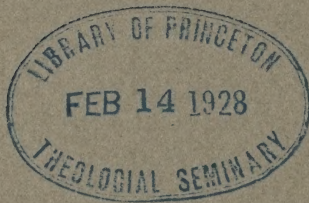


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The Importance of the Social Sciences for the Modern Minister

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*Commission on Christianity
and Social Problems
Evangelical Synod of North America*

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES FOR THE MODERN MINISTER

BY PROFESSOR PHILIP VOLLMER, PH.D., D.D.

We are living in serious but great times. In the words of Schiller, "Old things are passing away, the times are changing; but out of the ruins of the old new life is springing." Modern civilization is at present slowly but surely passing through another of its great historical turning points towards a new social order. The world is in the throes of a tremendous social revolution, or its aftermath, partly of a bloody nature as in Germany, Russia and China, partly silent, as in England, India, Africa, France, Italy and the United States. These silent or thundering revolutions have accentuated old social problems and raised new ones. Everywhere, all classes of the people discuss the problems of the church and the changing order, of democracy and dictatorship, of the modern family and the youth movement, of nationalism and the international mind, of imperialism and extensive war preparedness, of the new woman and the old moralities, of the rise of the labor class and of communism. Men call these problems burning and pressing, and so they appear to all who have a mind trained to interpret the signs of the times.

In this new epoch of human history, which the World War has ushered in, the demand becomes louder every day, inside and outside of the Church, at home and abroad, that the churches should make a much larger contribution to world reconstruction than hitherto, by a more fearless discharge of their peculiar mission as God's prophets to the nations, that is, by a stricter and more uncompromising proclamation of the social gospel in the sense in which Christ, according to the New Testament, taught it, so that the new civilization which at present is in the making may not only be new but also better and higher for individual and group life.

As all the perplexing problems with which the world is grappling are more or less of a social and economic nature, it follows that the churches must equip their ministers more adequately than hitherto for their part in the struggle, enabling them to discern and rightly interpret the signs of the times, to understand what it is all about, what the millions of men are agonizing for, what the church is to bless and what to condemn. Hence the great value and importance of an adequate study of the social sciences for the successful work confronting the minister of Christ's gospel in these

modern times. For in order to proceed intelligently in the effort to Christianize the new social order, the leaders must know precisely what the old and dying order really is, what the new demands are, and what principles Christ urges for a better world. In the words of Rev. R. Todt, the co-laborer of Dr. Stoecker in Germany, "Whoever would understand the social question and would contribute to its solution, must have on his right hand the works on political economy, on his left the platform of Socialism and before him the New Testament."

What Is Meant by the Social Sciences?

As distinguished from the groups of the natural, the philosophical, the historical, the linguistic, the theological and other sciences, we understand by the social sciences the whole group of studies which deal with men in their group relations, "*socius*" meaning comrade, companion. Like all sciences in this age of research and specialization, the social science group also has branched out into a network of chief- and subdivisions. Perhaps the best classification is that given by Blackman and Gillin in "Outlines of Sociology," as follows:

I. *Sociology*.—Social origins, social evolution, social psychology, social pathology, social control, history of sociology.

II. *Economics*.—Economic theories and institutions, taxation and finance, labor legislation, banking and monetary theories, industrial history.

III. *Politics or Civics*.—Political theories, national administration, diplomacy and international law, municipal administration, history of politics.

IV. *Ethics*.—Principles of ethics, social ethics, history of ethics.

V. *Anthropology*.—Ethnology, ethnography, archaeology.

VI. *History*.—Historical geography, history of institutions, and civilization.

VII. *Comparative Religion*.—History of religion, philosophy and psychology of religion.

It is of course not to be expected that the average minister of the Gospel should be intimately acquainted with all of these branches of the social sciences, but with the following he should certainly have a "speaking acquaintance." (1) *Sociology*, which treats of the beginnings, the history, the structure, the institutions, the diseases of human society and their healing. (2) *Economics* or political economy, which treats of national housekeeping, that is, of the creation, distribution and consumption of goods and services necessary for the satisfaction of human wants. (3) *Politics*

or Civics, which is the science of government treating of the origin, form and function of the state. (4) *Social ethics*, which is the science of public morality, dealing with social ideals and standards of group living.

The Importance of the Social Sciences to the Minister

First. An adequate knowledge of the social sciences will enable a pastor to discharge all the multitudinous duties of the Christian ministry with greater efficiency and more success. The function of the Church in this modern world is threefold:

(1) A Prophetic Function of Social Criticism. The Church is the conscience of society. As such she must maintain her sensitiveness to social injustice and her freedom to condemn it. She must therefore preserve her independence of all social powers, whether economic or political, and all conventions, theories or institutions, as well as of her own material interests (as an institution); she must eschew all alliances and commitments whereby her readiness to declare "Thus saith the Lord" might at any moment be impaired.

(2) An Evangelistic Function of Social Inspiration, by holding up the ideal of the kingdom of heaven and its progressive realization in a Christian commonwealth and a commonwealth of mankind; by enlisting the solemn and joyous service of men as fellow-workers with God in His "new creation;" by quickening and hallowing all social impulse and endeavor with the motive of Christian love.

(3) A Pastoral Function of Social Sympathy, with special care, after the manner of Jesus, for the socially "unfit"—for the weak, the poor, the erring and the fallen. This feature, so prominent in the personal ministry of Jesus and the example of the early church, must never be allowed to become less conspicuous. The glory of the Church is to "preach the Gospel to the poor."

These functions the minister may discharge successfully only in the measure that he understands the principles and laws operating in human society. Effective Christian preaching is not the presentation of the truths of Christ's Gospel in an abstract and a haphazard manner but their application to the present concrete conditions and needs of men as individuals and in their social group relations. Hence, just like a successful farmer, a teacher of religion needs to know soils as well as seeds.

Secondly. Sociological knowledge will open the minister's eyes to those definite, concrete conditions which in a special manner hinder the success of the churches in their race-uplifting work. Among these conditions are the intense struggle for existence, the

incessant conflict between capital and labor, and the estrangement of the masses, especially of laboring men, from the church. The great majority of working men do not care for the church, because they think the church does not care for them. The church, like the law, they say, is always on the side of capital against labor. This may not be true in the broad sense in which it is so often affirmed. But if the church had always plainly manifested the spirit of Christ, there would have been no occasion for the suspicion that she is partial to kid gloves and money bags. In the words of Rauschenbusch: "The actual results of our present social order are in acute contradiction to the Christian conceptions of justice and brotherhood." Present civilization is venerated, underneath which exists barbarism in its most malignant form. Sir Philip Gibbs recently said: "No man, unless he is drunk with optimism, can deny that the world is very sick, and it may be a sickness unto death." Proofs for this assertion abound everywhere. For example, greed for gain and power has turned legitimate commerce into wicked profiteering. The commercial giants traffic in human blood as they do in the inanimate products of the earth. Ambition for power and influence has caused politicians to juggle with the rights of the people, to prove unfaithful to their constituency, and to use public office for private gain. Ministers, especially of rich and fashionable congregations, have often apologized for these social wrongs, not so much because these servants of Christ and the Church were so exceedingly perverse, as because they were entirely ignorant of how "the other half" lives. A little wider knowledge of men and society would have given them larger and more generous sympathies.

Thirdly. The study of the social sciences will teach an intelligent minister that there are many ways to reach a desired end, and such insight may convince him that, as a rule, his peculiar contribution is to teach only the principles of righteous living, leaving the concrete measures of law and technique to general society and the state. For equally good and clear-headed persons, while agreeing on a principle, may often disagree on the definite ways and means of carrying it into effect. For instance, the minister should on every occasion urge the abolition of poverty as a divine demand, based on the New Testament principle of equity and brotherhood; but when it comes to the question of "how", his suggestions should be given only as his personal opinions. He may favor state insurance and widows' pensions, while other equally good Christians may prefer corporation or group insurance. Again, the minister should preach that righteousness exalteth a people; but whether this ideal can best be realized by state ownership of the public wealth, or by enlightened private capitalism or by any other means

must ever remain a matter of diversified opinion. Only let them be clear and definite principles which he proclaims and not glittering and hazy generalities. In the words of Professor Ely, "The church has often contented herself with repeating platitudes and vague generalities which have disturbed no guilty soul, and thus she has allowed the leadership in social reconstruction to slip away from her. It can, then, scarcely excite surprise that the labor movements have become materialistic and infidel." A phrase, "the simple Gospel," has recently been invented which according to the usual interpretation put upon it rather means an emasculated Gospel, a Gospel with one-half or three-fourths of its substance omitted, a Gospel which would keep Christians from concerning themselves about things like righteous business, fair elections, abolition of poverty, outlawry of war, etc. So when ministers hammer away at the sins of Egypt, 4000 years ago, and of Paris 4000 miles away, they are said to preach the "simple gospel"; but when they say the same things about affairs in America they are criticized for preaching politics (Vollmer, "New Testament Sociology," page 271).

Fourth. The history of the social movement will familiarize the studious minister with a number of serious lessons and warnings of which he should make frequent use in the discharge of his sacred duties. It will teach him that what is known as "Christian Civilization" is not at all identical with Christ's unvarnished Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Like a mighty river, Christianity, in its course through nineteen centuries, has been flowing through many lands and many epochs. And just as streams, in flowing, take on discolorations and accumulate sediments from the varied lands through which they flow, so Christianity has taken on discolorations from the various civilizations and philosophies through which it has flowed and has accumulated sediments from the varied organizations that have taken it in hand. It is right, therefore, that teachers of religion should critically ask, as they approach modern Christianity, which is the clear water of life and which is the mud and silt.

Social history will also show the minister the deplorable fact that the ruling classes in past ages usually came too late with their offer of social and political concessions, thus inviting bloody revolutions, as in America (1776), in France (1789), in Germany (1848), and in Russia (1917). These facts will enable him to interpret correctly the present world-wide social unrest. It is not a specially wicked outbreak of "sin" and discontent, but a God-inspired movement of the oppressed classes demanding their rights, though their methods may often be accompanied by sin and selfishness. The present social movement simply marks another step

upward in the moral development of the human race. As the English barons, in 1215, wrested some of their rights from absolutistic kingship, and the middle class in France, in 1789, triumphed over king, nobles and clergy, so since about 1848 the labor class is demanding its right to liberty, equality and the pursuit of happiness. The fact that the majority of the ministers take such an unsympathetic attitude toward the whole social movement can only be explained by the other fact that they lack knowledge of the social sciences.

History furthermore will reveal to the patriotic minister that the ruling classes have always used the church (and the church in most cases was blind enough to allow herself to be so abused) for the support of the conditions as they were and was ever ready to hurl sharp denunciations against "radical" men and parties. The result has been that all over the world millions of men and women are leaving the church, denouncing it as the "black police" for the ruling classes. In England the relation between the church and the working classes is somewhat better because all of the Christian churches have been more friendly to the working classes. Signs seem to indicate that the American churches will profit by history and follow the example of England. There is nothing inherently objectionable in the principles of the church which should repulse progressive men—just the opposite. The estrangement comes only when the churches and ministers permit themselves to be used as brakes on social progress. In that case the express train of social uplift will throw her aside, and the Lord himself may spew her out of his mouth. (Rev. 3:16). He has no use for a church which misrepresents him to the people and tries to serve God and Mammon.

Finally, a study of the history of social progress will teach the minister that many ideals of Christ's kingdom have already been realized, though the wrongs attacked seemed to be a part of the very nature of man and of former civilizations, such as slavery, polygamy, autocracy, the American saloon, etc. This will kindle the minister's optimism as to the power and the possibilities of Christ to cast out other demons that still infest our modern civilization.

Fifth. From a more intimate knowledge of the best literature published by the advocates of the social gospel, the up-to-date minister may learn how and why the Church differs from organized socialism in her activity for the social uplift of the masses. Both agree as to the diagnosis of the diseases of modern civilization, and also as to the results to be reached. But they differ in spirit and method. Class hatred has no place in the ministrations of Christ's

ministers. We must speak the truth in the spirit of love. Love is a working principle not only for individual life and social life, but for all life. Love in the sense of good will, is the only thing that makes all things work together for good. "Love makes the home work together for good; nothing else will. Love makes the school work together for good; nothing else will. Love makes the factory work together for good; nothing else will. Love makes the nations work together for good; nothing else will. Love, and only love, will make industry work together for good; nothing else will. Everything else has failed. Law has failed, education has failed, labor unions have failed, science has failed, organization has failed, employers' associations have failed. In a word, every form of industrial organization based on force and selfishness has failed. Love, and only love, can solve our industrial problems and usher in a period of industrial peace and prosperity based on industrial justice." (Dr. John McDowell.) It is therefore true love to his rich brother and true love of country which should prompt a faithful and intelligent minister to make the ruling classes see that Christ's program alone will avert social disaster and bloodshed. For as in Daniel's day, the very men for whom the writing on the wall is meant can neither read nor interpret it. It takes a prophet of God to do that. And the church is meant to be that prophet.

The church also differs from organized socialism as to method. Radical socialism believes in miracles. It expects happiness, contentment, goodness and all social virtues to result from material comfort. But no material comfort can satisfy the restless soul within us and give us peace with ourselves and others. In the best social order conceivable men will still be filled with lust and ambition and be lashed by hate and jealousy. This is proved by millions who already live under such comfortable conditions as are urged by social reformers to be enjoyed by all. So while the socialized minister will, of course, work and pray for the kingdom of social righteousness here on earth and now, in the form of a saved social environment, he follows Christ's method of bringing it about by stressing the demand: "Ye must be born again" (John 3:3). For the only effective ultimate solution of every social problem must lie in a change of mind and heart. The soul of all lasting improvement is the improvement of the soul. Of course! For the individual is the unit of society and enough of these units must be right before they can sustain right relations to one another.

Sixth. This accumulated knowledge of the social sciences will tend to make the minister a *better preacher*, because it will make his preaching and teaching adapted to the needs of the times,

("zeitgemaess"), instructive, inspiring and uplifting, whether it be done in the pulpit or in the Sunday school, or in occasional addresses before business men's gatherings, or in his literary work. Ministers often wonder why it is that sermons of past time pulpit giants, like Luther, Zwingli, Knox and others, had such a mighty effect on millions of men, while when read today they leave one unmoved. The secret is that those sermons were "timely", based on and colored by the actual conditions of the times, while modern preaching is to a large extent tame, theoretical, abstract, uninformed and not fitted to the times.

Seventh. Knowledge of the social sciences will also make the minister a *better pastor, adviser and leader* of his people and of society in general. Millions of the American people, especially of the educated and the laboring classes, are well informed on the various sociological theories. Already in our church membership, there are many kinds of social attitudes represented, and their number is on the increase. Now a minister cannot afford to make a laughing stock of himself and cast discredit on the cause of Christ and his Church and drive thousands away from her courts, by blind and bitter denunciation of the modern sciences and the social movements. Even when a minister favors standpattism on the social problems he should be able to defend his reactionism with intelligence.

Eighth. A knowledge of the social sciences will also make the minister a *better theologian* by enabling him to make the necessary and proper theological adjustments on the basis of new facts, clearer beliefs, stronger convictions and experiences and truer interpretations of the Bible. The essence of saving faith which is trust in God, is a matter of the heart and has remained the same in all ages, but theology is a matter of man's intellect, a feeble attempt to interpret the facts of the Bible and of Christian experience on the basis of the knowledge and spirit of the times. Like all other sciences, theology is therefore subject to constant changes and necessary adjustments. There will therefore always be a new theology of the old faith. In this sense, Jesus, Paul, Augustine, the Reformers, Wesley, Schleiermacher and others were all new theologians, making new theological adjustments. The same work is quietly but effectively going on at present. Walter Rauschenbusch, in his last book, "A Theology for the Social Gospel," says "We have a social gospel. We need a systematic theology large enough to match it and vital enough to back it. If theology stops growing or is unable to adjust itself to its modern environment and to meet its present tasks, it will die. Many now regard it as dead. The social gospel needs a theology to make it effective; but theology

needs the social gospel to vitalize it, for it is a permanent addition, to our spiritual outlook and its arrival constitutes a stage in the development of the Christian religion." Knowledge of the social sciences will assist the minister to make these theological adjustments intelligently.

Ninth. Knowledge of the modern social sciences and of the actualities of modern life will also enable an increasing number of well trained ministers to take a direct hand in bringing about concrete reforms. The captains of industry and some labor leaders often object to the social declarations of the church on the plea that the church is not competent to discuss economic and industrial questions. Unfortunately, there is much truth in this, and our seminary boards and faculties should make a note of it; but in its generalization the charge is not true. There have always been and there are today thousands of ministers who know what they are talking and writing about on political and economic questions. Yea, owing to their better trained minds and their wide reading and observation, some ministers know much better what at bottom is ailing society than many "practical" business men. History and recent facts, such as the famous report on the Steel Trust, prove this contention. Hence, while as a rule, it will not be the task of the minister to tell his people how to run their business, it may often become desirable, if not necessary, that the minister should have something positive to teach touching the well-being of society. The inculcation of general principles may not always be enough. Instance the case of Nathan before David. It becomes necessary for the preacher sometimes to say, "Thou art the man." The command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" sometimes needs more explicit explanation, as it did once, at least, in the history of Christ. But in order to give such explanation a good deal of ethical and especially sociological knowledge is required.

What Are the Churches Doing towards the Training of Their Ministers in the Social Sciences?

If the social sciences are so important for the work of the Christian minister, the next question is, what are the various American denominations doing to equip their leaders with this valuable weapon? The answer is encouraging. The religious organizations of our country have lagged a generation behind the churches of the older nations of Europe in this respect, but they are now catching up with vigor. The social gospel is fast becoming orthodox. Lectures and discussions on social subjects are becoming increasingly popular at synods, conferences, pastor's clubs and clerical summer

schools of all descriptions and have always been so with theological students. An immense and ever growing social literature tends to enlighten and inspire many ministers. The social interest in the Church has now run beyond the stage of a solitary pioneer. It has been admitted within the organization of the Church.

THE SOCIAL COMMISSIONS

Probably the most important agency for keeping the ministers and the church members as well as the general public abreast of the times has been the appointment and maintenance under various names of commissions on Christianity and social problems by all individual denominations, with a similar Commission of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, and the international commission on social research of the Stockholm Conference on Christian Life and Work. The National Catholic Welfare Council and the Council of Jewish Rabbis are also co-operating, making the religious forces of America a unit on this point. At critical times the leaders of these three national commissions work together.

These social commissions have no political or economic program. They only seek to use all available opportunities for the study of social and economic conditions and problems in order to assist their respective denominations to make a definite contribution to the social thought and progress of America which is in full harmony with the spirit and the principles of each Church. To this end the task of these Commissions is usually fourfold:

(1) To gather complete, accurate and unprejudiced information concerning economic conditions in this country and in other lands, and concerning all events or movements which involve moral principles or have a bearing upon the welfare of the people.

(2) To study this information in the light of the spirit and the letter of the teachings of Christ and with a view to discover what needs to be done to relieve and remove social wrongs and to Christianize the present social order.

(3) To keep in touch with the respective commissions of the Federal Council and similar groups in other denominations, as well as with any other Christian agencies aiming at improving and promoting the welfare of the people.

(4) To keep the people in our churches informed concerning the above and kindred subjects through timely popular articles and discussions in our periodicals and otherwise.

In its efforts to realize these objects, the social commissions usually work along three lines: education, organization, and field activities.

(1) The educational work includes (a) careful studies of the social situation in America and throughout the world by its officers and members; (b) the publication of the results of such studies for the use of our pastors and people in our church and Sunday school period-

icals and in occasional bulletins and leaflets; (c) special research work as to conditions in American industries, (d) the recommendation of suitable books and periodicals for general reading, (e) such co-operation with the different boards, activities and agencies of each denomination as may be in line with the commission's task.

(2) As to organization the Commissions aim to encourage the appointment of committees on social service and education in our congregations and in regional and district conferences as well as co-operation with local and national movements which aim at the prevention or the relief of wrong social conditions.

(3) The field activities of the Commission embrace sermons, lectures, Bible studies and addresses throughout the year by members of the commission at synods, general, district and pastoral conferences, Brotherhoods, Women's Unions, and at other occasions; also individual conferences and private correspondence.

THE SOCIAL CREED OF THE CHURCHES

As a crowning demonstration of the social awakening in the churches comes the fact that the new social convictions have come near to getting lodgment in a creed, as in every formative age the church has felt the need of defining its orthodoxy in formal statements of belief. The honor of making the first ringing social declaration belongs to the Methodist Episcopal Church, in 1908, and was soon followed by other denominations. Throughout the last twenty years these bodies have continued to express themselves concerning the social question in expository and expanded statements. In this they have been joined by the liberal wing of the Roman Catholic Church, which had a long historic tradition behind it, culminating in the famous encyclical of Leo XIII. The full voice of American religion was uttered in concert when the Council of Rabbis began to fulfill the law and the prophets through its commission on social justice. An examination of these respective utterances reveals a significant unanimity of judgment concerning the main points at issue.

"The social ideals of the churches," were adopted as a social platform by the first quadrennial of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America in Chicago 1912, ratified by the second quadrennial in St. Louis 1916; reaffirmed by the Cleveland Conference, May 6-8, 1919 and were adopted by most of the Protestant denominations. As these principles should never fall into "innocuous desuetude," we reprint them here.

The churches stand for:

1. Equal rights and justice for all men in all stations of life.
2. Protection of the family by the single standard of purity, uniform divorce laws, proper regulation of marriage, proper housing.
3. The fullest possible development of every child, especially by the provision of education and recreation.
4. Abolition of child labor.

5. Such regulation of the conditions of toil for women as shall safeguard the physical and moral health of the community.

6. Abatement and prevention of poverty.

7. Protection of the individual and society from the social economic and moral waste of the liquor traffic.

8. Conservation of health.

9. Protection of the worker from dangerous machinery, occupational diseases and mortality.

10. The right of all men to the opportunity for self maintenance, for safeguarding this right against encroachments of every kind, for the protection of workers from the hardships of enforced unemployment.

11. Suitable provision for the old age of the workers, and for those incapacitated by injury.

12. The right of employees and employers alike to organize, and for adequate means of conciliation and arbitration in industrial disputes.

13. Release from employment one day in seven.

14. Gradual and reasonable reduction of hours of labor to the lowest practicable point, and for that degree of leisure for all which is a condition of the highest human life.

15. A living wage as a minimum in every industry, and for the highest wage that each industry can afford.

16. A new emphasis upon the application of Christian principles to the acquisition and use of property, and for the most equitable division of the product of industry that can ultimately be devised.

Facing the social issues which have developed since the war, be it resolved: That we affirm as Christian Churches:

1. That the teachings of Jesus are those of essential democracy and express themselves through brotherhood and the cooperation of all groups. We deplore class struggle and declare against all class domination, whether of capital or labor. Sympathizing with labor's desire for a better pay and an equitable share in the profits and management of industry, we stand for orderly and progressive social reconstruction instead of revolution by violence.

2. That an ordered and constructive democracy in industry is as necessary as political democracy, and that collective bargaining and the sharing of shop control and management are inevitable steps in its attainment.

3. That the first charge upon industry should be that of a wage sufficient to support an American standard of living. To that end we advocate the guarantee of a minimum wage, the control of unemployment through government labor exchanges, public works, land settlement, social insurance and experimentation in profit sharing and cooperative ownership.

4. We believe that women should have full political and economic equality with equal pay for equal work, and a maximum eight hour day. We declare for the abolition of night work by women, and the abolition of child labor; and for the provision of adequate safeguards to insure the moral as well as the physical health of the mothers and children of the race.

Of course this "Creed" possesses no ecclesiastical authority, in the sense that it has behind it no pains or penalties. It has, however, considerable moral force and educational power. Therefore it is creative and directive. It indicates the direction in which re-

ligion is both leading and pushing public opinion and action. So to call the original statement a social creed was not altogether to use a metaphor. It set down some things which the churches stand or must stand for, that is, some standards which the churches believe ought to be reached and which they propose to try to get translated into action. This is certainly a primary function of faith. Thus is an ethical religion realized. Also this statement partakes of the nature of a creed in that most of the rank and file of the churches and quite a few of the clergy, either do not know that it exists, care little or nothing about it, or make no effort to put it into life.

When those who wrote the social creed, under the impulse of a long religious tradition, mentioned some of the things that the labor and farm leaders and also the socialists had been striving for, and when later the social workers and the progressives repeated in substance the main things that all the rest had said, it did not mean that any were borrowing language or ideas from others. It meant that a common movement in American life was coming to expression. That organized religion should both take direction from it and then put into it an older sanction and power is an instance of how God is revealed in human life. Thus did the prophets and the law; and thus did Jesus fulfil them. Thus also did he enjoin his disciples to fulfil them.

The Social Gospel in the Theological Seminaries

Twenty-five years ago only one theological seminary offered an articulated course on the relation of Christianity to the organic life of society. Today there are few seminaries of first-class rating that do not have several such courses, some even having whole social departments. I have examined Dr. Kelly's book, "Theological Education in America", and a large number of recent catalogs of theological seminaries and have come to the conclusion that with respect to their offerings in the social sciences the seminaries may be roughly divided into three groups: (1) *Progressive schools*, which treat the social sciences as an important, essential subject, each offering from 4-16 courses, some prescribed, others elective, on subjects like "New Testament Sociology", Sociological aspects of the Primitive Church, Modern Social Problems, The Sermon on the Mount, Social Psychology, Social Ethics, The Church and Social Progress, Sociology and Ethnology, Social Teachings of the Bible, Ethical Viewpoints in Modern Literature, Economics and Religion, The Town and Country Parish, Problems of Racial Contact, Modern Social Movements, the Sociology of Religion, The Survey, its

Methods and Uses, Urban Sociology, Social Theories, International Relations, War and Peace, Missionary Sociology, Social Service, Trade Unionism, etc. Several of the theological schools conduct "seminars" and "clinics". (2) The second group of *seminaries proceed on the laissez faire theory*. They offer from 1-4 courses on some phases of the social problems, but all depends on the personnel of the faculty, the likes and dislikes of individual professors. As these schools do not offer social science courses on principle, the number and emphasis changes from year to year and with changes in the professorship or the demand of progressive students. (3) A group of either small or *intellectually backward seminaries* neither require nor offer any courses on any phase of sociology, some even actively denouncing these studies, either from general lack of scientific interest or from dogmatic prepossessions, such as extreme pre-millennialism. Dr. Kelly says of these seminaries: "They are wholly untouched by the progress and method of science. They are conducted on the assumption that science and religion occupy mutually exclusive fields, if they are not indeed in actual conflict. Many of these schools could not qualify as high grade educational institutions, since they neither speak the language nor use the methods of modern education."

THE SEMINARY MINIMUM IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Of course, theological seminaries cannot be expected to train specialists in the social sciences. But the responsible authorities should regard it as a matter of sacred duty and of conscience to provide the following minimum of social equipment in these serious times of world reconstruction.

(1) Colleges controlled by Church denominations should be strictly held by their synods and boards and require of all pre-theological students at least three social courses, one in general sociology, one in economics and one in the history of civilization, together with a few elective courses. The medical and law schools demand of the colleges recognized by them such preparatory courses as lead directly to their work, and the college authorities are very anxious to comply with their demand. Why should not colleges founded, controlled and partly supported by the churches arrange similar courses for the pre-theological students?

(2) Seminary boards and faculties should make credits for the above three courses a condition for entrance to the diploma course of their schools, but not only on paper in the catalog, or as a suggestion or recommendation, but as an inexorable condition. This demand should be made known to prospective theological students, especially to such as receive their preparatory course in colleges not

controlled by church boards. The seminaries should not be expected to spend their precious time in preparatory studies.

(3) An up-to-date theological school should offer and require of each student at the very least one exegetical course on the social teaching of Christ, such as the value of personality, class distinctions, the Kingdom of God, marriage and divorce, the importance of the child, the moralization of the property idea, the perils of great wealth and of dire poverty, the limits of government control, on true and false patriotism, on war, etc., all of which problems were already "burning" in Christ's own time. This important course, if it is to fulfil its object, must follow the strictly scientific method of interpretation. That is, it must be based closely on the text of the New Testament, carefully gathering, scientifically classifying and honestly interpreting the many direct sayings as well as the legitimate implications of the teachings of Jesus on the social problems. No modern theories must be read into the text, nor must seemingly too radical sayings be suppressed or toned down to suit present conditions. Christ must be allowed to speak for himself. Many social errors in the minds of our ministers and people are due to the widespread ignorance on what the Gospels really do say on the above subjects. Such a course must also point out the difference between the social teaching of the Old and New Testament. ("Moses said—but I say." Also Hebr. 1: 1-3).

It is true that in its modern technical sense the New Testament does not contain a "sociology"; but neither does it contain a "theology" in the scientific sense. But just as during the past fifty years, a distinct "New Testament Theology" has been differentiated from dogmatic theology, so during the past twenty years a distinct "New Testament Sociology" has been separated from Christian ethics. The reason was in both cases the same, namely, to let the New Testament speak for itself, unmixed with the results of later developments. Under various names, many seminaries already offer such exegetical courses. This study can be made exceedingly helpful and is usually very popular with the students.

Literature for the exegetical study of the social teaching of Christ:
Kent, The Social Teaching of the Prophets and of Jesus.
Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis.
Vollmer, New Testament Sociology and The Modern Student's Life of Christ.
Horstmann, The Will of God.

(4) As electives may be offered courses on the outstanding social problems, either by the seminar or the deductive, or the historical methods. Courses on the social content of the epistle of James, or the Sermon on the Mount are also very helpful.

(5) The social point of view should be stressed in other courses, especially in Church history.

(6) Applied or practical sociology should also be studied. It aims to investigate the real conditions of society in city and country and the work being actually done to improve conditions.

Besides work in the Seminaries, committees on ordination should make it a point to test the knowledge of the applicant on the social teachings of Christ in their application to present conditions.

Finally, the church judicatories should support their social commissions by sympathy, suggestions and money, for untold good proceeds from their work. Periods for papers and discussions on social subjects should be set apart at the stated meetings of synods and conferences, in addition to special summer schools and convocations, for social discussions.

The above is the minimum the Church should do to equip her ministers.

How to Find Time For the Social Sciences

A steadily increasing number of seminaries offering courses in social sciences show the way in which time may be found for these most necessary studies. Some of them have extended the regular theological course to four years (as in Germany) while some of our "University" seminaries stress a fourth year graduate course. Furthermore, the required number of hours per week might be raised. A generation ago the students carried from 20 to 25 hours per week and yet found plenty of time for papers, collateral reading, recreation and—horrible dictu—for allotria and loafing. Students of law and medicine usually carry more hours per week than theologians. Usually men do their best work under pressure of time. Most seminaries have made the study of Hebrew and Greek elective. I hate to suggest this, for Greek has been my specialty; but the modern minister needs other studies much more than languages. Much time may be saved in the seminary by a better co-ordination of nearly related courses and by eliminating repetition. For example, catalogs offer courses in Old Testament history, O. T. Introduction, O. T. History, O. T. Religion, O. T. Theology, Messianic Prophecy, Exegesis of several books, etc. In the New Testament courses are offered on N. T. introduction, the N. T. Times, the Life of Christ, or on Paul's Life, exegesis of Romans and Galatians, on N. T. Theology, dogmatic theology, history of dogma, symbolics and so forth. In giving these closely related courses separately, especially when each one is taught by a different instructor,

much time is usually wasted by repeating similar or identical lines of thought which could be saved for other courses by a mutual understanding among the professors in charge.

Selected Bibliography

One hardly knows what books to recommend on the social sciences, for the amount of even the good ones is so immense and daily on the increase.

Saeger, Introduction to Economics.

Dow, Sociology and its Problems.

Emory S. Bogardus, History of Social Thought.

James W. Garner, American Foreign Policies.

Niebuhr, Does Civilization Need Religion?

Vollmer, Philip, New Testament Sociology.

Sir Oliver Lodge, Science and Human Progress.

Ernest R. Groves and Wm. F. Ogburn, American Marriage and Family Relationships.

Horstmann, The Will of God, Can It, Shall It be Done on Earth as It is in Heaven?

Herman Feldman, Prohibition: Its Economic and Industrial Aspects.

R. H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.

Kresge, The Ever Coming Kingdom of God.

Ruecker, Quest of Character.

Williams, Charles D., The Prophetic Ministry for Today.

Vedder, The Gospel of Jesus and the Problems of Democracy.

Peabody, Jesus Christ and the Social Question.

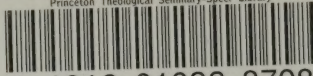
Nathusius, Mitarbeit der Kirche an der sozialen Frage.

Rauschenbusch, Prayers of the Social Awakening.

Angell, The Great Illusion.



Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



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