

The EVANGELICAL STUDENT

The Magazine of THE LEAGUE OF EVANGELICAL STUDENTS

CALVIN KNOX CUMMINGS, *Editor*

Volume XI Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, April, 1936

No. 2

EDITORIAL

APOLOGETICS AND EVANGELISM

There is an ever recurring tendency among Christians to decry apologetics. It is persistently affirmed that what we need today is not apologetics but evangelism. It is urged that we never win anyone to Christ through argument; simply preach the Gospel. Explicit in this attitude are two erroneous ideas: the one—that apologetics and evangelism are mutually exclusive, the other—that apologetics is unnecessary if not positively harmful and un-Christian. It has become needful for Christians to realize that apologetics and evangelism, far from being mutually exclusive, are mutually inclusive and that apologetics, far from being unnecessary and un-Christian, is so indispensable and Biblical as to make it *un-Christian not* to engage in apologetics.

Apologetics and evangelism are mutually inclusive for two reasons. First, because there can be no true evangelism without some form of apologetics. Evangelism is the promulgation of the Gospel. The preaching of the Gospel involves the narration of certain facts in history and the interpretation of these facts. But the unregenerate person does not believe that those facts and interpretations are true. They seem unreasonable to him. Will the faithful evangelist abandon the unbeliever at this point? Not at all. He will do as Jesus did with the woman of Samaria and deal with the questionings of the mind. In the wisdom of God he can present the reasonableness of the truths of the Gospel and it may be that the Holy Spirit will use this testimony to enable that soul to see and accept the Gospel as true. It is emphatically true that reasoning alone will never save a single soul. There must be the mysterious working of the Holy Spirit in regeneration. But what the Holy Spirit does in regeneration is not to compel a man to accept what he believes to be false, but through the presentation of the evidences for the truth of the Gospel to convince the man that the Gospel is true and then enable him to accept it as true. The Holy Spirit convinces some men of the truth of the Gospel instantaneously with the preaching of the Gospel and apart from evidences. But there are Thomases who must behold the evidence. To withhold the evidence may be to abandon some soul to the darkness of unbelief forever. The Holy Spirit deals with men differently. The Bible and Church History are replete with proof that God has used some form of apologetics to bring men out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Apologetics and evangelism are mutually inclusive, also, because there can be no true apologetics without evangelism. Much of the modern antipathy toward apologetics is due perhaps to a failure to realize that apologetics is simply a method of evangelism. Apologetics is and never should be an end in itself. The reasoned defense of the Gospel is only to the end that men might be won to the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. It is quite possible that this all important purpose of apologetics is overlooked or minimized sometimes. This is a terrible sin. When this is done apologetics is no longer worthy of the name

AN INDICTMENT OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL*

R. B. KUIPER, M.A., B.D.

It is not my present purpose to discuss with any degree of adequacy the place which social problems should or should not occupy in the preaching of the Christian minister. Timely and urgent though the earnest consideration of that question is, the brevity of this article obviously precludes even an attempt at it.

In order to prevent possible misunderstanding, however, it may be well for me to say at the outset that I do not and cannot agree with those who tell us that the preacher of today, living as he does in the so-called church age, in distinction from the coming kingdom age, should ignore social problems in the pulpit; that it is his sole business to try to rescue individuals out of society; and that he may well leave it to his King to save society at His second coming. I am sure that, for instance, the late I. M. Haldeman made too sweeping a statement when he wrote in his in some respects admirable review of Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*: "According to the Word of God, the work of the Church in this age is not to save society, but individuals out of it" (page 6). The very distinction between the church age and the kingdom age can be shown to be unscriptural. And not only did the Old Testament prophets preach against the social evils of their day, but Jesus had much to say about family life, and Paul in his epistles discussed, besides family problems, such matters as the proper relation of employers and employees to each other and the Christian attitude toward the civil government. Briefly put, while the primary emphasis of the gospel is indisputably on individual redemption, the gospel does have evident social implications.

After thus warding off conceivable misunderstanding, let me now present a criticism of the Social Gospel as it is being proclaimed today by many liberal preachers. My criticism will amount to a serious indictment. A great many weighty charges may be laid at the door of the Social Gospel. In the interest of brevity I shall do little more than enumerate some of its most flagrant offenses.

* * * * *

(The Social Gospel is evolutionistic in its approach. It assumes without argument that the trend of the times is in the right direction.) It takes for granted that ten thousand liberal preachers cannot be wrong. More specifically, the fact that the Church has of late years increasingly discussed social problems is considered conclusive evidence that such is the Church's task. L. O. Brastow, for instance, reasons in effect as follows in his book on *The Modern Pulpit*: The two great subjects of investigation in the nineteenth century were nature and man: natural science and anthropology. Great changes resulted. Social and political changes allied themselves with industrial and commercial changes in thrusting new tasks upon the pulpit. New social, political, and industrial problems are before the world and must be faced by the preacher (page 87). Obviously, from the fact that the spirit of the age has forced social problems upon the pulpit Brastow infers that they belong there.

As was already indicated, the Christian need have no dispute with those who say that there is room in preaching for the consideration of certain social problems. There is even need of it. However, it makes a world of difference why one admits social problems to the pulpit. The modernist does so because

* An abbreviated form of an address delivered at the Eleventh Annual Convention of the League.

of the trend of the times, the stress of circumstances, the spirit of the age, of all of which he is *a priori* certain that they are in the main good. The Christian does so only because the Word of God so teaches.

* * * * *

(The Social Gospel fails to distinguish sharply between moral evil or sin, on the one hand, and such physical evils as poverty and disease, which result from sin, on the other.) Because of this failure it frequently stresses alleviation of the consequences of sin more than salvation from sin itself. The word *sin* is not at all popular with the preachers of the Social Gospel. As some one has aptly put it, they are concerned much more about getting men out of the slums than about getting the slums out of men's hearts.)

The fallacy of this type of reasoning, if indeed it be not lack of reasoning, is self-evident. How superficial, to put it mildly, it is to seek to dispel the ravages of a disease without attacking the disease itself. What must one think of a physician who mistakes the symptoms of an ailment for the ailment itself and confines his treatment to the symptoms?

* * * * *

(The Social Gospel is based on the silly assumption that the providence of God does not control social evils.) Says A. E. Garvie in *The Preachers of the Church*: "Another error of popular thinking is the assumption that all that occurs is by or according to the will of God.—Evils which might be prevented by intelligent action are ascribed to 'a mysterious dispensation of the divine providence' " (page 154). And in his recent book on *Social Salvation* John C. Bennett of Auburn Theological Seminary informs us: "The recognition that God is limited in His dealings with men, that He does not will the social evils of our time or any time, but that those evils are the result of forces which operate in spite of God's will—such a recognition is the first step in attempting to discover any coherent conception of the work of God in the world" (page 189).

That this view overlooks the important distinction between God's secret will, embodied in His decree, and the revealed will of God, expressed in His law, is obvious. Of course, the fact that divine providence is over all things does not rule out human responsibility for the ills of the world, but neither does human responsibility for these ills rule out divine providence in them. To deny the latter truth is flatly to contradict the plain teaching of God's Word in Amos 3:6, "Shall evil befall a city and Jehovah hath not done it?" Nobody questions the full responsibility of Judas for his betrayal of Jesus; yet Scripture tells us in Acts 2:23 that he did it "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." When President McKinley, mortally wounded by the assassin's bullet, said: "God's will be done," he showed himself a better theologian than Garvie or Bennett. (The Social Gospel nonchalantly rejects divine sovereignty. It boldly denies that God is God.)

* * * * *

(The Social Gospel stresses the betterment of the group at the expense of individual redemption.) (It delights in stamping interest in one's own salvation narrow and selfish. If it cares at all about the salvation of the individual, it would accomplish this by changing his environment, by improving the society that surrounds him.)

The logical error underlying this type of preaching is so obvious that even H. G. Wells saw it. Therefore he wrote in *New Worlds for Old*: "I recognize quite clearly, that with people just as they are, with their prejudices, ignorances,

misapprehensions, their unchecked vanities, greeds and jealousies, their crude and misconstrued instincts, their irrational traditions, no Socialist state can exist—no better state can exist than the one you have now, with all its squalor and cruelty. (page 219). (After all, society is made up of individuals, and it is clear as light itself that society can never be better than the aggregate of individuals constituting it.) The only way, then, to improve society is by improving individual men and women. To reverse the order is to put the cart before the horse.

* * * * *

{ The Social Gospel manifests a decided tendency to make common cause with the advocates of such anti-biblical systems of society as state-socialism, collectivism, and communism. (It is generally known that a couple of years ago many of the leading liberal clergymen of America urgently requested President Roosevelt to give official recognition to the present government of Russia.) Personally I have heard at least one modernist preacher take up the cudgels for the Soviets in his pulpit.

{ While it goes without saying that the Christian Church may never condone the evils of the so-called capitalistic system, it surely does not follow that it is the Church's duty to advocate a type of communism. It should be superfluous to remark that the communism of the early Jerusalem church may not be appealed to as an argument for the various communistic schemes of our day. It was communism among Christians only. There was nothing compulsory about it. And there is no shred of evidence in the New Testament that it was copied by other churches in the apostolic age. (The right of private ownership is taught clearly and emphatically throughout the whole of Scripture. But what is that to the religious liberals of our times? They have rejected the Bible as the absolute norm for faith and life. And many of them, to say the least, are sympathetic toward an anti-biblical socialism.)

* * * * *

{ (The Social Gospel is not satisfied with the Word of God. It cannot think of preaching the Bible only.) For that matter, the Bible is a rather old book by this time. While it does contain much that is of lasting value, it can hardly be said to be up-to-date. To suppose that it contains the solution of distinctly modern social problems is manifestly absurd. In fact, on several points it is obviously in error. So say the advocates of the Social Gospel. Therefore they read books and magazine articles by university professors and brain-trusters and from them cull material for their sermons. In *The Preachers of the Church* A. E. Garvie advises: "However reluctantly and modestly, the Christian preacher must already make the venture to offer to others such solutions as many of the best minds concerned with these problems have agreed upon" (page 198). In consequence of throwing the Bible into the discard, many a preacher of the Social Gospel has come to the sweeping and dogmatic conclusion that all war is sin.

{ Comment is well-nigh superfluous. (It is a dismal day indeed for the Christian Church when its preachers substitute human theories for divine revelation.) "To the law and to the testimony! If they speak not according to this word, surely there is no morning for them" (Isaiah 8:20).

* * * * *

The Social Gospel ridicules the *Jenseitigkeit* of the historic gospel and substitutes for it an exclusive *Diessseitigkeit*. That may seem almost too bold an accu-

sation to make, but it is borne out by the words of one of the most able advocates of the Social Gospel. Says A. E. Garvie in *The Preachers of the Church*: "Men are saved by Christ, not for safety hereafter, but for service here." Observe the extreme character of this dictum. Garvie does not say that men are saved by Christ, not only for safety hereafter, but also for service here. Nor does he say that men are saved by Christ, not merely for safety hereafter, but for service both here and hereafter. To either of those statements every orthodox Christian would gladly subscribe. But Garvie stresses service here to the absolute exclusion of safety hereafter.

How narrow, then, is the outlook of the Social Gospel. How broad in its purpose, on the other hand, is the historic gospel of the Christian Church. One is for this life only; the other is for this life and the next. And let no Christian preacher ever apologize for preparing men for eternity. Important though it is that man be relatively happy the little while that he bides here, it is much more important that he be perfectly happy hereafter forever. Differently and more accurately expressed, nothing is comparable in point of importance with man's serving God in perfection through the endless ages of eternity.

* * * * *

(The Social Gospel denies Jesus Christ.) To be sure, it emphasizes the prophetic work of Christ, but it does so at the expense of His priestly office. It claims to exalt Him as the greatest teacher of humanity, but it has nothing to say about His sacrificial death for the expiation of sin. It also says much about His kingdom, but by ignoring or misinterpreting the cross it seeks to demolish the very foundation of the kingdom.

Words fail me to express the enormity of this offense. While lauding Jesus to His face as a teacher of social ethics, the preacher of the Social Gospel calls Him a liar behind His back. He will have nothing, for instance, of the Saviour's solemn declaration that He came to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). [While commanding men to be good and to do good, he destroys by his denial of the atonement the very basis of Christian morality.] He utterly ignores the inspired words of the apostle Peter: "Who his own self bare our sins in his body upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness" (I Peter 2:24). When rejecting the atonement, he denies Jesus Christ not only as Priest, but as Prophet and King as well. [Thus the Social Gospel would murder the true gospel, and itself is no gospel at all.] The historic gospel tells the criminal behind the bars that the bloody sacrifice of Jesus Christ on Calvary's cross has satisfied the just Judge, who, in consequence, has given orders for his release, and that this manifestation of love divine demands his soul, his life, his all. The Social Gospel has no other message for the prisoner than that he must by all means be good. That is not good news. It is not even news.

* * * * *

(The Social Gospel would save men from sin, if at all, by such external influences as education, culture, the clearance of slums, and the establishment of social centers.) Missionaries under the spell of the Social Gospel would save the heathen by teaching them the use of tooth-brushes and bath-tubs. [The Social Gospel completely overlooks, nay even denies, the emphatic teaching of Scripture that the very first requirement for the sinner's salvation is the uprooting of sin from his heart, to which God Almighty alone has access.] It contradicts the supremely significant statement of our Lord: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except one be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It has already been remarked that the Social Gospel is narrow in its outlook. The charge of superficiality has also been suggested. Now it must be said that the Social Gospel is amazingly superficial. To be sure, no Christian will sneer at culture and education. They are beautiful and valuable gifts of God to man. But how on earth any one can make himself believe, and can in all seriousness try to make others believe, that these forces are able to make a wicked heart good, is difficult to comprehend. The appalling case of Leopold and Loeb and the oft-quoted claim of a warden of Sing Sing that he could supply a university with a complete faculty from the inmates of that institution testify against the Social Gospel. Nor will it help the liberal preacher to deny that the heart of man is desperately wicked and that the natural man is dead in trespasses and sins. History and experience are against him. And, most significant of all, when making these denials he is flatly contradicting God.

* * * * *

The Social Gospel is evolutionistic, not only in its approach, as was already indicated, but also in its program. It declares that humanity is able to save itself by resident forces; that it lies within the power of society to regenerate itself; in a word, that it can lift itself by its bootstraps. Differently expressed, it teaches that the kingdom of God will be ushered in and perfected by human effort. In still other words, the Social Gospel is thoroughly Pelagian, naturalistic through and through. Professor Shirley Jackson Case of the University of Chicago has expressed this unmistakably in his book *The Millennial Hope*. Says he: "The course of history exhibits one long process of evolving struggle by which humanity as a whole rises constantly higher in the scale of civilization and attainment, bettering its condition from time to time through its greater skill and industry. Viewed in the long perspective of the ages, man's career has been one of actual ascent.—Since history and science show that betterment is always the result of achievement, man learns to surmise that evils still unconquered are to be eliminated by strenuous effort and gradual reform rather than by the catastrophic intervention of Deity" (page 238). And Bennett is just as outspoken in *Social Salvation* when he writes: "There is one fact neglected by theologies strongly Augustinian which must be recognized, whether to recognize it be Pelagian in the current use of that word or not. It is that human salvation, yes even the grace of God, can be blocked by social and psychological conditions which only human effort can remove."

It is difficult to conceive of a teaching that goes more directly contrary to the central truth of Holy Writ. The fact that "salvation belongeth unto Jehovah" (Psalm 3:8) lies at the very heart of Scripture. To be sure, God is pleased frequently to use human endeavor for the amelioration of the ills of society. At times he thus employs the efforts even of the unregenerate. But then all the credit goes to God's common grace. However, the only sure cure for the ills of society lies in the supernatural regeneration of the individuals constituting it. That, no doubt, Isaiah had in mind when he said that wars will not cease until the earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah 11:9). And how clearly God tells us in His Word that the promise of the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, will not be fulfilled until the day of the Lord, which will come as a thief, and in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein will be burned up (II Peter 3:8-13).

In summary, the Social Gospel, in contradistinction from the historic gospel of the Christian Church, is anthropocentric, not theocentric; naturalistic, not supernaturalistic. It does not offer God's supernatural remedy for sin, but man's palliatives for sin's consequences. It proclaims not the Word of the living God, but human theories. (It aims at the temporal welfare of man instead of the eternal glory of God.)

All of which is but another way of saying that the Social Gospel is "a different gospel which is not another gospel," and that to it and its advocates applies the scathing denunciation of the inspired apostle: "If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema" (Gal. 1:6, 9). XXX

VISIBLE—TEMPORAL; INVISIBLE—ETERNAL

BISHOP ROBERT W. PEACH, PH.B., D. D.

PART II*

PART II. THE INVISIBLE GOD IS A PERSON.

Beware of anthropomorphism, which, primarily, is ascribing a man's body to God! Bodily form does not make personality, either in God or man. Three things make personality: thought, will, feeling—consciousness, volition, sensibility. God, invisible because incorporeal, has these three things. Nay more, He is their Source. Infinite in intellect, He is omniscient; infinite in will-power, He is omnipotent; infinite in love,—for "God is love,"—he is omnipresent in beneficence. God is a Person: He is our Creator, He is our Sovereign, He is our Father, even though no man hath seen Him, or can see!

(1) *God is Omniscient: All Knowledge is Invisible.* Hear David: "O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my down-sitting and mine uprising; Thou understandest my thought afar off;" and again, God "tellethe the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names;" and once more, "Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite." Hear the Lord Jesus: "Are not five sparrows sold for two pence? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." And again, "God knoweth your hearts." Hear St. John: "God . . . knoweth all things."

How could God be anything less than omniscient? All visible things are His thoughts, made objective by His will. He did not think and will them yesterday or a million years ago, and sooner or later forget. With Him, there is no sooner or later, but an everlasting now. "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," said St. Peter; and "God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM." Not only the visible, but all invisible things—spirits of angels in heaven, of angels fallen, and of men—are His thoughts, energized and endowed with consciousness by His will. If God were visible, He would have one center of consciousness, from which His thought would have to reach out with diminishing fulness; being invisible and infinite, His consciousness functions fully at once in what to us is nearest fellow-creature and farthest star. Said St. James the

* For Part I see the previous issue of *The Evangelical Student*.