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The Social Gospel

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could not see the devil. We, too, are sick with this horrible disease that we would be wise and knowing in the devil's name. . . . This is the lesson we must learn: not to be wise in our own conceit, but just close our eyes, simply stick to Christ's word, go to Him on His kind and gracious bidding, and say: Thou alone art my dear Lord and Master; I am Thy pupil" (XII:1260, 1264).

TH. ENGELDER

The Social Gospel

(With Special Reference to Walter Rauschenbusch)

"Why bother about the social gospel?" a man recently told the present writer. "The social gospel is dead and buried. No one concerns himself about it any more. It has been superseded by the theology of Karl Barth in its various forms, by the religious philosophy of Kierkegaard, by the neo-orthodoxy of Niebuhr and others, and by a number of other movements and developments."

That may be true enough, on the basis of outward appearances. However, we have a parallel phenomenon in Unitarianism. This also was declared to be dead, at least a half century ago. The truth is that it was no longer a positive factor in the church life of America, simply because it had penetrated and permeated practically all those churches, no matter what their antecedents, in which liberalism had become established. The deity of Christ, the personality of the Holy Ghost, had been denied by so many preachers and theologians for so long a time that Unitarianism was practically rampant in many church groups. The same thing holds true for the social gospel in the modern world. It may no longer be a separate movement in the Christian churches of America for the simple reason that it has absorbed or has been absorbed by a great many church bodies as well as individual congregations with their pastors, that it has become part and parcel of much of the religious thinking (and writing) of America. Hence it will be an interesting, if not a profitable, task to inquire into its antecedents, origin, and tenets, and then to examine its present status in the Christian churches of America.

The antecedents of the social gospel are clearly discernible in the religious philosophy of Schleiermacher, with its vague subjectivism, excluding the objective certainty of the grace of God in Christ. Schleiermacher erred with regard to the doctrine of the atonement and therefore also of justification; he erred with regard to the concept "faith"; he erred with regard to the inspiration of the Holy Scripture, referring to an "illumination" of the writers rather than the miracle of inspiration; he was not even clear in

his teaching on the Holy Trinity. He apparently placed all religions on the same level.¹⁾

Another source for the ideas which were expressed in the social gospel are the writings of Albrecht Ritschl. Among the strange ideas which he promulgated is that of explaining "eternal life" as man's control and government of the world. One of his sayings, which is often quoted, states: "Christianity is the monotheistic, perfectly spiritual and moral religion, which, on the basis of the life of its Founder, as of Him who redeemed and established the Kingdom of God, consists in the liberty of the divine sonship, containing in itself the impetus through the love whose object is the moral organization of mankind, and laying the foundation of salvation at the same time in the divine sonship and in the Kingdom of God."²⁾ The position of Ritschl has recently been summarized as follows: "He teaches that the facts on which theology is based are to be sought in religious consciousness or feeling, and nowhere else. As for the Scriptures, he denied their inspiration and authority. The follower of Ritschl seeks God and theological truth in himself. He says he finds 'an indefinite and indefinable feeling which he believes to be God.' . . . Ritschl rejected the deity of Christ, but thought that Jesus was a religious genius, a religious hero who had progressed so far in moral and spiritual attainments that He has to the Christian 'the value of God.' . . . Ritschl speaks of Jesus as divine, but flatly denies His divine nature. He also denies His miraculous birth, His miracles, His resurrection. On the atonement of Christ he wrote a large work in which he defends a doctrine which leaves out the cardinal points of the substitutional sacrifice of Christ."³⁾

Such is the background of the social gospel, as described also by W. A. Brown, a follower of Ritschl in our country.⁴⁾ Vagaries such as this form the foundation for a structure which was built up in the last decades of the last and in the first decades of the present century. It is a philosophy whose force, as indicated above, has by no means been spent, but exerts its power in many ways to this day. The fact that the most comprehensive and sympathetic biography of Walter Rauschenbusch, the high priest of this movement in our country, was issued only two years ago in itself indicates that we are dealing with forces which still constitute a menace for confessional Christianity.⁵⁾

Walter Rauschenbusch (1861—1918) spent a part of his child-

1) See *Proceedings of the Kansas District*, 1921, pp. 16—19.

2) *Reden und Vortraege*, II:14, 15.

3) Horsch, *Modern Religious Liberalism*, p. 62 f.

4) *Outlines of Christian Theology*, p. 340.

5) Sharpe, Doris Robinson. *Walter Rauschenbusch*. Macmillan, 1942.

hood in Germany, where he was enrolled in the celebrated nursery school at Neuwied and received many impressions which influenced his entire life. He attended secondary schools in Rochester, N. Y., where he acquitted himself with such distinction that his father sent him to Germany, where he first studied at the Gymnasium of Guetersloh and later traveled. He did some preparatory work for the ministry and accepted an appointment as summer supply in a small German Baptist church in Louisville, Ky., in 1884, returning to this post in 1885. He continued his seminary work at Rochester, completing the final courses in 1886. For some years he was active in inner mission work in New York and elsewhere. During this time his religious social theories developed and found an ever-increasing audience. With two friends he organized "The Brotherhood of the Kingdom," a group which became increasingly active in spreading the ideas of "Christian social service," "social Christianity," and the "social gospel." In 1897 Rauschenbusch was called to Rochester Theological Seminary as professor of New Testament interpretation, natural sciences, and civil government, to which were later added zoology, English, and other subjects. Here he did his life work, especially after he, in 1902, accepted the chair of church history. His dynamic way of teaching soon gave him a great following and increased his sphere of influence immensely, particularly also through his books. One of these, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (last edition 1937), had a sale of over fifty thousand copies, while the others easily exceeded half that amount. He was quoted everywhere, and some of his admirers were extravagant in their praise of him. He was called "the prophet of the New Reformation," "a modern prophet of the Kingdom of God," "a friend of humanity," and even "Defensor Fidei."

But what about the theology for the social gospel?

We find, in the first place, that the men who have taught the social gospel *do not regard and employ the Bible as the inerrant Word of God*. Nowhere is the solid foundation of the Sacred Record emphasized. On the contrary, the disciples of this school seem to regard Christianity as one of the great religions of the world and its sacred Book as one of those which have found recognition. J. F. Clarke writes: "The curious fact in regard to this theory of verbal inspiration is that the Bible itself makes no such claim. . . . Inspiration means the descent of some higher truth into the soul by vital processes, not merely logical or mechanical."⁶ G. B. Smith asserts: "The Bible is valued today because of its actual power to quicken our religious and moral ideals rather than because of any particular theory concerning its origin."⁷ And by another man of

6) *Common Sense in Religion*, pp. 87, 90. Cp. pp. 93, 91.

7) *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology*, p. 217.

the group we are told: "Reverent appreciation of the Bible as our ultimate literary expression of the life of the Spirit does not compel one to accept blindly or to interpret literally every narrative or statement it contains. Here, as in all ancient history and literature, criticism has a great sifting process to perform. And the more searchingly and thoroughly this is done, the more valuable and reliable will the book become."⁸⁾ The entire attitude of the theology for the social gospel is that of subjectivism, of applying the yardstick of human wisdom to the eternal verities of the inspired Record. In chapter III of his book, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, Rauschenbusch himself, as the prophet of the new order, places the entire New Testament teaching into the category of uncertain sources, calling the information meager and incomplete and stating that "of those writings which did survive only a limited number were embodied in the canon of the New Testament."⁹⁾ The "leading them into all the truth" and "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" evidently did not mean much to the apostles of the new social order. Wherever we may open a book written by these men, we may be sure to find vague and inadequate statements concerning the Bible. There is none of the boldness that can say, in full confidence: "Thus saith the Lord."

In the second place (and this is the most significant aberration and denial of Scripture truth), the theology of the social gospel sets aside the *Biblical doctrine concerning sin and grace*, that is, the atonement wrought for sinners through the vicarious suffering of the Son of God. Their conception of sin is totally inadequate. Rauschenbusch writes: "The traditional doctrine of the Fall is the product of speculative interest mainly. . . . It would strengthen the appeal of the social gospel if evil could be regarded as a variable factor in the life of humanity. . . . Sin is essentially selfishness. . . . To find the climax of sin, we must not linger over a man who swears or sneers at religion or denies the mystery of the Trinity, but put our hands on social groups who have turned the patrimony of a nation into the private property of a small class or have left the peasant-laborers cowed, degraded, demoralized, and without rights in the land."¹⁰⁾ Similar expressions abound in the books of the social gospelites. "Sin is villainy in public life."¹¹⁾ "Sin is the destruction of the interests of society and of other individuals, in order to secure the immediate gratification of the sinner at the social expense."¹²⁾ "What the theologians call original sin the

8) Hyde, *Social Theology*, p. 192. 9) P. 101.

10) *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, pp. 41, 43, 45.

11) Clarke, *Common Sense in Religion*, p. 131.

12) Hyde, *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 92.

new theology does not believe in. . . . Sin cannot be inherited." ¹³⁾ Rauschenbusch even has what he evidently considered a plausible explanation of what is commonly called sin in orthodox parlance: "According to evolutionary science the impulses connected with our alimentary and reproductive organs run far back in the evolution of the race and are well established and imperious, whereas the social, altruistic, and spiritual impulses are of recent development and relatively weak." ¹⁴⁾

Naturally, the Scriptural teaching concerning forgiveness and grace have no room in such a plan. Self-righteousness and work-righteousness are the chief characteristics of the social gospel. Gladden writes: "He who has learned to love God, who is the perfect Goodness and Truth, with the highest love of his heart, and to love his neighbor as himself, is a saved man, no matter what creed he may confess or what language he may speak. . . . The very beginning of salvation, I say, is the change of mind by which you come to see and realize that the way of Christ, which is the way of unselfishness, is the right way for you to live."¹⁵⁾ And Rauschenbusch expresses himself in the same vague and inadequate manner: "A salvation confined to the soul and its personal interests is an imperfect and only partly effective salvation. . . . The form which the process of redemption takes in a given personality will be determined by the historical and social spiritual environment of the man. At any rate, any religious experience in which our fellow men have no part or thought does not seem to be a distinctively Christian experience. . . . Complete salvation, therefore, would consist in an attitude of love in which man would freely co-ordinate his life with the life of his fellows in obedience to the loving impulses of the spirit of God, thus taking his part in the divine organism of mutual service."¹⁶⁾

What about the Cross and the redemption through the blood of Calvary? Rauschenbusch states: "He [Christ] saw a red line running through history, and His own life and death were part of it. He Himself generalized the social value of His peculiar experience and taught us to see the Cross as a great social principle of the Kingdom of God."¹⁷⁾ In the opinion of G.B. Smith redemption involves the following factors: "The salvation which we may have through Christ is located in the power of the Christian community to transmit from generation to generation the God-consciousness which is possible because of the moral courage and the spiritual

13) Gladden, *Present-Day Theology*, pp. 69, 73.

14) Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 58.

15) *Present-Day Theology*, pp. 83, 85.

16) *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, pp. 95, 97, 98.

17) *The Social Principles of Jesus*, p. 175.

insight created by our acquaintance with Christ." ¹⁸⁾ All of which seems to mean: If all men follow the example of Christ closely, so that the entire community is filled with that consciousness, then such a community possesses salvation. According to Hyde the situation is still more simple: "The redemption of the world means the prevalence of a healthy, happy, holy, human life." ¹⁹⁾ We could quote at length also from Sellars and from Vedder, the latter, for example, ridiculing the idea that God sent His Son to pay the penalty of our sins, which He bore in our behalf. Clarke goes into the matter of the atonement at some length: "So it is true that it has been believed that Jesus Christ as our Substitute did actually suffer the spiritual and eternal death which is the penalty of sin. But it is safe to say that nothing so horrible as this has been taught in any theological seminary in this country for the past hundred years. . . . Christ died in our behalf, but not in our stead. . . . It may be well to say that those old figures of ransom, of debt, of juridical necessity, of governmental policy, are utterly incapable of explaining the matter. . . . The new theology teaches that God does not need to be appeased or placated and that nothing needs to be done for His government to make it possible for Him to forgive and save the sinner. . . . This is the atonement, it is the revelation of God to men, when they see Him as He is and know Him, then they are reconciled to Him." ²⁰⁾

But how do the proponents of the social gospel understand the word "faith"? Clarke indicates that it is about the same feeling that drove Columbus over the western ocean in 1492. Speer puts it thus: "Faith in God, in the reality and supremacy of the moral and spiritual values, interests, and forces, faith in man." ²¹⁾ Hyde puts it thus: "We must lay hold of the good we have not yet attained. And this apprehension of unrealized goodness is faith." ²²⁾ And Clarke tops the false and inadequate notions regarding the meaning of faith when he states: "We mean that Christ in His life and character shows us how God feels, that He reveals God, and that when we see how Christ loved, spoke, acted, under any circumstances, we see how God would act, feel, and speak under the same circumstances. . . . All real knowledge has its roots in faith; all moral power is born of faith; all generous goodness and truth is rooted in faith. Jesus came to seek and save lost souls by giving them some clear, strong convictions by

18) *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, p. 231.

19) *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 228.

20) *Common Sense in Religion*, pp. 158, 159, 164 f.

21) *The New Opportunity of the Church*.

22) *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 114.

which to live and die." 23) If we compare this shallow definition making with the clear presentation of the essence of saving faith as given in Scripture, we cannot but have a feeling of sadness for the souls who are led astray by such falsehoods.

That the theologians of the social gospel do not even possess the slightest apprehension of the Scripture facts concerning the way of salvation is evident from many passages. Thus Rauschenbusch falls hopelessly short of the truth when he writes: "These traditional theological explanations of the death of Christ have less Biblical authority than we are accustomed to suppose. The fundamental terms and ideas — 'satisfaction,' 'substitution,' 'imputation,' 'merit,' are post-Biblical ideas and are alien from the spirit of the gospel. . . . How did Jesus bear sins which He did not commit? The old theology replied, By imputation. But guilt and merit are personal. They cannot be transferred from one person to another. We tamper with moral truths when we shuffle them about. Imputation is a legal device to enable the law to hold one man responsible for the crime committed by another. Imputation sees mankind as a mass of individuals, and the debts of every individual are transferred to Christ. The solution does not lie in that way. Neither is it enough to say that Jesus bore our sins by sympathy. . . . The solution of the problem lies in the recognition of solidarity. . . . Our analysis of race sin culminated in the recognition of a kingdom of evil. Jesus lived in the midst of that kingdom, and it was this which killed Him." 24) The horrifying ignorance and blindness of this man is shared by Hyde: "To condemn a sinner because of his sin to more misery than the direct consequences of his sin involve, to keep him in condemnation and punishment after he had repented of his sin and was trying to overcome it, would be an act not of a Father, but of a brute; not of God, but of a devil. It would be an act, not of truth and light and love, but of falsehood and darkness and malignity." 25) These are statements whose falseness and blasphemy can be refuted by the average Lutheran catechumen. What is the place of Christ in this system? Sellars puts it briefly thus: "Jesus, the Carpenter, with His kindly word for the poor and downtrodden and His scorn for the haughty and rich, has become the symbol and sign of a new social ethics." 26)

The social gospel not only denies the most fundamental doctrines of the Bible, but has laid its blasphemous hands on practically every teaching of Christianity which did not agree with the system that Rauschenbusch and his followers had built up. Concerning

23) *Common Sense in Religion*, pp. 345, 349.

24) *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, pp. 242, 245.

25) *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 134.

26) *The Next Step in Religion*.

the creation of the world Gladden writes: "We know that the old idea that the creation of man took place about 4,000 years before Christ was born is altogether inadequate. We have a pre-Hebrew, a prehistoric world of unimaginable extent and impressiveness to confront us, a world beside whose population the inhabitants of the entire historic period are but as a drop to the ocean."²⁷⁾

With regard to the miracles of Scripture some of these social-gospel theologians wax almost facetious. In many instances they evade the issue by simply declaring that occurrences which do not agree with human science cannot be accepted. Even in the Virgin Birth God is said to have made use of ordinary instruments, and parthenogenesis occurs in lower forms of animal life. The miraculous feeding of the sons of the prophets, according to these modern scribes, was simply due to the fact that the young men lost their appetite and that for this reason the small quantity of food was sufficient. Gladden puts it thus: "It is true indeed that we cannot deny to God this power, but with our present habits of thinking we might find it difficult to believe that, if He had this power, He would exercise it."²⁸⁾

One of the reasons why the social gospelites utter such nonsense is due to the fact that they teach the immanence of God without His transcendence. Gladden writes: "The immanence of God is the central truth of the present-day theology."²⁹⁾ The explanation is to be found in the fact, as Rauschenbusch explains the situation, that God is immanent in nature, in mankind, that the term "god" is merely a sanctified expression for everything that has being, that God and the world, the universe, are identical, that God is the world energy, the sum total of all its natural laws. This nonsense has been branded as such so frequently in Christian literature that it would be superfluous to enumerate the clear teaching that completely discredits all such sensational balderdash.

What about the doctrine of God in social theology? According to G. B. Smith, God is "the spiritual forces of the world in which we live," "the unseen forces of the universe."³⁰⁾ According to another modern teacher we are to accept the definition: "God is my deeper self and yours, too; He is the self of the universe." Another has declared: "Do you ask me whether God is simply the spirit of humanity? I reply that God is essentially and simply just that."³¹⁾ The Biblical doctrine of the Trinity has been completely disfigured and emasculated, even though the orthodox designations are sometimes retained. Thus King writes: "The

27) *Present-Day Theology*, p. 11.

28) *Op. cit.*, p. 44.

29) *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

30) *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, pp. 537, 511.

31) Cp. Horsch, *Modern Religious Liberalism*, p. 76.

Biblical Trinity is in truth what it has sometimes been called, the trinity of redemption, and for me directly emphasizes the great facts of redemption. Here there are three great facts: First, the fatherhood of God, that God is in His very being Father, Love, self-manifesting as light, self-giving as life, self-communicating, pouring Himself out into the life of His children, wishing to share His highest life with them, every one. Secondly, the concrete, unmistakable revelation of the Father in Christ, revealed in full ethical perfection, as an actual fact to be known and experienced; no longer an unknown, hidden, or only partially and imperfectly revealed God, but a real, living God of character, counting as a real, appreciable, but fully appreciable fact in the real world. And, thirdly, the Father revealing Himself by His Spirit in every individual heart that opens itself to Him, in a constant, intimate divine association, which yet is never obtrusive, but reverent of the man's personality, making possible to every man the ideal conditions of the richest life."³²⁾ With such hollow mockery hiding the truth of Scriptures, it is no wonder that Clarke dares to exclaim: "The Christian, worshiping in name the true God, worships in reality the false one; and the pagan, worshiping in name Jupiter, worships in reality the God and Father of Jesus Christ."³³⁾ Such statements not only *approach* blasphemy, for they *are* a direct transgression of the First Commandment. As may be supposed, the deity of Christ is not accepted by the theologians of the social gospel. They use the term divinity, but deny the essential sonship of Jesus. G. B. Smith writes: "The divinity of Christ . . . must be sought in the God-consciousness which dominated His life. It is only as we share this God-consciousness and thus discover God within our life that we can confess our belief in the divinity of Christ in any religious sense."³⁴⁾ Just as nebulous and out of harmony with clear Scriptural statements is the explanation of Hyde: "What, then is sonship? Who, then, is the Son of God? The Son of God is He who, in the cramping limitations of space, under the evanescent form of time, with the finite instrument of flesh, and with the partial knowledge which is conditioned by a particular human brain, still sees nature as the expression of an omniscient Mind; beholds human society as the unfolding of one universal Will; recognizes every man as the reproduction of the thought and the will of the Father; accepts every duty and relationship of life as an opportunity to do the will of the Father and to bring men to the consciousness of their sonship to God and their brotherhood with each other."³⁵⁾

32) *Theology and Its Social Consciousness*, pp. 225, 226.

33) *Common Sense in Religion*, p. 65.

34) *Social Idealism and the Changing Theology*, p. 231.

35) *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 50.

As one may expect under such circumstances, the doctrine of the Holy Ghost is also completely distorted. Hyde explains it in the following words: "The spirit of social service is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father; for if there were no absolute and eternal thought and will binding all men together in the unity of one conception and one purpose, then it would be ultra-rational, absurd, to live a life in which the social good should be the aim of individual endeavor. The Holy Spirit is the realization of the will of God in the life of humanity. The Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son, as the later creed rightly affirms; for without the example and inspiration of one to whom the Spirit was given without measure, and who embodies the perfection of the Father's will and manifests the completeness of the social service, the reproduction of the divine life among frail, finite men would have been feeble, fickle, and fragmentary. The Holy Spirit is Christ multiplied into individuals and reproduced in institutions. . . . The Holy Spirit is the thought of God, the life of Christ, reproduced on those who obey God and follow Christ." ³⁶⁾ But, we ask, Where is the personality of the Holy Ghost, and where are the personal functions which are so definitely taught in the Holy Scriptures?

Quite naturally, the doctrine of the virgin birth goes by the board, at least in the opinion of the theologians of the social gospel. Hyde writes: "Belief in the divinity of Christ [namely, as he interprets the term] does not rest on such narratives as the accounts of the 'Gospel of the Infancy' introduced into the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke, and is entirely independent of the question whether we interpret these narratives as fact or fancy, poetry or prose. Any attempt to base the belief in the divinity of Christ on the miraculous is sure to alienate multitudes of honest minds, who will thus be led to regard it as simply one among the many deifications of saints and heroes with which the legends of antiquity abound." ³⁷⁾ Gladden is just as cool in setting aside the virgin birth of Christ when he writes: "The truth is that nothing is added to the moral greatness of Christ by insisting on this doctrine, and nothing subtracted from His essential divinity by the belief that He entered the world in a way that God has sanctified for all His children; and all disputation about the subject is not only unprofitable, but unseemly." ³⁸⁾

If space would permit, we could present additional material to show that the theology of the social gospel as taught by Rauschenbusch and his followers denies also the following Scripture truths: the doctrine of the devil and of the evil angels, the doctrine of the Sacraments, the doctrine of immortality, the doctrine

36) *Op. cit.*, pp. 80, 82.

37) *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

38) *Present-Day Theology*, p. 143.

of hell. On the last-named point Rauschenbusch has this to say: "No man, in any human sense of justice, has deserved an eternity of hell. . . . Today many Protestants are allowing the physical fires of hell to go out, and make the pain of hell to consist in the separation from God. They base the continuance of hell not on the sovereign decree of God, but on the progressive power of sin which gradually extinguishes all love of good and therewith all capacity for salvation."³⁹ And Gladden declares: "Heaven is not limited to any place in this life or the next; it has no boundaries. . . . The essential elements of heaven and hell are in every man's heart, in every man's life. . . . The substance of hell is alienation from, and enmity against, God. . . . Heaven and hell are not, primarily, places; they are states of character. They are not confined to the other side of death, they are here and now."⁴⁰ This may suffice to characterize the anti-Scriptural, anti-Christian nature of the social gospel and its theology.

In conclusion, however, it is necessary to point to the most significant feature of the social gospel, namely, its thorough present-worldliness. Its exponents delight in bandying about the concept "Kingdom of God." They have, of course, abandoned the clear teaching of the Bible on this point, especially as offered in Rom. 14: 16, 17 and elsewhere, and proudly proclaim a kingdom which consists essentially in the amelioration of social conditions in this world. All the books written by Rauschenbusch are based on this feature. According to him the Kingdom of God is "the right social order" (chapters IV—VI). He states: "The conception of the Kingdom of God has forged to the front as the modern spirit has come to religious self-consciousness, and has been enlarged and modernized to make it the adequate receptacle for the vaster range of present-day knowledge. In recent years it has become the common possession of thoughtful religious men. Every constructive force in modern religion has contributed to its ascendancy. . . . The spread of evolutionary ideas is another mark of religious thought. . . . It has prepared us for understanding the Reign of God toward which all creation is moving. Translate the evolutionary theories into religious faith, and you have the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. This combination with scientific evolutionary thought has freed the Kingdom ideal of its catastrophic setting and its background of demonism, and so adapted it to the climate of the modern world."⁴¹ When one reads the same author's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, especially pp. 54—57, one is astounded to find that a man who professes to be a Christian can be so hopelessly

39) *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 233.

40) *Op. cit.*, pp. 96, 102, 115.

41) *Christianizing the Social Order*, pp. 89, 90.

muddled in his thinking on facts so clearly taught in the Bible, facts which certainly oppose his notions of the "Kingdom" in every way. Yet the other men in the field evidently share the views of their "prophet." Hyde writes: "The Kingdom of God is realized in actual service of the world, in costly sacrifice for men, in the heat of the conflict, and in the joy of achieved victory."⁴²⁾

No wonder that the aim and object of the Church's work is completely misunderstood and misrepresented by the teachers of the social gospel. It is evident throughout their writings that they are concerned only with the "here and now," that the real spiritual values of the Gospel and of the way of salvation are not accepted by them. Speer names as the "present business of the Church: to supply ideals for society and for humanity and the convictions which must sustain such ideals."⁴³⁾ Ward states it in this form: "The world needs a social religion, a religion dealing with all the business of life, including every interest, covering work as well as prayer, and which will be just as vital in the factory, the shop, and the mind, as in the home or the church."⁴⁴⁾ Just as though the Christian religion, in the proper sequence and with the proper foundation, were not supplying the needs of men in all circumstances of life. But it is undoubtedly the nebulous character of the social gospel, with its many half-truths, and with its habit of "covering the substance of hell with the livery of heaven," together with man's inveterate inclination toward self-righteousness, that has made the social gospel such a potent force in all modernistic movements.

P. E. KRETZMANN

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