis of their shortcomings. Finally, it involves a treatment of the effect of the evolutionary conception and the theory of history which came with it, on the utopian idea and the consequent changes in the type of Utopias.

Throughout it is essentially a study of social ideas and ideals, —the influence of environment and events in producing them, the types of individuals conceiving them, the factors responsible for their survival, and their ability to translate themselves into fact.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

PART ONE

SOCIAL UTOPIAS: AN HISTORICAL REVIEW



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

CHAPTER II

THE ETHICO-RELIGIOUS UTOPIANS AND THEIR UTOPIANISM

1. THE PROPHETS AS FORERUNNERS OF THE UTOPIANS

a. INTRODUCTION

There is a common impression that Plato was the first to picture a perfect future of whom we have record in literature, and that his "Republic" was the first Utopia or ideal commonwealth. This is the result of holding to a literary field too narrowly conceived. A broader reading with the search for utopian elements uppermost, will bring a different conclusion.

Among another people and in another literature which antedated that of Greece by several centuries we find numerous utopian expressions by men, who, as social critics and social architects, were the equals if not the peers of Plato. We refer to the Hebrew prophets,¹—men of marked individuality and originality; men of rare ability in appraising their times, in suggesting lines of social reconstruction, and in depicting the perfect future. We will devote the ensuing section to their study.

Because of the practically limitless field which thus opened to us we shall concentrate our study upon the so-called "literary" prophets who form that wonderful movement which was inaugurated by Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, about the middle of the eighth century B. C., and continued after him by an unbroken line of prophets through upward of three centuries,

¹ The prophetic period proper can be said to have begun with Samuel in the eleventh century B. C., and to have extended to the fourth century B. C., when it insensibly passed over into the period of the Apocalyptists.

before, during, and after the Babylonian exile of the Hebrews. We shall devote ourselves to them for the following reasons: first, they are in their broad general aspects characteristic prophets; second, owing to the fact that they are "literary," i. e., have left their ideas in writing, their Utopias are authentic to a greater extent than the prophetic Utopias which have been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth before being written and thus had lost many of their pristine characteristics; and third, they show most clearly the development of the utopian idea, spoken of by them as the "Messianic" state, and profess doctrines making for what we have called utopianism.

But we must even limit our field here. So we have decided to consider the works attributed to the six most important prophets of this group, namely, Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Deutero-Isaiah, who have been called the beacon lights of prophecy.²

Since this is primarily a sociological study we shall hold ourselves aloof from all theological and exegetical controversy and certain mooted points of higher criticism. We will, however, accept those interpretations of time and authorship of passages upon which we find almost universal unity of opinion among Biblical scholars. What we are concerned with above all else, are the contemporary social conditions which impelled the prophets to speak as they did; the fact that there were men in those early times who felt the need of reconstructing society; men who conceived of means to be employed in bringing about the ideal state free from the evils of the time, and who possessed the constructive imagination to foresee what this ideal commonwealth might be and to describe what they saw. Whether it was this familiar individual or that unknown one does not matter so much.

We will conclude our treatment of the six prophets mentioned with a brief summary of the sociological significance of the prophets, hoping thereby to establish them definitely as forerunners of the Utopians.

² See the book of that name by A. C. Knudson, New York, 1914.

b. Amos

The first of these prophets was Amos, a rugged, virile character who evokes our profound admiration. "Amos is one of the most marvelous and incomprehensible figures in the history of the human mind, the pioneer of a process of evolution from which a new epoch of humanity dates."³ It was he who gave impetus to that spirit of hope which we expect to trace through the following pages,—a movement centering about a perfect future state and containing the purest elements of utopianism.

Amos lived and spoke about the middle of the eighth century B. C., in the days of Jeroboam, second, of Israel, whose long brilliant reign had been marked by peace and prosperity.⁴ It was after one of Israel's periods of depression and distress when she had again raised herself to power. Her worst enemy, the kingdom of Damascus, had been decisively defeated, and was no longer dangerous; the neighboring nations had been subjected and Jeroboam II reigned over a kingdom extending from Hamath to the Dead Sea, the size and grandeur of which had not been surpassed since the days of David. Israel was the ruling nation between the Nile and the Euphrates. The internal doings were seemingly as brilliant and stupendous as they had ever been. Everything breathed of luxury and riches; ivory palaces, houses of hewn stone, castles and forts, horses and chariots, power and pomp, the luxurious and idle rich; all proclaimed the prosperity of the times.⁵ In the year 760 B. C., the Autumn festival was being celebrated at Bethel, and in accordance with the spirit of the time, revelry was the order of the day. Unwonted splendor characterized the feast, and untold sacrifices were offered. People felt that all was well.

But suddenly the festival mirth was interrupted and the merry revelers were shaken out of their complacency, for Amos, a herdsman and sycamore dresser of Tekoa, a plain-looking

³ Cornill, C. H. "The Prophets of Israel," Chicago, 1899, p. 46.

⁴ Smith, H. P. "Old Testament History," New York, 1915, pp. 177-184.

⁵ Amos 6:4-6

and lowly, but tremendously inspired man appeared among them, denouncing them and predicting their early destruction.

We ask ourselves, was Amos fit to speak as he did? We answer, yes! He was a man stern by nature. Furthermore, he was accustomed to the stern scenery of the wild country among the Judean hills around the Dead Sea. And so the loneliness of his life as a shepherd and the ruggedness of his surroundings deepened much the native sternness of his soul. He had time to brood and ponder, to appraise events, and contemplate consequences. At the same time he traveled much, because of his occupation, saw much, and came in contact with many people. It was with this clarity of vision and keenness of insight that he had drawn his conclusions and arrived at his solution. Beneath the shining surface of things his keen eyes saw the symptoms of rottenness and inevitable decay. The people were inflated and proud; the whole splendid structure of which the nation boasted was to Amos a tottering edifice, doomed to destruction. The times were those of false worship and social injustice; ritualism had supplanted spirituality and oppression had smothered justice.

The worship of God in ancient Israel had always been of a thoroughly joyful and cheerful character; it was considered to be a rejoicing in God. But by Amos's time it had degenerated to a Saturnalian orgy. Revelry and tumultuous carousings marked the festivals: drunkenness and indecency together with the most licentious debaucheries were common at the local shrines. And yet the contemporaries of Amos considered this the correct and fitting worship of God.⁶ The spirit of the age had befogged their vision. But the prophets, especially Amos, recognized in those aberrations remnants of acquired paganism, chiefly that of the Canaanites. For him the sacrifices were not only something indifferent, they were even contemptible,—a multiplication of transgressions.⁷ The sanctuaries were places of whoredom. It is for this reason that Amos cried out in protest against the ceremonies of the feast

⁶ Cornill, C. H. *op cit.*, p. 38.

⁷ Amos 4:4

at Bethel. With true social vision, he protested against this perversion of the religious rites because the whole life of the body politic was bound up in the due performance of those rites.

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

Take away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?

But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chuin your images, the star of your God, which ye made to yourselves."⁸

In the material prosperity on which the people laid so much stress the prophet saw only the social evils which prosperity had fostered. He felt it to be superficial. It was the luxury of the few at the expense of the toil of the many; consequently social injustice was rife. On the one hand the wholesale exploitation of the poor was noticeable;⁹ they were swindled by being sold bad grain, given short weight, and charged exorbitant prices.¹⁰ The courts were corrupt and venal;¹¹ justice was poisoned at its source by the love of money. The relations between tenant and landlord were favorable to the landlord alone.¹² Shameless oppression was to be seen at every hand.

On the other hand profligate extravagance and debauchery characterized the life of the fortunate classes. The rich idled in their sumptuous palaces lying on couches of ivory with damask cushions; gorging themselves with the choicest of the flocks; imbibing the costliest wines; and anointing themselves with precious oils.¹³ The voluptuous women of whom he

⁸ Amos 5:21-26.

⁹ Ibid. 4:1; 5:12,

¹⁰ Ibid. 5:11; 8:4-7.

¹¹ Ibid. 2:6.

¹² Ibid. 5:12.

¹³ Ibid. 6:4-6.

speaks as the Kine of Bashan, as always is the case in such a social system, were even more extravagant and avaricious than the men.¹⁴ All were swollen with foolish pride and wallowing in shameless luxury. Life in general was corrupt, and the evils, always prevalent at such a time, were present here in a marked degree. This corrupt condition meant a corrupt state, and a corrupt state meant corrupt individuals, and a general condition of inequality and iniquity.

It was this deplorable social corruption which incensed Amos and caused him to make the predictions he did. The sum of the message that he proclaimed with such elemental power was that a society founded upon social injustice could not endure; and that its doom as a nation was inevitable and irrevocable. As a nation it was being broken down by its own indolent, dissolute leaders, and it was soon to be broken physically and politically by the deadly onslaught of the Assyrians.¹⁵ No other fate could be in store for a nation which crushed its poor, which pandered to its lust, which stifled its conscience, which rejected its preachers, and which forgot its God. But Amos did not express the inevitableness of Israel's collapse in terms of the operation of social forces, as we should explain it to-day. The Hebrew sense of the overruling Jehovah prompted him to speak of the coming disaster as a divine infliction. He reached out to the great truth that Jehovah is only to be served through the social relationships of men. He admonishes men with tremendous, and what is oftentimes a terrible, earnestness.

"Let justice flow like a river
And righteousness like a perennial stream."¹⁶

But wherein lies the utopianism of Amos's message? It lies in the social aspect of his exhortation. The sins which Amos, like the other prophets, denounced were social sins; wrongs done to the neighbor, especially the helpless neighbor. Jehovah does not require sacrifice but righteousness between man and man. What Amos knew and what he thought everybody else

¹⁴ Ibid. 4:1.

¹⁵ The great siege ended and the exile took place about 721 B. C.—actually within thirty years after Amos had foretold it.

¹⁶ Ibid. 5:24.

ought to know was that the Almighty is ethical in his demands. Doing justice in society, bringing about fair play between man and man was the end. Amos looked forward to a world in which service and not ceremonial was the ideal; a world in which a new era of social justice would be inaugurated.¹⁷

But how was society to be recast so as to bring this social state into being? Well, his was not the message, "Down with the rich, the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie." It was "Seek the Lord and ye shall live."¹⁸ "Seek good and not evil that ye may live." "Let righteousness roll like a perennial stream."¹⁹

The ideal for which Amos pleaded so passionately was that of a well-ordered society, animated by the spirit of justice and fair play. The new, perfect society was to come about by a complete change both individually and nationally, in social relationships. This in turn depended upon a moulding anew of the social ethics, the quickening of men's innate sense of right and justice. This was only possible as the people clung more and more to Jehovah, followed His precepts, and brought their lives into conformity with His. It decreed a change of attitude, a reconstituted group-morality, an awakened spirituality, a renewed assurance of the existence of Jehovah and of His control of the universe for a moral purpose.

After the violent denunciation had fallen upon the people like a thunderbolt from the midst of a tempest, and after he had pictured to them the inevitable doom, Amos in the last chapter²⁰ portrays briefly the beautiful rainbow bursting forth after the storm had wrought its worst. It was a fleeting glimpse of a halcyon Utopia to come.²¹

¹⁷ In touching upon this phase of Amos's teaching A. C. Knudson, *op. cit.*, p. 91, has said: "Amos may be regarded as standing at the head of all those who through the ages have sought to free religion from its unnatural alliance with superstition, ceremonialism, selfishness, and tyranny, and who have endeavored to identify it with the never-ceasing struggle of the human mind for righteousness, truth, freedom, and social progress."

¹⁸ Amos 5:6.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* 5:14 and 5:24.

²⁰ Amos 9:11-15.

²¹ A large number of the critics agree that this last passage of Amos may have been added at a later date by a reviser, to add the necessary element of hope required at a time of particular social stress. This does not materially affect our general method of presentation.

In the overwhelming ruin which was at hand the sinful members of this nation, who composed the bulk, were to perish, but there remained a residue,²² comparable to the good grain which passed through the sieve and remained upon the threshing floor. The question as to the ultimate destiny of this good grain was answered by pointing to the reestablishment of the shattered power of the Davidic house. This house, though weakened by the invasion which overwhelmed Israel, survived the shock, took up unto itself all those who escaped, and was restored to its former integrity, splendor and power. In that reestablished Kingdom there was that abundance of physical blessing which was the natural production of a land flowing with milk and honey²³—blessings to be shared in perpetuity.

But the Israel which is represented as restored is not the corrupt Israel of Amos's own day; it is the Israel, which, though he does not expressly say so, is implicitly conceived as worthy of being reinstated in its ancient home. It is the nation purged of transgressions, the purified, ideal Israel of the future—a paradise regained.

c. HOSEA

Hosea made his contribution to prophetic literature between 738 and 735 B. C., about twenty-five years after the appearance of Amos.²⁴ It is in Hosea that we find the utopian elements hinted at by Amos more fully developed and also presented from a different viewpoint. It is held by some that Hosea was a farmer, and the wealth of agricultural metaphors, analogies and allusions would seem to bear out this statement, but it has been conjectured, and with greater probability, that he was a priest. As will be presently shown he had an unusually high conception of the duties of the priesthood. He also reveals a rich knowledge of the past history of his people, such as one would naturally expect of a priest;²⁵ then too, he is

²² Amos 9:9. "I will sift the house of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth."

²³ Ibid. 9:13, 14.

²⁴ Cornill, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

²⁵ Hosea 9:9; 10:9; 11:1; 12:3; 13:1.

acquainted with a written law and its requirements in which it was apparently the special function of the priest to give instruction.²⁶ It is therefore not improbable that he belonged to the priesthood, and was forced into the prophetic office by the degeneracy of his order.²⁷

This difference of origin between Amos and Hosea is one of several marked distinctions between the two. Amos is the stern moralist—a preacher of Jehovah's awfulness and majesty—sitting in judgment on his people, pronouncing them guilty, and almost rejoicing to anticipate that justice will be done. His Jehovah is essentially a criminal judge, inspiring fear, but not love; "Jehovah is justice." But Hosea is deeply emotional and sympathetic, rich in his affections, and for him "Jehovah is love"; his is a deeply moved heart torn by grief. Not that Hosea is any less severe in his judgment of the people, but because he cannot rest content with merely a negation or threat. For him Jehovah is one whom pity overcomes, One who is merciful, who cannot cast aside the people He loves; hence He will change them, improve them, educate them so as to make them fit to abide in his presence. Whilst in Amos the ethical element is predominant, in Hosea the religious element occupies the foreground.²⁸ Hosea is essentially the critic of religious observance. He makes the religious corruption of his time, including idolatry, particularly prominent, laying less stress on the distinctively ethical side of his people's life. Hosea, even more than Amos, looks upon the activities of his day with that detachment which moral insight and purity of motive alone can give.

An examination of the social background shows that Israel was rapidly approaching the doom which Amos had foretold, and the evils which he denounced so vigorously had become still more flagrant and accentuated. There was considerably less prosperity than in the time of Amos, hence the wickedness took on different forms. It was a period of anarchy and dissolution. Politically the nation was rapidly approaching bank-

²⁶ Hosea 4:6; 8:1, 12.

²⁷ Knudson, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

²⁸ Cornill, *op. cit.*, p. 47-48.

ruptcy. Kings were both murderers and usurpers; distrust was everywhere rife; current diplomacy was little more than intrigue.²⁹ Sensuality, ever the sin of the Oriental peoples, had become increasingly shameless. Robbery, murder and fornication flourished.³⁰ The causes for this widespread immorality centered about the priests and a badly deteriorated religion and were twofold, as Hosea saw more clearly and pointed out more definitely than had Amos. First, there was the detestable vileness and hypocrisy of the priests, with whom the false prophets were in league.³¹ They were not neutral but openly wicked, and when the religious leaders are torpid in callous indifference and stereotyped in false traditions, how can a nation's decadence and doom be forestalled? The priests were failing to teach and direct the people, who were consequently perishing for lack of this knowledge.³² There is even the imputation that the priests manipulated affairs to their personal profit, and that they encouraged people to sin in order that they might impose penalties upon them and exact fines.³³ In one passage he does not hesitate to accuse the priests of sins of violence.³⁴ Secondly, the worship and religion had been corrupted at its source. What had come to be the conventional worship was arrant paganism, and constituted the real cancer that was eating the life out of Israel. The worship had taken on elements of the Canaanitish observances. So the ethical Jehovah worship had been perverted into a sensuous and sensual pagan nature worship. These corrupt forms had been introduced through the alliance of King Ahab with Jezebel, a daughter of the usurper Ethbaal of Tyre, who had been a priest of Astarte.³⁵ The coarse emblems of Asherah and Ashtoreth thus brought in smoothed the way for a cultus of which the basis was open sensuality. The "adultery" and "whoredom" which are denounced so incessantly on the pages of Hosea are

²⁹ Hosea 8:4; 13:10 ff; 7:11; 5:13.

³⁰ Ibid. 4:2; 6:9, 10; 7:1, 4; 9:10; 10:11-14.

³¹ Ibid. 5:2.

³² One of the most important duties of the priests was to interpret and teach the Law. See Deut. 33:10; Lev. 10:10, 11.

³³ Hosea 4:6, 8, 9; 6:8.

³⁴ Ibid. 6:9.

³⁵ Farrar, F. W., "The Minor Prophets," New York, 1890, pp. 79, 80.

not only the metaphors for idolatry, but the literal description of the lives which that idolatry corrupted.³⁶ Hence at the popular festivals the orgies and debaucheries received the religious sanction. The altars on the high hills were places of iniquity. At them prostitution was regularly practiced.³⁷ It was for this reason that Hosea denounced the priests and a popular religion which smacked of Canaanitish origin, while Amos condemned the wealthy and aristocratic for their injustice and oppression.

Amos felt that it was his mission to tell a smug and contented people rejoicing in prosperity that their social fabric was rotten and was really tottering to its fall, while Hosea had to call a broken, troubled, corruption-ridden society back to its religious loyalty as the only hope of political and social salvation.³⁸

He drew an analogy between his own unfortunate marital experience and Israel. He married Gomer, at first pure, but who later turned out to be an unworthy, profligate person, who made shipwreck of their married life. Reflecting on this, Hosea saw something which taught him the heart of Jehovah toward Israel. He himself in his mixed and harrowing feelings toward Gomer was a type of Jehovah. His loathing abhorrence of her sin, his flaming indignation at her infidelity, and, stronger than either, his tender compassion at the depth of misery to which she reduced herself, are but a reflection of Jehovah's feelings toward His people.³⁹ Israel's unfaithfulness was the unfaithfulness of a wife; she had given preference to another lord, Baal. As Gomer erred, so Israel as a nation erred. Jehovah has an indictment against his people, says Hosea; there is no fidelity and no knowledge of Jehovah in the land; there is naught but breaking faith and killing and stealing, and committing adultery.⁴⁰ Therefore this people must be given over to perdition. "For they have sown the wind, and

³⁶ Ibid. p. 80.

³⁷ Hosea 4:13.

³⁸ Soares, T. G., "The Social Institutions and Ideals of the Bible," New York, 1915., p. 226.

³⁹ Cheyne, T. K., "Hosea" in the Cambridge Bible, p. 21.

⁴⁰ Hosea 4:1, 2.

they shall reap the whirlwind.”⁴¹ But Jehovah has no personal object in this judgment; He wishes thereby to lead these foolish and blinded hearts to reflection and self-knowledge.

Hosea sets forth his utopianism and his Utopia in many scattered passages throughout his book. His utopianism centers about the principle of Divine love. It is his purpose to set forth this love in its moral nature, as opposed to the altogether non-moral and quasi-physical union supposed to exist between a heathen deity and his worshippers.⁴² Jehovah in His infinite love will follow after His socially, politically and religiously corrupt people into their misery and degradation until they depart from their erring ways and permit Him to minister to them through the agency of His love. Only as they assume this submission can they hope for a lasting and profitable life. Jehovah wants pure and unadulterated love and faithfulness rather than sacrifices, and knowledge of Himself rather than burnt offerings,⁴³ and as the people conform themselves to this standard will they approach perfection. When the people approach Jehovah in their distress, openly confess to Him their transgressions, and become properly penitent, then will He accept them into grace and they will be His people and He will be their God.⁴⁴ The central idea of Hosea’s teaching expressed throughout his pages is that fatherly love is the foremost attribute of Jehovah and that it alone is the great reconstructing force of which society can avail itself in order to work out its redemption. But it is not only the love of Jehovah for Israel of which he speaks, for, in catching his spirit, we feel that he also emphasizes the love of man to man as a fundamental reconstructing agency in the social organism.

Of the Utopia we obtain but occasional glimpses.⁴⁵ It is the natural outcome of the prophet’s doctrine of divine love, and an integral part of his message. He seems to have used these various utopian fragments as a sort of lure to woo the people on to obedience to Jehovah. It is the picture of a rehabilitated,

⁴¹ Ibid. 8:7.

⁴² Cheyne, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

⁴³ Hosea 6:6.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 2:21-23; 5:15; 6:1-3; 14:4.

⁴⁵ For Utopian passages see Hosea 1:10, 11; 2:14-23; 3:1-5; 14:1-8.

purified people after the Covenant. It is to be a new betrothal. Right and justice, grace and pity, love and faith will be the blessings of this new time. The bow and the sword shall be broken and the battles that had harrassed Israel so long shall be ended. The earth shall bring forth its wealth of products. It will be a righteous and peaceful people living in harmony with Jehovah and enjoying physical abundance.⁴⁶

d. ISAIAH

Isaiah is the third historically of the prophets, the social background and utopianism of whom we are considering, his period of activity extending from about 740 to 700 B. C. He stands out in many respects in marked contrast to his immediate prophetic predecessors, Amos and Hosea. Like Amos, he was a native of Judah. But Amos was a man of lowly station; a sheep-herder and a nature-man; an inhabitant of the moorlands and hills and open places; self-tutored, and disciplined by rigorous experience. Hosea's home was in the northern kingdom, Israel, where he doubtless was a priest. But Isaiah was a noble and courtier, by some accounts even of royal birth. This we infer from the fact that he seems to have had ready access to the king and court.⁴⁷ He was an inhabitant of the capital city. Nor was he an untaught man like Amos, but was a scholar, fully acquainted with the literature of the past,—one who shared in that revival of culture and learning which seems to have marked the reign of Hezekiah.⁴⁸ Unlike his predecessors Isaiah did not hold himself aloof from the political life of his time. The ministry of Amos was apparently of brief duration; he came, spoke and wrote, and then passed away into obscurity. Hosea seems to have stood apart from the controlling forces of the nation's life. But Isaiah spent nearly half a century as the councillor, advisor and critic of kings; a statesman who took a keen interest and played a vital rôle in the politics of his day. Like the prophets of old ⁴⁹ he assumed the rôle of the practical statesman, watching the intrigues of the

⁴⁶ Hosea 2:18–22.

⁴⁷ Isaiah 7:3 ff., 8:2; 22:15 ff.

⁴⁸ Sayce, A. H., "The Life and Times of Isaiah," London, 1890, p. 14.

⁴⁹ Samuel and his immediate successors.