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THE BIBLE AS THE TEXT-BOOK IN SOCIOLOGY

We are accustomed to regard the Bible as *the* text-book, because the authority, in dogmatics and ethics. Our "Confession of Faith" (Chap. i. 10) says: "The Supreme Judge, by whom all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture." Our "Longer Catechism", in response to the inquiry, "What is the Word of God?" replies: "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience." Our "Shorter Catechism", in answer to the question, "What do the Scriptures principally teach?" says: "The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man." Our "Form of Government" obliges all our church officers, ministers, ruling-elders and deacons, to affirm that they "believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the only infallible rule of faith and practice" (Chap. xiii. 4 and Chap. xv. 12). Our Book of Discipline says: "Nothing shall be the object of judicial process, which cannot be proved to be contrary to the Holy Scriptures, or to the regulation and practice of the Church founded thereon" (Chap. i. 4). Our "Directory for the Worship of God" in a footnote explanatory of its title is careful to state as follows: "The Scripture-warrant for what is specified in the various articles of this Directory, will be found at large in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, in the places where the subjects are treated in a doctrinal form." These several

declarations have been interpreted to mean, as it would seem to be self-evident that they were meant to mean, that all that the Bible requires in dogmatics and ethics and, indeed, as regards their expression in religion, must be received and that nothing which it does not require in these spheres may be imposed.

The question before us is, Does all this apply, and apply in the same sense, in sociology? Is there a "divine order of human society"; and does the Bible, and the Bible alone, set forth this order? Is it true that with respect to the family, the nation, the church, the race, the kingdom of God, the great institutes which are the subjects of Christian sociology, the Bible gives us what we find nowhere else; and that all that it gives us in this field, as in that of dogmatics and ethics, is infallible and authoritative? Is it so that whatever the Bible requires in the case of these institutes is also the law and that nothing which it does not require may be made the law? This is the question to be considered.

None could be so pertinent or more evidently important. None could be so pertinent, because, as Prof. Francis Greenwood Peabody remarked in substance, "The problems of the social world are undoubtedly the problems of to-day. Social unrest is *the* fact of contemporary life. No institution of society—the family, the state, or the church—is too stable or too sacred to be assailed." So, too, no question could be more evidently important. If the Bible is *the* authority in sociology, then what our age needs most to know is the trend and the extent of this authority. Only thus can it answer the inquiry in which it is most interested, and which is most insistent, and yet it is from almost every source but this that most are now seeking the answer.

I. We assert, then, that the Bible is as truly the authority and so the text-book in sociology as it is in dogmatics and ethics, and we assert this for the following reasons:

(1) The Bible is *the* text-book in religion, and a pro-

gressive or even a permanent civil society or nation is impossible without religion. That the Bible is the great religious text-book, we have just seen: this is the fundamental presupposition of all our standards. That a progressive or even a permanent civil society is impossible without religion, this results from the nature of things and is also one of the clearest teachings of history. The institute of rights, an avowedly unmoral nation is a contradiction in terms; and, as Washington said in his Farewell Address, "Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles." We see the truth of this specially in connection with the most pressing and difficult social problems. As the Hon. Carroll D. Wright, U. S. Commissioner of Labor, remarked recently, "Religion is the only solution of the conflict between labor and capital. The Decalogue is a good platform. Religious education must bring about an alliance of ethics and economics in the welfare of mankind." Nay, we must go further. What has just been observed of the necessity of religion in general, must be affirmed of Christianity in particular. Says Prof. R. E. Thompson, "History is the biography of nations,—not of the whole body of mankind in all stages of arrested or of continuous development, but of those bodies politic, which have not stereotyped their institutions, which have contributed a share to the common wealth of civilization, and which have influenced each other for good. In modern times this group of nations is all but coincident with Christendom. It is only the Christian nation which has been able to garner the experience of the past—Hebraic and Hellenic, Roman and Teutonic—and to carry forward its development to still higher ends. It is within Christendom that history is not wasted and the past not barren for men, and this because we have learned to see in it the leading hand of the living God" (*The Divine Order of Human Society*, p. 121). In a word, it is only on a Christian foundation that society is truly progressive.

The reason for this should be plain. Religion has been described, not altogether inadequately, as "the sum of our relations to God". A truly religious man must, then, be conceived as a man who stands in right relations to God; and in like manner, a truly religious society must be regarded as a society that stands in right relations to God. Such a society will be one that acknowledges God, that obeys God, that draws its life from God, that glorifies God. This, however, is as important in the case of society as in that of the individual. That "we live and move and have our being" in God and that we "were created by Him and for Him",—all this is as true of men socially as it is of man individually. The government, "the powers that be", through which society develops itself, have been ordained of God. "By Him kings reign and princes decree justice." His benevolence is the source of all wealth. His law is the way of peace and happiness for nations and for communities as truly as for individuals. That "in His favor is life and His loving kindness is better than life,"—this applies to the social organism as such as really as to its members. Because of what God is and because of the relation of dependence in which society stands to Him, it must be that "righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people". In emphasizing, therefore, authoritatively, the supreme importance of true religion, that is of right relations to God and, therefore, to Christ who is the revelation of God, the Bible, so far from being outside of the domain of sociology, is teaching just that which is most fundamental to it. Our religious relations underlie and ultimately determine our social relations. An utterly irreligious society would be hell.

(2) Sociology is implicated in, and is the result of, dogmatics and ethics.

Christian ethics is not an independent science. It is the consequence of the application, to and in individual human lives, of the facts of Christian dogmatics. The prophets of the Old Testament were great ethical teachers because of

their intense realization of God, and their ethical teaching was uniquely high and pure because their conception of God was true. In affirming monotheism, therefore, they were teaching ethics. They were not only giving religious instruction, but they were giving the one kind of religious instruction on which a true ethics could be based.

It is the same in the New Testament. Right conduct is never set forth independently of right belief. The moral teaching of the closing chapters of the Romans is presented as the requirement of the plan of salvation as given in the body of the epistle. It is by the mercies of God, as we might say because of the mercies of God, which Paul has been expounding in the previous eleven chapters, that he beseeches us to present our bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service, and then goes on to show in detail what such consecration involves. Who may say, consequently, that Paul's dogmatic teaching is without authority for ethics? On the contrary, it reveals the root and principle of Christian ethics.

Precisely this is the meaning of our Lord when He says, "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi. 29). The great thing that God would have us do is to believe on His Son. That is, faith in Christ is the primary, the germinal, and in that sense the all-comprehending virtue: Christian ethics is to appreciate and to appropriate Christian dogmatics. Indeed, we may be and should be more precise. It is to understand and to fulfill the divine plan. It is to do the works which "God afore prepared that we should walk in them". It must be, therefore, that the dogmatic portions of the Bible are of authority, are *the* authority, in Christian ethics. "The duty which God requires of man" is the result of, is involved in, and can be learned from, only "what we are to believe concerning God".

Can it, however, be otherwise in the case of sociology? Will it not in like manner be implicated in Christian ethics and so in Christian dogmatics? Certainly. Social ethics,

which discusses what society ought to be, to do, and to become, presupposes individual ethics, which treats of what the individual ought to be, to do, and to become. This is so because society presupposes, depends on, and is impossible without, its constituent members. While society is other than and more than the sum of the individuals that compose it, it is only in them and because of them, and as they, that it exists. An analogy is often pointed out in this respect between the social and the physical organism. Paul himself does so in 1 Corinthians xii. As the health and vigor of the body depend on the health and vigor of its members, so it is with the Christian society or church, "the body of Christ". "Whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it, or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." This analogy, however, while true, falls short of the whole truth. The physical body and the body politic are both organisms, but the latter is an ethical organism. That is, its members are ends in themselves. The foot must be honored, but it is for the sake of the body. The individual members of society, too, must be perfected; but this is not simply because the welfare of society depends on them; it is also because society realizes its end only in and through the perfection of its individual members. It exists for them rather than they for it. Social righteousness, therefore, presupposes and has its purpose in individual righteousness; and consequently, just because the Bible is the authority in and for individual ethics, it must be the authority, too, in social ethics. It cannot teach the former and not teach what is most essential in the latter.

And this is a truth that can scarcely be emphasized too much to-day. The trend of our age is toward the depreciation of the individual. Machinery has ruled out handicraft. The lecture has taken the place of private instruction. The shepherd of souls who knows his own sheep by name is giving way to the evangelist who converts sinners in the mass and who has no sheep of his own to know by name

or even by sight. Sociology is a more popular study than theology and the reason is that it puts its stress not on individual regeneration but on social reformation. In a word, what society does not want, but needs all the more urgently, is a renewed emphasis on the individual; and therefore, the Bible, which is dominated by the spirit of the question, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" is not only, as we have seen, the authority in sociology, but the most pertinent authority. In affirming the individuality of each man's relation to God it affirms both what is most essential in the foundation of any true sociology, and also that which in our day most demands recognition.

So, too, like individual ethics, and through its relation to individual ethics, Christian sociology is implicated in the Christian religion. It is what and as it is because of the revelation which God has made of Himself in Christ. It is determined throughout by the great fact of redemption. This is cosmical as well as individual. There is a "divine order of human society". Hence what our ecclesiastical fathers used to call the "amplitudo regni Dei". They conceived of God as redeeming and so as regenerating and ruling over all right human relationships as well as the individual men and women who entered into these relationships. They conceived of Christ as Lord of the family and as King of the nation, as truly as Head of the church or the Life of the individual Christian. They taught that all philosophy and science and art and commerce—all legitimate human interests, must be "brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ"; and that the ideal society could be realized only as His will was done on earth as it is in heaven. Must not, then, the Bible, the infallible because inspired revelation of that will to us, be *the* authority in sociology? Because it is this for religion, and because sociology is implicated in religion as in ethics, it could not be otherwise.

(3) The Bible contains much information and gives much instruction which is directly sociological. Dr. Crafts, in his *Practical Christian Sociology*, p. 30, says that "there is more material for Biblical sociology than for Biblical theology". I cannot agree with him. He has studied the Bible, as many do, from his own standpoint only. Nevertheless, there is ample ground for his taking his standpoint. Were he not to do so, he would be untrue to the Bible. And we should be equally untrue to it, were we not to do so. The social or sociological aspects of the Scriptures are so many and so important as to demand attention as such. Even a general and cursory study of the Word of God must reveal to every reader, not blinded by his own outlook, how large a portion of it is concerned with man in his collective capacity. As Samuel E. Keeble has said in his admirable book, *The Social Teaching of the Bible*, nations, tribes, cities, communities, classes, families, constantly come under the socio-religious regard of the sacred writers. "Their social relationships and their social morality, their social woes and their social sins, their whole collective life, receives careful, detailed, often passionate and always memorable attention."

This is conspicuously true of the Old Testament. "The Prophets, especially, are full of instruction on sociological problems." "As Professor Seeley says, 'their utterances are instinct with the sense of the national life, the national vocation, the continuity of the national history'." Read what Mr. J. S. Mill, in his work on *Representative Government*, declares of their function in carrying the development of national life in Judea to a point never reached by any other Oriental people, in dissociating the national religion from the blind conservatism which elsewhere stereotyped institutions, in making liberty and movement possible. But what is thus true of the Prophets in particular is as true of the Old Testament as a whole. As Prof. R. E. Thompson has written (*The Divine Order of Human Society*, p. 6), "Until we

perceive that the Hebrew nation is the type of all national life, and that its history is meant to illustrate the laws of that life, what shall we make of all this ado over kings and wars and revolutions? What else is the use of a great part of the Old Testament? Why is it included in the canon at all?" This reasoning is strengthened by the fact that the Old Testament is not an ordinary chronicle of the national evolution of the Hebrews. As the editor of the *Biblical World* for 1901 remarks, "it is the theistic interpretation of such evolution". As I would add, it is the supernatural and, consequently, infallible interpretation of it. In a word, the Old Testament, while primarily and chiefly the supernatural record of the divine preparation for the Messiah, is at the same time other than this; it is also God's text-book of national life.

When we come to the New Testament, we find the sociological element equally, although differently, prominent. In the words again of Prof. R. E. Thompson (*The Divine Order of Human Society*, p. 7), "The Baptist and our Lord both begin their mission by proclaiming, not a way of salvation for individuals, but a kingdom of heaven,—a new order of society, a holy and universal brotherhood transcending all national limitations, and embracing or aiming to embrace, the whole family of man. It is the laws of that kingdom, the conditions of life within it, that our Lord sets forth in His chief discourses. It is the nature of that kingdom and its relation to that of Tiberius Cæsar which are mooted at His trial before the Roman procurator. It is for the establishment of a kingdom that He sends forth His apostles to bring the old world to an end and the new to its birth. Through all their labors, their preachings, their epistles, they are concerned with the relations of men within this kingdom, this "city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God". And our canon closes with the vision of its coming down from heaven to earth to permeate and pervade all the families, fellowships, and nations of men with its divine principles.

Now, the questions which at once suggest themselves are, Can information and instruction which bulk so largely and so prominently in both testaments, be mere by-products? Can no more authority attach to the sociological utterances of the Bible than to its statements in the sphere of science, which statements, while always true in the sense in which they were intended, are not regarded by us as authoritative in the sense of final deliverances? On the contrary, is it not what we should expect, in view of the way in which and the degree to which social ethics is implicated in and determined by dogmatics and individual ethics—is it not just what we should expect that so much of God's Word would have a sociological character and purpose; and does not the fact that it has warrant the inference that its sociology is as authoritative as the dogmatic and ethical teaching that demands and determines it? Involved in them and having the same aim with them, it must be equal to them in authority, and how could this be emphasized more strongly than by the prominence which God Himself has given to it in His own Word?

(4) The Bible is the *final revelation* of the will of God for man in his present state of existence. This is either the direct or the implied teaching of each one of our standards. They all represent the Scriptures as giving the last word with regard to "faith and practice" as clearly as Paul teaches this when he says in Galatians i. 8, 9: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema. As we have said before, so say I now again, if any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema." It follows, therefore, that, unless the Bible be the final and so adequate authority also in sociology as in dogmatics and ethics, then we have no such authority in sociology. That is to say, we have no absolute norm for social development; we have no sufficient ideal for social realization; there is no "divine

order of human society": and, consequently, there is, in the last analysis, nothing for us to do in the social sphere but to lie around, Micawberlike, and see what will turn up. It is not ours to determine in accordance with the divine plan the evolution of society; it is only ours to be evolved. The mere statement of this position should be its refutation.

Nowhere is it more important that there should be *an* authority than in sociology. The fact is that in the social sphere no more than in the individual one can we simply lie around and be evolved. Society is made up of men, not of stones, not even of beasts: and it is characteristic of men, it is *the* characteristic of men, that they are self-conscious; that they evolve themselves; that they themselves work out the plan of God for them, and that, consequently, they "live and move and have their being" in "the realm of ends", of ideals, of authority. To take the ground of the alarmingly popular naturalistic and mechanistic philosophy that, instead of determining and so evolving himself, man is merely determined and evolved—this is to shut your eyes to what man is, even more than if one were to deny that he is an animal and so must breathe. Man is the animal whose very nature it is, and, therefore, in the social sphere, as really as in the individual, to realize and to demand authority. This is the essence of his essence.

We may and should go further. It is not enough for man to have *an* authority. In social relations, specially, he needs an authority that is adequate because final. Legislation, which is merely to meet the need of the hour, of which at the present time we have so much, does not and cannot satisfy any thoughtful person. The doctrine that society should determine itself simply according to the requirements of each new age can not permanently win approval. Made by God and for God and in his image, man can realize himself only as he can aim at and determine himself according to the Eternal and Unchangeable. As he must have an authority on which to rest, so the only authority on which he can really rest will be absolute and thus final.

As has been remarked, this is not only true in the social sphere; it is conspicuously true in it. While we can not with William Temple, Headmaster of Repton, make the moral depend on the social and say that "The isolated individual may be wise or foolish; he can not be moral or immoral, and that an atheistic debaucher upon a desert island is not liable to moral censure", we do hold that the social is both the goal and the crown of the moral. Man was made for society and fully realizes himself only in society. But who understands society, its nature, its functions, its development? It is of all things the most complex, the most complicated. If no man can know himself thoroughly, still less can he know the society of which he himself is but one insignificant member. And, therefore, if man by the very constitution of his nature demands an absolute norm and so a final authority, much more does that most wonderful of all organisms, the social body which men constitute, and in which alone they can fully find themselves, demand it. That is, God Himself must reveal His kingdom from heaven, if we are ever to realize it on earth. A final authority in and for sociology would seem, consequently, to be specially demanded by the divine purpose. Indeed, the Bible would fall short of its own revealed end, if it were the final authority in dogmatics and ethics and not in sociology. It is precisely in the kingdom which it was revealed to introduce, the divine order of society which, while it is to be consummated in heaven, must be established on earth, that we see most clearly the absolute need of such an authority. On these four grounds, then, to adduce no others, we would seem to be justified in claiming the Bible as *the* authority and so *the* text-book in sociology as really as our standards affirm it to be so in dogmatics and ethics.

II. There are, however, many who admit the force of our reasoning and yet deny our conclusion. They make this denial on the following grounds:

(1) The Old Testament, while containing, as we have

seen, much sociological information and instruction, has been abrogated with the dispensation to which it belonged. Its sociological function, if not its dogmatic and ethical one, was vacated when Christ came. The text-book of national life before this, it can not be so since then. The kingdom which our Lord set up was not of this world.

This position, while plausible, is invalid.

(a) The dogmatic and ethical and sociological elements of the Old Testament are so implicated as to be inseparable. Not only does the dogmatic determine the ethical and do they together determine the sociological, but the sociological is given either as an implication of the dogmatic and the ethical or as the conditions which demand them. Its fate, therefore, is one with theirs. If it has been set aside, they, too, have been; and as we do not claim that the Old Testament is no longer a part of the "only infallible rule of faith and practice", for the individual, so neither may we claim that the New Dispensation in fulfilling the Old has abrogated its sociology.

(b) That it has not done so appears in the fact that some of the sociological teaching of the Old Testament is either reaffirmed in the New Testament, or is based on grounds which are permanent. Thus we could not be shown more clearly in the case of Saul and of David and of the kings generally that government is of God than it is asserted to be so by Paul in the thirteenth chapter of Romans. So, too, the obligation of capital punishment for wilful murder is made to rest on the fact that man was created in God's image (Gen. ix. 6); and this reason, from the nature of the case, is and must be as much in force to-day as ever.

(c) While it is true that most of the social enactments of the Jewish theocracy, such as the judicial or civil laws regulating the duties of husbands and wives, the distribution of property, the punishment of crimes, etc., inasmuch as they grew out of the temporary and peculiar conditions of the Old Dispensation, ceased to be binding with the ceas-

ing of that dispensation, it is not true that the principles which these economic or social provisions illustrated and enforced were also abrogated. Thus, the civil magistrate to-day neither ought to put, nor may put, the Sabbath-breaker or the adulterer to death. Yet these offenses, if viewed as sins against God rather than as crimes against the state, deserve death as much now as ever; and it is only as we look at the penalty to be imposed on them when state and church were united in the Jewish theocracy and crimes were punished as sins that we can appreciate or even perceive their real heinousness in God's sight. Thus, again, the land-laws of the Old Testament are not in force to-day. They could not be enforced if they were. How could we secure that every naturalized immigrant, be he Italian, Pole or Magyar, should have his own holding of land, and should dwell under his "own vine and fig tree"? Yet, who can successfully deny that in these land-laws we have a temporary and peculiar illustration of principles that are as wide and as permanent in their application as the human race? In England one out of every eleven of the people is a pauper. Has the fact that nine tenths of the land is held by one tenth of the citizens nothing to do with this? British sociologists say that it has much to do with it. The ideal is that property in land should be universal. This, however, was what the land laws of Israel required. Among ourselves the rich are growing richer and many of the poor, poorer. Is not this largely because no opportunity is afforded to the poor man to recover himself? Such opportunity, however, was to come to every poor Israelite with every return of the year of Jubilee. Are not even our most fertile lands being impoverished through uninterrupted cropping? This could never be, if the Sabbatic year were observed. We could multiply illustrations, but these are sufficient. The judicial and civil laws of the Old Dispensation bind us no longer, but they affirm sociological principles which are of divine authority. It is in this case as in dogmatics. The sacrificial system of the Old Testament was done away, when, "once

for all at the end of the ages," the Lamb of God offered up Himself. Yet, the great truth, the truth that men need most to heed and that we seem most likely to forget, the truth that without the "shedding of blood there is no remission of sins", this eternal truth was only reaffirmed and reemphasized when the temporary symbols of it were done away. And so it came to pass that even those portions of the Old Testament which were essentially and necessarily temporary in their surface teaching, are in their deeper meaning, whether sociological or ethical or dogmatic, of permanent authority; and this, as Illingworth, a recent Bampton lecturer has said, causes the Old Testament to stand, as it has always stood, "in lonely eminence, immeasurably superior to all else of its kind".

(2) The New Testament, whether as regards the sociological teaching which, as we have just seen, it must take over from the Old Testament, or as regards that which is distinctive of itself, cannot be of permanent validity because it was written under the influence of the end of the world.

That the New Testament as well as the Old contains abundant sociological material is, as we have observed, generally admitted.

It cannot, however, be material which has any application to ourselves. Dominated as it is by the thought of a great and imminent crisis, expecting as it does the almost immediate coming down from heaven of the new Jerusalem, what reference can it have to us who are saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation? Paul might well write: "But this I say, brethren, the time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none, and those that weep as though they wept not; and those that rejoice as though they rejoiced not; and those that buy as though they possessed not; and those that use the world as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away" (I Cor. vii. 29-31). This, however, can not mean anything

for us. We have found that the fashion of this world does not pass away. We have found that the things of this world seem of all things the most real. A sociology, therefore, which emphasizes their impermanence, a sociology whose fundamental principle is that the world is passing away, such a sociology might do for the first century, but the twentieth can have no use for it.

This reasoning would have force if the facts were as assumed. If the teaching of the apostles, taken as a whole, were really that "the end of all things" was certainly at hand, or if our Lord merely believed that it was, perhaps an argument could be made for the eschatological objections under consideration. "There is," however, as Stalker has observed in his *Ethic of Jesus* (p. 25), "an opposite side of his consciousness, which is left entirely unexplained" by this theory. "It can be proved from his words that he foresaw and foretold a slow and gradual development of his cause such as history has actually exhibited; and nothing is more certain than that he expected to be put by his death into a new and world-wide relationship to men." This is well expressed by Harnack at the close of the third lecture in his *The Essence of Christianity*, and his words are all the more interesting because of his near kinship with the school just referred to. "He who would know," Harnack says, "what the kingdom of God and the coming of this kingdom mean in the preaching of Jesus must read and ponder his parables. Then it will dawn upon him what Jesus is thinking about. The kingdom comes when it comes to the individual, making entry to the soul which embraces it. The kingdom is the reign of God, no doubt; but it is the reign of the holy God in individual hearts, it is God Himself with His power. Everything dramatic in the external and historical sense here disappears, and the whole external hope of a future upon earth also sinks out of sight. Take any parable you please—that of the Sower, or that of the Pearl of Great Price, or that of the Treasure Hidden in the Field—and you

perceive that the Word of God, or rather God Himself, is the kingdom; and what you are reading about is not angels or devils, thrones or principalities, but God and the soul, the soul and its God."

Moreover, the eschatological conception is not, as the objector alleges, unfitted for our own day. On the contrary, it is the very conception needed to keep us from overusing and so from abusing the world. It is true for each one of us as individuals, that the "time is shortened" and that "the Lord is at hand". To make the most even of "the life that now is", we must be ever "looking for and hastening unto that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ". The old Puritan lawgiver called for candles when sudden darkness led the convention to think that the Day of Judgment had come. It was just because he expected his Lord to appear that he wished to be found most diligent in his work. In like manner, to be the kind of citizen that the good of the nation demands, we must realize that we have here "no continuing city", we must appreciate that our own true citizenship is even now in heaven, we must look for "the city which hath the foundation whose builder and maker is God". In a word, it is precisely because the Bible does present an end-ethic, as it is called, and an end-sociology, that it can be *the* authority. To be faithful to what our Lord has given us to do here in the church, which is His body and in the world, which is His workmanship, that is, really to bring in His kingdom, we must expect His coming.

(3) There is the objection made years ago by Mill and Mazzini, and later by Frederic Harrison in his *New Year's Address for 1889*, and also by N. M. Salter in his *Ethical Religion*, and again and again repeated since—the objection that though the sociology of the Bible were not an end-sociology, still, it gives no guidance or help as regards the social problems of to-day. Thus it has nothing to say as to the development of art, as to pedagogy, as to trades-unions and

strikes, as to woman suffrage. How, then, can the Bible be any longer the authority in sociology? Even if it were so twenty centuries ago, it could not be so now. The questions now demanding solution are entirely different. Evolution has changed human nature and has introduced a new environment. Hence, as in the political sphere there are those who call, not for the carrying out of the Constitution, but for a new Constitution; so in the social sphere there are many who are demanding, not adherence to the Bible, not even to what is so fundamental in it as the Decalogue, but a radically new sociology, one adapted to the new conditions. For example, so eminent and so able a writer as Rauschenbusch, in his last book, *The Christianization of the Social Order*, takes the ground that whenever private property ceases to contribute to human development, then the right of property is no more. As though any right guaranteed by the Decalogue could cease to contribute to such development as God intends and approves! This objection, then, is refuted in the first place by the view of God and of the Bible which it involves. God "knows the end from the beginning". He Himself is "the same yesterday and to-day and forever". It can not be, therefore, that what is fundamental in His Word will ever cease to be so. The Decalogue is the demand either of God's nature or of man's nature; and as God can not change Himself, so neither may we conceive of Him in the development of His plan as creating what was afterward to be set aside. His plan is eternal; His purpose is one: evolution, consequently, while it brings out the new, must be of the old; and, therefore, the old must regulate, while bringing in, the new. In a word, what the new social problems of to-day demand is not a new sociology, but a more prayerful and diligent study of the old text-book and a more fearless and consistent application of it to modern conditions. It will then appear, as many of us think that it has already appeared, that even when God has not told us in His Word

all that we need to know for the solution of the social questions of to-day, he has laid down principles and limitations of universal and perpetual obligation. Thus, sacred art is not the only true art, but any art to continue true must be moral; and to continue moral must be in spirit religious. Pedagogy has much to learn from psychology, and thus far it would seem to have learned very little; but all that psychology has to teach here is not so fundamental, even pedagogically, as that "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom". Even the Agnostic Huxley recognized in a letter to the rector of St. Mary's Church, London, that any education that did not begin with and rest on the Bible was worse than no education. It would not be possible to adjust all labor difficulties by an appeal to the Bible alone. There is need of much patient investigation and much careful legislation with regard to them. The most patient investigation and the most careful legislation will, however, be worse than fruitless, unless they assume and proceed on such old-fashioned biblical truths as, that "The laborer is worthy of his hire"; that "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth"; that "My Father worketh hitherto and I work". The extension of the suffrage to women was certainly not before the mind of Christ or of His apostles. Nevertheless, the only basis on which this pressing question can be settled rightly is that of the New Testament teaching as to both the equality of and the radical distinction between the sexes. These illustrations are sufficient. Social evolution presents new problems, but these only emphasize the fundamental importance of the principles that underlie the old solutions.

(4) Were all these objections set aside, it would still be urged that Our Lord was anything rather than a political reformer or a teacher of sociology. "He never enters on the role of the statesman or of the political economist. He enacts no code. He leads no party. In an empire full of slaves he opens no crusade against slavery." He gives no

teaching as to the proper form of government for either church or state. He has nothing to say of woman's rights, or of popular suffrage, or of reform parties or measures. Though the greater social reforms resulted from Him, He does not appear in any sense as a social reformer. Not only does He not use sociological terminology; rarely does He, at least directly, discuss sociological themes. Nay, more than this. As Dr. W. Cunningham remarks in his *Christianity and Social Questions*, perhaps the soundest and sanest of the recent books on Sociology, *The Parable of the Tares* is a warning for all time against the mistake of looking on the kingdom of heaven as an earthly realm from which evil is to be eradicated. . . . No movement which begins with drastic effort to purify society, in the hope of removing contamination from individuals, is consistent with the teaching of this parable. Moreover, Our Lord's work in healing diseases and in satisfying hunger and other human needs—these miracles and the immediate relief which they afforded, as Dr. Cunningham adds, "were never done for their own sake; to our Lord's mind they were entirely subsidiary to the spiritual aims of his ministry" (p. 221).

Does his course, then, in this respect, indicate that he was indifferent to social reform and so that His teaching can not be the authority in sociology? Not at all. Rather does it declare authoritatively the true method of social reform. "The disciple is not above his Master"; as Dr. Cunningham continues, "we must beware of criticising Our Lord's mission as inadequate, and of claiming that we can supplement it by developing new activities in His name, when He Himself refused to sanction them. There may be much eager talk about Christianity and much activity by professing Christians that he will refuse to recognize as emanating from himself." In every sphere of life, political and social, as truly as religious, the individual Christian, as a Christian and because a Christian, has a part to play and a duty to

perform; but the Church in her organized capacity "can only exercise a wise influence on social problems by being true to her Master, and striving to carry on His work, as He saw it, and as He committed it to her charge". She is to seek the reformation of society through the regeneration of individuals. This is the great lesson of Our Lord's example, and teaching, and it is a lesson which needs the supreme, the unique, authority which only He could give.

III. It remains to close this too long discussion with the briefest statement possible of the more important conclusions:

(1) The authority of the Bible does not cover every sociological question. It is a great mistake to expect to settle all or many social problems off-hand with a "Thus saith the Lord". We can not do this in ethics. We can not do it even in dogmatics. In each one of these spheres, and especially in that of society, very much has been left to the reason of the age and of the individual. There is a large class of social questions, therefore, as to which the right of private judgment must be insisted on. The state ownership of public utilities, the regulation by the state of corporations and of rates—there is a right and a wrong in the case of these and of like issues, and it is highly important that it should be determined; but God's Word has not settled it and, consequently, the church may not presume to do so. Hence, the danger and the wrong of the so-called "Social Creed of the Churches", adopted in 1908, by the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. It seeks the authority of the Church for judgments on many of which the Word of God has not passed and which, therefore, the church may not pass. It is a direct infringement of "the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free".

(2) There is, however, a "divine order of human society", and the Bible lays its foundations. These foundations cannot be insisted on too strenuously, and as to them we have no right of private judgment. That

can not be the true order which does injustice to church or state or family, or to the great institute which includes them all and in which each one realizes itself, even the kingdom of God. Thus that can not be a true order which subordinates, as in Erastianism, the church to the state. That can not be a true order which, as in the Papacy, denies the temporal power of the nation. That can not be a true order which, as the spirit of much of modern life, is inimical to the family. That can not be a true order which, as in Socialism, substitutes state-control for providence and puts society in the place of God. Against the principles which underlie every such scheme it is the duty of the Church, and specially of her ministers, most vigorously to protest. Let them do this positively as well as negatively, by laying the scriptural foundations as well as by overturning those of "the wisdom of this world". This is the minister's distinctive function as regards social reform. He is to insist on the supreme authority of the Bible with respect to it.

(3) He is to do other and more. His great work is not to agitate even for the social principles laid down in the Bible. His great work, the greatest of all works, the work which is incomparably the most efficient for social reform, is to strive for the regeneration and development of individual souls through the preaching in all its fulness of "the everlasting Gospel of the grace of God". This is the supreme and the most comprehensive lesson of the Bible regarded as *the* text-book in Sociology.

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