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A Study of the Writings of Walter Rauschenbusch as Reflected in His Books on the Social Gospel

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A STUDY OF THE WRITINGS OF WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH AS REFLECTED IN HIS BOOKS ON THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

An Abstract of a Thesis

Presented to the

School of Graduate Studies

Ouachita Baptist University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

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by

Natille Pierce Lindsey

May 1966

Using primarily his five books on the social gospel movement, this study of Walter Rauschenbusch centered on the man as a writer and literary figure. A background investigation had revealed that there had been extensive studies of Rauschenbusch as a man, a preacher, a social critic, and a theological professor but not of his career or ability as a writer. Although he had published five large books and two small ones in English, as well as four books in German, he had not been noticed as a writer. Why?

Since Rauschenbusch and his writings were so inextricably interwoven that one cannot be explained satisfactorily apart from the other, the social gospel movement of which he is sometimes called the father, was first examined in some detail. Lives of the men who led it were looked at briefly as a part of this background.

His five large books written in English and proclaiming Rauschenbusch's social gospel message provided the principal basis for this study. Additional information was acquired from such periodicals as South Atlantic Quarterly, Religion In Life, Christian Century, and Survey. Extensive use was made of materials loaned from the Colgate Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York. Other relevant books and theses were consulted.

This study revealed that Rauschenbusch had a natural talent for writing. His interest in writing started developing while he was a young student in Germany and continued throughout his professional career.

He was a scholar, as is evident from the position he held in the Rochester Theological Seminary. His constant pursuit of knowledge revealed itself in his writings.

He was a compassionate person, a dedicated Christian, and a social idealist. His response to social conditions as a young minister in New York City's Hell's Kitchen area and the fact that he devoted his adult life to the championing of the cause of the underprivileged only serve to accentuate his unselfish love for all mankind.

As a writer, Rauschenbusch is repetitious in both theme and style. This may be explainable, at least in part, by the fact that he was a preacher and frequent public speaker, perhaps given to recapitulation for the sake of the audience. He coupled a sardonic humor with a concise and picturesque style. His books, plainly written in simple language, abound with similes and metaphors. The use of short, stabbing sentences lends a dramatic emphasis to his message.

If Ezra Pound's definition of great writing is accepted, then Rauschenbusch might even be termed great. Said Pound,

"Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree."[1] The writings of the Prophet of Rochester could, in this sense, be judged great.

Rauschenbusch's ability as a speaker and influence as a social reformer have overshadowed his talent as a writer and have caused a study of this ability to be overlooked.

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[1]Kellogg W. Hunt and Paul Stoakes, Our Living Language (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 562.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Students of the social gospel movement in the United States have given careful attention to the preaching and theological impact of Walter Rauschenbusch, as well they should, since this Baptist pastor from New York's Hell Kitchen section was a prime force in the development of the movement. Rauschenbusch the man, Rauschenbusch the preacher, Rauschenbusch the social critic, Rauschenbusch the theological influencer--all of these have been developed extensively in various studies.

The one facet of Walter Rauschenbusch's life which has not been examined closely is his career as a writer. This neglect was first noticed when the author of this thesis was writing a paper, "The Social Gospel Movement," for a graduate course in American History. Why should a man who produced five large books and two small ones in English, in addition to four books in German, not be noticed as a writer? Were his written words so devoid of the "fire" of his speaking that they were discounted? Was the master of the spoken word inept at expressing himself on the printed page? Or was his stature as a speaker so great that his ability as a writer was simply overshadowed?

Intrigued by these questions, this writer decided to dig into the mystery. This thesis is the result.

THE PROBLEM

The purposes of this study are (1) to do a literary analysis of five works of Walter Rauschenbusch and (2) to make a comparative study of the books. The literary analysis will consist mainly of excerpts that exemplify certain elements of literary form within the five books. The comparative study will involve a discussion of the differences and similarities in the style, tone and emotional fervor expressed by Rauschenbusch in the works selected.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The past decade has brought about an increased interest and involvement in social problems. The current social legislation owes its passage to a few dedicated men who, nearly a century ago, saw the need for improved social conditions.

> The concepts of social Christianity which had struggled for expression in Channing, Gladden, Bushnell, Josiah Strong and others in the nineteenth century found in Rauschenbusch their pen, their voice and their personification.[1]

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[1]Harold E. Fey, "Rauschenbusch Centennial," Christian Century, LXXVIII (October 4, 1961), p. 1165.

Since Rauschenbusch is considered to be a major prophet of the social gospel movement in America, it is significant that his writings be studied from a literary viewpoint.[2] His works aptly fall into the second category of W. Roscoe's definition of literature:

> There is, first, the literature of knowledge; and, secondly, the literature of power. The function of the first is--to teach; the function of the second is--to move: the first is a rudder: the second, an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the mere discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always through affections of pleasure and sympathy.[3]

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

To understand the motivation behind Rauschenbusch's writings and to place the man and his works in their proper setting, it is necessary to consider the religious environment of his literary career and to understand the social gospel movement.

The Protestant churches, to which the Prophet of Rochester, as Rauschenbusch became known, addressed much of his message, were in the grip of traditional individualism.

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[2]Dores Robinson Sharpe, Walter Rauschenbusch (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942), p. 8.

[3]Paul Robert Leider and Robert Withington, The Art of Literary Criticism (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1941), p. 448.

> Walter Rauschenbusch, the clergyman and professor of church history, became the Isaiah who held up to scorn the smugness of the well-to-do urban church members and who took the lead in bringing a new social consciousness to American Protestantism.[4]

The churches were interested in conventional foreign missions--"the evangelization of the world in this generation."[5] Their home missionaries followed the people into the new territories such as Oklahoma and Arizona, which had not yet become states. The churches conducted evangelistic campaigns. They conducted Sunday schools, taught temperance, and had two church services each Sunday. They opposed dancing, they saw sin as associated largely with sex, and they did not consider organized economic forces as particularly evil. Theirs was an easy blend of piety, secular optimism, and patriotism. Their social activities were simple and vague. They thought they saw simple causes of various phenomenain a relatively simple society.[6]

Into this individualism and complacency came the strong voice of a professor in a theological seminary who

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[4]Robert E. Spiller and others, Literary History of the United States (New York: The Macmillan Press, 1955), p. 951.

[5]Benson Y. Landis, A Rauschenbusch Reader (New York: The Macmillan Press, 1955), p. 951.

[6]Ibid. (All the facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

was as much surprised as anyone when he found himself discussed everywhere and in demand as a lecturer and writer.[7]

Rauschenbusch was one of the later exponents of the social gospel movement. Before him, men like Theodore Munger, Washington Gladden, William Dwight Bliss and Thomas Sheldon had been using voice and pen to acquaint people with the social aspects of Christianity.

The birth of the social gospel movement was assisted by a variety of distinctively nineteenth century forces: One was the challange of socialism, another the rising strength of labor unions. A third force was a liberal theology in which the moral idealism of liberalism and its insistence on practical fruits of religion intensified the sense of Christian responsibility for doing something about the evils of society. A fourth force was the intensity of the social problems themselves. By 1880 the United States was rapidly becoming a closely knit industrial society, and the social gospel sought to meet the problems of this society. The social gospel was a new application of the Christian ethic in response to the demands of a new historical situation. Conscience had to become "social conscience."[8]

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[7]Ibid., p. xvii.

[8]John Dillenberger and Claude Welch, Protestant Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), p. 245. (All the facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

At the onset of this social gospel movement after 1865 American Protestantism found itself in a position of increasing difficulty. Its traditional doctrines were being eroded by a new emphasis on science and by historical criticism. Radical proponents of the new religion of humanism were proposing their faith as a substitute for what they called an anachronistic Christianity.[9] Most ministers held fast to the old orthodoxy and contented themselves with the doctrine of stewardship of the gospel of wealth. A small but increasing minority began the development of what they called "a new theology."[10] This theology was heir to the "expectation of the coming kingdom upon earth,"[11] which expectation in the nineteenth century became the dominant idea in American Christianity. Christianity, the social gospel, and the message of the kingdom of God--these three are names for the same religious reality.[12]

The official recognition of the social gospel was symbolized by the organization in 1908 of the Federal

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[9]Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1956), p. 258.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Kenneth Cauthen, The Impact of American Religious Liberalism (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 86.

[12]Ibid.

Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. The Council was formed partly for the specific purpose of providing a centralized office for the expression of Protestant concern in every area of social problems. After a difficult struggle against elements both inside and outside the churches, it became a prominent force on the American scene. It has continued to provide an effective framework for Protestant social action.[13]

Although practically all denominational groups ultimately awoke to social issues, the movement took root and grew most vigorously among Unitarians, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians--three American religious bodies inheriting the state-church tradition of responsibility for public morals.[14] Unitarianism, with its insistence on meeting social needs of humanity, was credited with the emphasis in teaching which led to the effective beginnings of the movement that was to make the social gospel a national force.[15] This same Unitarianism was the principal "seedbed in which

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[13]Dillenberger and Welch, op. cit., p. 253. (All the facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[14]Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 318.

[15]Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the U. S. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950), p. 255.

the ideological roots of social Christianity found themselves most at home though the Quakers of Pennsylvania preceded it in some fields."[16]

The religious social movement expressed itself in various concrete forms. The first of these was a vast body of educational and propagandistic literature and activity. Another form was the different types of organizations, such as the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor. One concrete, organized product of the movement was the institutional church and the religious social settlement. Finally, there was the supply of leaders furnished by the church to social work, the Socialist party, and the labor movement as a result of the social emphasis.[17]

A special form of social gospel idealism prevailed between 1900 and World War I, with Rauschenbusch's being an outstanding participant of the social gospel movement.[18] In noting some of the qualifying aspects of this period, one needs to remember three points. First, "This whole impulse of radical criticism and Christian socialism was only a

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[16]Ibid.

[17]Hopkins, op. cit., p. 319 (All the facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[18]J. Neal Hughley, Trends in Protestant Social Idealism (New York: King's Crown Press, 1948), pp. 12-13.

minority movement in religious circles."[19] The masses of churches and the majority of pastors were devoted to the status quo, "even in the realm of ideas."[20] Second, Christian influence of the Christian Socialist Fellowship, which was backed by men like Rauschenbusch and William Dwight Porter Bliss, was widely, though briefly, felt in church leadership circles. In the third place, the social gospel was radical in that it challenged the old order; but it was not, as a rule, possessed of revolutionary Marxist conceptions.[21]

> The social gospel idealism between 1900 and 1920 became highly respectable, became in fact an established, formalized, creedalized, institutionalized program with all the gains and losses which such a process entailed.[22]

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Walter Rauschenbusch wrote eleven books and numerous articles and pamphlets. Four of his books, The Life of Jesus, published in 1895; Biography of Augustus Rauschenbusch, published in 1901; Civil Government in the U. S., published in 1902; and "Section on U. S.," Kruger's Church

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[19]Ibid., p. 12.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., p. 13.

[22]Ibid., p. 14.

History, published in 1909, were written in German. Seven of his books, Christianity and the Social Crisis, published in 1907; Prayers of the Social Awakening, published in 1910; Christianizing the Social Order, published in 1912; The Social Principles of Jesus, published in 1916; and A Theology for the Social Gospel, published in 1917, along with two smaller books, Unto Me, published in 1912; and Dare We Be Christians, published in 1914, were written in English.

This study will cover Rauschenbusch's major books on the social gospel. This examination will be restricted to the first five books listed that were published in English. Unto Me and Dare We Be Christians were read but were arbitrarily excluded from this study because they produced no new literary elements and were brief, devotional treatises.

SOURCES AND TREATMENT OF DATA

The five works to be studied were secured from the Riley Library at Ouachita Baptist University and from private libraries. Some of the material in the books has been printed separately in periodicals such as American Journal of Theology, Biblical World and Homiletic Review.

Critical reviews of Rauschenbusch's writings appear in periodicals such as South Atlantic Quarterly, Religion in Life, Christian Century, and Survey. Many of these were secured through interlibrary loans.

Since the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School in Rochester, New York, has a large collection of materials pertaining to Rauschenbusch, the librarian of this school was contacted; and extensive use was made of materials from this source.

Books were ordered through interlibrary loan from Yale University, the University of Kentucky, and Colgate University.

Three relevant theses from Baptist seminaries were consulted for data and added bibliography.

The data furnished by the study will be arranged into four chapters. Chapter I has given the purpose, significance, background, delimitations, and sources and treatment of data. Chapter II will consist of detailed background material. A biographical sketch will be presented together with a look at the social gospel movement. In Chapter III, a summary will be presented of each of the five books involved in this study; and a literary review will be undertaken. A comparative analysis of Rauschenbusch's works will be made to note changes in mood, tone and style. Chapter IV will summarize the findings and will contain conclusions derived from the study.

The organization of this paper has been planned to emphasize the literary aspects of the books studied and to

bring into focus the basic issues of the social gospel movement that created the background for the books.

CHAPTER II

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL ERA AND WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH

To understand the writings of Walter Rauschenbusch, and the impact that he had upon the social conscience of the world, one needs first to study the social gospel movement. Many of Rauschenbusch's forerunners and contemporaries shared ideologies which were similar in emphasis to his. This chapter examines the emphasis of several of these men who, also, were involved in extending a social gospel. The value of surveying their thought makes it clear that Rauschenbusch's own contribution was, despite its importance, neither unique to the age in which it found its expression nor original in its concern. Actually, the effort here is to say that although, in many senses, Rauschenbusch was an eclectic thinker, he was also a representative one. What emerged as evident is that in Rauschenbusch the variegated facets of the social gospel find a unity and focus they had not found prior to him. This justifies the study.

THE MEN AND ISSUES INVOLVED

Charles Hopkins in his book The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915, defines social gospel as

> the application of the teaching of Jesus and the total message of the Christian salvation to society, the

> economic life, and social institutions. . . as well as to individuals.[1]

The term "social gospel" first came into prominent use through the name of a magazine which appeared in 1898, The Social Gospel, A Magazine of Obedience to the Law of Love. Reviews by leading Christian reformers of the day were published. This magazine was the organ of the "Christian Commonwealth," an experiment in primitive Christian living undertaken in Georgia from 1896-1900.[2]

"The 'social gospel' was not a revolutionary attack on capitalistic society from the outside, but a reforming effort from within."[3] The theory that was behind the ideas of reform was the one of human rights--the idea that the individual has a natural right to an existence worthy of a human being, that institutions and social arrangements are but means to the realization of this right.[4]

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[1]Charles Howard Hopkins, The Rise of the Social Gospel in American Protestantism 1865-1915 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), p. 316.

[2]Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1956), p. 273.

[3]H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, American Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963) Vol. II, p. 362.

[4]Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought (New York: Harper and Bros., 1951), p. 608.

The church, or established religion, was responsible for the greatest inspiration and most effective propagation within the social gospel movement. It was not a theory but a condition which led the religious mind to become aware that it could not ignore the processes which were producing human misery. In the late nineteenth century, the church, which had never been indifferent to misery but had possessed charity as one of its cardinal virtues, began to be disturbed by new forms of poverty and new kinds of misery. The new poverty of the industrial classes seemed to be a man-made thing. It was a by-product of the very processes by which wealth was being created. Children in factories and mines, sweatshop work by women at starvation wages, industrial accidents with unguarded machinery all resulted from bad human arrangement in the process of creating wealth. Through observing these concrete conditions which cried aloud for correction, the men who became prophets of the social gospel found their initial impetus for reform. The church, herself, while not indifferent to poverty and need, comforted its conscience by giving charity.[5] It is quite possible that the tardiness of the church in aggressively entering the field of social reform was in some measure due

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[5]Winfred Ernest Garrison, The March of Faith (New York: Harper and Bros., 1933), pp. 149-150.

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to the persistence of the belief that misery is the result of the individual's sin and an expression of God's displeasure.[6]

These church-expressed beliefs were propagated, to some extent, by one of the early social gospel leaders, Theodore Thornton Munger, a Congregationalist minister in New Haven, Connecticut, who took the lead in the new movement. His volume, The Freedom of the Faith, in 1883 expressed the mood and presented the ideas of the progressives. "The New Theology," said Munger,

> accepts the phrase, 'a religion of humanity,' but it holds that it is more than an adjustment of the facts of humanity, and more than a reduction of the forces of humanity to harmony.[7]

Munger accepted science and evolution as the probable method of physical creation. He welcomed new views of scripture made possible by historical criticism. He held fast to theism and stood firm on the old doctrine of the free and accountable individual. Between the poles of individualism and socialism Munger worked from the traditional protestant position toward middle ground. This new expression of theology became a leaven which finally, through the social gospel movement, transformed American protestantism.[8]

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[6]Ibid., p. 151.

[7]Gabriel, op. cit., p. 258.

[8]Ibid., p. 259.

This transformation, however, was not completed until the slaves had been liberated by the Civil War. After that, the social impulse of Christianity was set free to devote itself to the relief of the new industrial conditions which the war had helped to create. Up to that time public interests of the Church had been mainly absorbed in the question of slavery; now, religion became the most powerful drive behind the humanitarian movements of the age.[9]

A few liberal clergymen, attracted to the utopian socialism of the period, saw the literal fulfillment of Christ's promise of heaven on earth in a collectivistic society, the principles, ends, and methods of which appeared to them as definitely Christian.[10]

Among the earliest and most eloquent exponents of the social aspects of Christianity was a group that included Washington Gladden, and, later, Walter Rauschenbusch, and was called the Brotherhood of the Kingdom. Among other early leaders who will be discussed in greater detail later was William Jewett Tucker of Andover, who was the first to introduce social studies into the curriculum of a theological seminary. Josiah Strong combined a social emphasis with rather conservative theology. William Jennings Bryan

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[9]Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the U. S. (New York: Harper and Bros., 1950), Vol. II, p. 258.

[10]Hopkins, op. cit., p. 318.

infused religious fervor into his appeal on behalf of the agrarian West and the debtor class generally. Charles M. Sheldon's In His Steps was to the new appeal for social righteousness what Uncle Tom's Cabin had been to the anti-slavery movement. For one week, Sheldon experimentally edited the Topeka Capitol, a religious daily paper, and focused the eyes of the country upon the fact that there was at least one Christian leader who thought that religion required a definite attitude toward the events of the day.[11] Another religious leader was William Ellery Channing, whose constituency included men of position and wealth. He was genuinely concerned with the social and moral effects of the prevailingly unequal distribution of wealth. Joseph Tuckerman, a Unitarian colleague of Channing's, made a serious effort to apply Christ's teaching of brotherhood in the bleak and revolting slums of Boston; and Edwin Chapin and others followed his example in New York. Elian Magoon, a Baptist minister, declared that the church must "work for the millions rather than for aristocratic cliques."[12] In Republican Christianity Magoon maintained that the time had come when Christianity must forego its historic connection with tyranny, aristocracy, and priestcraft to play the part

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[11]Curti, op. cit., p. 307.

[12]Ibid., p. 308.

as "patron of the aspiring, the fortifier of the weak, the deliverer of the oppressed."[13]

Jesse H. Jones, Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford, turned from reform of art to that of society and preached a curious economic and social philosophy which he called "communion." Jones felt that the Christian church should minister to the industrial wage earner and to the railway worker as much as to the employer. In Boston in 1872 he founded the Christian Labor Union, using the local Knights of Labor as his model. The purpose of the organization was the education of workers and support of labor reforms. All members were ardent supporters of Steward's Eight-Hour Movement. To carry its message to America, the Christian Labor Union established a monthly journal, Equity, with Jones as editor. Equity proclaimed the desirability of cooperative banks, workshops and stores. It boldly espoused the cause of socialism--public ownership of machinery, mediums of exchange and transfer, and products of industry prior to their final distribution. Equity stopped in December, 1875, for lack of funds. In the last issue, Jones wrote a discussion of the labor problem from the Christian viewpoint. It met with almost complete silence. Through a new social gospel, this prophet made a

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[13]Ibid.

determined effort at the turn of the century to transform the churches of America into agencies for the amelioration of the unhappy lot of the "House of Want," a term created by Henry George to depict the poor class of people.[14]

The first book of the social gospel movement was a volume entitled Being a Christian, published by the Congregational Publishing Society. The author was Washington Gladden, a young minister in Springfield, Massachusetts, who had resigned from the editorial staff of the religious journal, the Independent, because he had disapproved of its policy of accepting what he considered dubious advertisements. Now considered a religious rebel, he declared that anyone who would follow the Nazarene needed but to accept as the ruling axiom of ethical conduct the command that a man shall love his neighbor as himself. He preached the philosophy that "the power of Christian love" was strong enough to "smoothe and sweeten all the relations of capitalists and labor."[15] He felt that peace would exist if the capitalist would measure his profits, and the workingman his wages, by the Golden Rule.

Gladden had been greatly influenced by Horace Bushnell, who progressed from a local pastoral fame in

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[14]Gabriel, op. cit., p. 257.

[15]Ibid., p. 259.

Hartford, Connecticut, in the 1830's to an international reputation in the 1860's, by emphasizing the humanity of Christ. He also preached that the significance of the crucifixion was the example Christ set in self-sacrifice. Putting the teachings of Bushnell to work in his own life during the 1870's, Gladden gradually evolved most of the fundamentals of the social gospel.[16]

In the same decade Octavius Brooks Frothingham formulated the basic concepts of the American religion of humanity; Ingersoll rose to the climax of his campaign of ridicule and vituperation against the old orthodoxy; and Lester F. Ward completed his Dynamic Sociology. These three dismissed theism as outmoded by science. Unlike them Gladden held fast to the faith. He welcomed science and scholarship as partners of religion. Historical criticism was a friend of the scriptures. Gladden became the crusader for the new liberalism. In 1882 he moved to Columbus, Ohio, where he plunged with vigor into the pressing problem of the relation between employers and employees. He was courageous and conciliatory and spoke his mind boldly. Because of his honesty and common sense, he won the respect of both capitalists and laborers. In 1885 when management

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[16]Ibid., p. 260.

was watching the rise of the Knights of Labor with anger and fear, Gladden told the employers that labor had a right to organize and to strike. He also reminded the churches that they should be leading American social movements. In his book, Working People and Their Employers, published in 1885, Gladden discussed whether

> there shall be a caste system recognized and established in our churches; so that the rich shall meet by themselves in the grand churches, and the poor in the mission chapels; and that there shall be no sympathy between the two classes, but only aims, with a certain haughty condescension on the one side, and a qualified mendicancy, with envious resentment, on the other.[17]

His solution to the labor problem was typical of his middle-of-the-road liberalism. He rejected complete communism or socialism on the ground that such a society must produce weak and flabby individuals. He strongly believed that the emphasis should be on the individual. He balanced his preaching of the good with blows against specific evils. His death in July, 1918, ended a career dedicated to his fellowman.[18]

One of Gladden's contemporaries, Henry George, whose Progress for Poverty was published in 1879, found enough sympathy for his diagnosis of the economic conditions to win

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[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., pp. 260-263.

international fame for him, though his proposed cure, the single tax, never won any great following.[19] In his campaign for mayor of New York, he ran a good second ahead of Theodore Roosevelt, who was on the regular Republican ticket. George found it difficult to find a publisher for Progress for Poverty; however, after publication, it went through more than a hundred editions, and by 1906 had probably been read by six million men and women.[20] In it, he painted stirring pictures contrasting the "House of Have" with the "House of Want." The appeal of the book lay in the simplicity of the author's proposed remedy. In brief, a new system of land taxation promised to abolish large fortunes and to provide a decent and secure living for the plain people. He proposed that society virtually take over the ownership of the land by levelling a tax equal to the rental value, and the revenue thus obtained would be applied to social services. "Such a tax would be sufficient to finance the government. All other forms of taxation would be remitted."[21] In Progress and Poverty, George calls "rent" the difference between the income value of a given plot of land and that of

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[19]James Dombrowski, The Early Days of Christian Socialism in America (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936), p. 37.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., p. 38.

the least valuable land in use in the neighborhood. Thus, the progress of society furnishes profits for the landlord monopolist. As the economic solution of this basic evil, he proposed the taxation of unearned increment.[22]

As a fellow minister and admirer of Henry George, William Dwight Porter Bliss came to America from Constantinople, Turkey where he had been born of missionary parents, to attend Robert College and decided that the United States needed missionaries as badly as other countries. Bliss studied theology at the Hartford Theological Seminary and, while there, mastered Henry George's Progress and Poverty. In 1886 he took charge of St. George's Episcopal Church in the factory town of Lee, Massachusetts. He joined the Knights of Labor and became the master workman of a local assembly. This work brought him into contact with George McNeill, veteran leader of the Eight-Hour Movement. They had a reciprocal influence on each other and spent hours discussing labor. Bliss resigned his church to establish in South Boston what he called the Mission of the Carpenter. This church for working people was a perfect expression in institutional form of the ideal of the social gospel movement.[23]

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[22]Jacob Mark Jacobson, The Development of American Political Thought (New York: Appleton-Century-Crafts, 1932), p. 527.

[23]Garrison, op. cit., p. 152.

In 1887 with Bishop F. D. Huntington of New York, Bliss founded the (Episcopal) Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor, popularly known as CAIL. Its basic principle was a new doctrine of solidarity expressed in the formula, the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.

> The most important plank of the CAIL platform was the conclusion that the chief of man's God-given rights is the right to work. CAIL was a success in that it secured a large and influential membership from among the clergy. They cooperated in its effort to achieve social justice by pleading the cause of labor before the employer, by furthering the passage of industrial legislation, and by establishing a Council of Conciliation and Mediation to function in labor disputes.[24]

CAIL was one of the most important organizations of the social gospel movement. As leader of the "Christian Socialists" group, Bliss in 1889 said, "The control of business is rapidly concentrated in the hands of a dangerous plutocracy and the teachings lead directly to some form of socialism."[25] With the publication of a journal called the Dawn, Bliss passed beyond the middle-of-the-road positions of Munger and Gladden to the affirmation that socialism expressed the true meaning of the formula of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God. Dawn met with the

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[24]Ibid., p. 153.

[25]Ibid.

same fate as Equity. Bliss replaced it with The American Fabian, which journal was the record of the The Fabian Society, whose members believed in a slow rather than revolutionary change in government. The Christianized Fabianism of Bliss and his followers was a compound of religion, evolution, and socialism. Uncritically accepting the prevailing ideas of the day--an immanent God, the organic view of society, and the present reality of the kingdom of heaven--these crusaders developed an evolutionary reform philosophy that included the spiritual values of socialism and many of its critical and constructive elements but that rejected its materialistic and atheistic aspects.[26]

The greatest achievement of Bliss was the Encyclopaedia of Social Reform, written for Funk and Wagnall's.[27] At his death in 1926, this untiring missionary from the Church of the Carpenter had devoted forty years to the propagandist ministry of Christian socialism.

About the same time that Gladden and Bliss were preaching a similar doctrine on social evils, George D. Herron, a Professor of Applied Christianity at Iowa College, later Grinnell College, was advocating a conservative socialist policy. With the aid of a friend, Mrs. E. D. Rand, who secured him his teaching job, he became one of the most

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[26]Hopkins, op. cit., p. 180.

[27]Gabriel, op. cit., p. 266.

influential preachers in the middle West. An effective speaker, his lectures at colleges, divinity schools and churches always aroused controversy. In the decade of the Populist Crusade, he was the ecclesiastical counterpart of William Jennings Bryan. Herron joined the Socialist Party in 1900. He preached that capitalism must be replaced by socialism, and it was his belief that he was destined to play a Messianic role in the redemption of the world. In 1901 Herron's wife obtained an uncontested divorce, and two months later his marriage to Carrie Rand ended his prestige and influence in this country. However, his gospel of sacrifice encouraged two concrete results, the writing of Charles M. Sheldon's book In His Steps and the organization of the Christian Commonwealth Community of Georgia.[28] After his second marriage, Herron became an exile in Europe where his Italian villa attracted attention as a rendezvous for interesting intellectuals from many countries. After 1917 he tried to get the liberals of Europe to understand the democratic idealism of Woodrow Wilson. Herron's message held no practical concern for specific remedies, such as trade unions and regulation of monopoly, of the sort that appealed to Gladden. Dissimilar also to W. D. P. Bliss's Christian socialism, Herron's evangel was of "the political appearing

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[28]Ibid., p. 188.

of Christ"--a religious theory concerning the nature and purpose of the social state.[29] Herron's version of the social gospel appears to have been a deeply religious interpretation of the contemporary social revolt, phrased by a prophetic genius of tremendous spiritual dynamic.[30]

It is significant that, during the era of Herron and such contemporaries as Gladden and Bliss, the social gospel had a correlative existence with Calvinism. It showed its greatest strength in the countries where Calvinism was most deeply entrenched. Ironically, the "other-worldly"[31] emphasis of Calvinism prompted the growth of a social Christianity opposed to the "other-worldliness" of Lutheranism and the "next-worldliness"of Catholicism.[32] The social gospel insisted that life on the earth was not to be regarded as preparation for some future existence. The good life was to be realized here on earth. Here, God's will was to find complete fruition. In some respects this was a reaffirmation of the Puritan ideal of a theocratic social structure. The phrase, the "kingdom of God,"[33] served as the most charac-

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[29]Ibid., p. 189.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Dombrowski, op. cit., p. 30.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Ibid.

teristic symbol of the social movement in Christianity. During this period religion had for its function the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. The most prominent feature of the social gospel was its emphasis upon the saving of society before the saving of individuals. There could be no salvation of the individual apart from that of society as a whole. It was this idea that gave the social gospel its unique significance.[34]

With the exception of a small minority represented by George Herron, it may be said that the dominant philosophy of the proponents of the social gospel in the eighties and nineties was theological liberalism, which carried over as the major emphasis of the movement until the World War.[35] Because of his conservative socialistic beliefs, Herron felt that some type of drastic change from this liberalism was necessary. "Revolutions," said Herron in 1893, "even in their wildest forms, are the impulses of God moving in tides of fire through the life of men."[36] This theistic faith was basic to the man who, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, lifted the social gospel above the

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[34]Ibid.

[35]Ibid., pp. 30-31.

[36]Gabriel, op. cit., p. 270.

romanticism of Sheldon and the dogmatism of the Grinnell prophet to cause it to possess intellectual dignity.[37]

When Herron's constantly repeated gospel of the redemption of society by sacrifice was imparted to the Reverend Charles M. Sheldon, a Congregational minister of Topeka, Kansas, the center of a New England Puritanism was transplanted to the plains. Sheldon's influence spread via a novel, In His Steps, first published in 1898. Next to the Bible this was the most widely read religious book in America during the first decade of the twentieth century. More than fifteen million copies were sold. In his story he proposed as the solution for social ills that each individual, rich or poor, when faced with a decision, should ask the question, "What would Jesus do?"[38] The novelist described in simple and effective language the revolution which occurred in the lives of those who took the pledge, and asked themselves the question for a one-year period. To ask the question was not easy. Even the minister in the story who followed the formula had to make a major decision when he chose God's way which meant giving up fame and success. To crystallize his philosophy Sheldon, at the close of the book, used an incident in which a man had lost his job because of the introduction of

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[37]Ibid.

[38]Charles M. Sheldon, In His Steps (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1935), p. 15.

machinery. When the kingdom of God shall have been realized on earth, the law of that kingdom which is sacrifice and the bearing of one another's burdens will be triumphant.

> In such a world no man can lack for work. Sheldon repudiated the Christian Socialism of Bliss; he added to Gladden's concept of the socialized individual the Herron doctrine of social redemption through individual sacrifice.[39]

Sheldon's philosophy was in time to make an impact on the newly developed College Settlment Movement. This social movement also owed much to the churches. Doctor Vida D. Scudder (Episcopalian) of Wellesley played a leading part, as did Stanton Coit (Society of Ethical Culture), whose Neighborhood Guild, started in New York in 1886, drew its inspiration from Toynbee Hall in London. Jane Addams opened Hull House in Chicago in 1889, and Graham Taylor became professor of social ethics in Chicago Theological Seminary and founded Chicago Commons. Andover House, opened in Boston in 1892, was the second settlement in this country. Kingsley House in Pittsburg, 1893; in Boston in 1893, the Epworth League House, which developed the Good Will Industries; and the Union Settlement Association in New York, 1895, are examples of the scores of settlements founded mainly under church or religious auspices and destined to become laboratories for the study of social questions. In these settlements remedial

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[39]Gabriel, op. cit., p. 271.

agencies were organized and conditions were discovered that prompted legislative investigation. They were tremendous stimuli to the social consciousness of the churches. These settlement houses helped to relate sociologists and liberal religious leaders to the needs of the underprivileged urban population and became centers where different American and foreign-born groups met for the discussion of mutual interests and where social reform legislation was planned and stimulated.[40]

Paralleling the College Settlement Movement in the East and mid-West was the Christian Commonwealth Colony founded by Ralph Albertson on a cotton plantation twelve miles east of Columbus, Georgia. The purpose of the colony member was to obey the teachings of Jesus "in all matters of life, labor, and the use of property."[41] Albertson has been influenced by Henry George, Edward Bellamy, Washington Gladden and George Herron. The chaos brought on by the Pullman strike of 1894 convinced Albertson that such was the natural and inevitable result of an economic system with a central principle of competitive profit-seeking. Albertson decided that in this desert of materialism, which was called

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[40]Stokes, op. cit., p. 266. (All the facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[41]Gabriel, op. cit., p. 272.

the United States, he would create an oasis of self-forgetting brotherhood. The colony applied the principle of diversified agriculture to its one thousand acres. A monthly journal, The Social Gospel, was published. Although this was one of the main sources of income for the colony, the group was poverty stricken.

> In the January, 1900 issue of The Social Gospel Albertson wrote that they had all been living for months on less than three cents each of meal and that they could not indulge themselves in luxuries until they had honestly preferred God's poor above themselves.[42]

George Herron was a contributing editor and Sheldon a friendly supporter. The magazine dealt with all phases of Christianity. Count Tolstoy was their greatest outside friend. He rejoiced in their firmness of views and gave much moral support. The Commonwealth fell in 1899 for three reasons: A heavy freeze ruined their food supply; a small cabal of renegade members sought by false pretense to throw the colony into bankruptcy in order to secure a share of its property; and typhoid fever swept the colony. After eight dollars and fifty cents were given to each family, the group disbanded.[43]

Although they did not found a colony, the transcendentalists were very much involved in the social

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[42]Ibid., p. 372.

[43]Ibid.

gospel movement. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who began his career as a Unitarian minister, and other transcendentalists promoted social idealism because they believed in the essential divinity of human nature. The Reverend Theodore Parker, who was a Unitarian minister in Boston, was greatly influenced by the transcendentalists and became a factor of importance in the social reform movements.[44] His well-known motto, as he vigorously attacked abuses in the social area and in politics, was, "Religion rises every morning and works all day."[45] The influence of both transcendentalism and the social gospel was celebrated in popular hymns, such as Frank Mason North's "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life," Washington Gladden's "O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee," Clifford Box's "Turn Back, O Man," and Ernest Shurtleff's "Lead On, O King Eternal."[46]

Notice should be taken of the fact that Roman Catholic leaders began to deal with the social problems of the new American industrial society in a constructive way in the 1880's. Before the Civil War, Catholics, as an oppressed minority who did not share the prevailing optimism concerning progress, remained largely aloof from the humanitarian

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[44]Stokes, op. cit., p. 257.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Dillenbarger, op. cit., p. 246.

crusades. Instead, they created their own benevolent emphasis. Probably the most influential man in the Catholic social thinking was Monsignor John A. Ryan. He had been influenced greatly by Henry George and Richard T. Ely. At St. Paul Seminary, Minnesota, he taught the first course in economics and sociology given in a Catholic seminary in the United States. He was the author of a social declaration adopted by Catholic bishops in 1919 and known as the Bishop's Program of Social Reconstruction. In the social area, more than anywhere else, there developed a degree of cooperation between Catholics and other religious bodies.[47]

A non-Catholic, recent leader in the social movement was E. Stanley Jones with his "kingdom of God idealism." As an evangelist and an author, Doctor Jones widely proclaimed his central idea of the kingdom of God, "God's order."[48] He considered this the primary religious doctrine in the interpretation of life. In line with the social gospel tradition, Doctor Jones preached that the kingdom of God is regarded as earthly, either actually or potentially. In his book, Christ's Alternative to Communism, he said,

> Jesus laid down three basic socialist 'principle-practices': (1) elimination of acquisitiveness,

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[47]Smith, op. cit., p. 364.

[48]J. Neal Hughley, Trends in Protestant Social Idealism (New York: Kings Crown Press, 1948), p. 122.

(2) support according to need, (3) contribution to society according to ability.[49]

Taking a different approach from Jones, Reinhold Niebuhr, as one of the later followers of the social gospel movement, was trained at Yale (1914) in the liberal, social gospel tradition. He believed that social problems today will be solved by "sentimental love."[50] The Sermon on the Mount was a manifesto for a new way of life in which men would imitate the Jesus of history and all would be well.[51] Only his first book, Moral Man and Immoral Society, A Study in Ethics and Politics, showed any sympathy with the prevailing social gospel views. Later, the influence of two of his Yale professors, Frank C. Porter and Dwight C. Macintosh, changed his views from this early sanction of the social gospel movement to a critical negative analysis of it:[52]

> The social gospel movement which began with Gladden and Bushnell reached the end of its creative period with the appearance of Niebuhr and his new theories of liberalism. Niebuhr, along with several contemporaries, began to throw a new light on such subjects as sin, Christology, and Biblical theology.[53]

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Reinhold Niebuhr, "Coherence, Incoherence, and Christian Faith," Journal of Religion (July, 1951), p. 162.

[51] James W. McClendon, Pacemakers of Christian Thought (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1962), p. 7.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

Niebuhr attacked both the theological premises and the working strategies of the social gospel. The decline of liberal theology and the emergence of neo-orthodox currents of thought undermined the theoretical foundations on which the social gospel had been built.[54] He had grown up under the influence and inspiration of the social gospel but felt that its theory misunderstood the limitations of voluntary cooperation as a means of dealing with stubborn social evils and that it did not take sufficient account of man's sinfulness. In the second decade of the twentieth century he led the attack on the views of man and society that had dominated the social gospel. "Niebuhr argued that the social gospel rested on a false analysis of a social situation and therefore followed a false strategy."[55] His relentless criticism of the theories and strategies of liberal, social Christianity contributed to its decline.

The attack on the social gospel came from outside as well as from inside the movement. Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was one of the earliest outside critics of the social gospel movement.[56] His opposition to the contemporary equivalent of a social gospel was that it seemed to make no

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[54] _____, "The Attack Upon the Social Gospel," Religion in Life, (Spring, 1936), p. 176.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Smith, op. cit., p. 507.

contribution at all to a social ethic. Yet, with peculiar force he helped Christians to understand the relation between the gospel and culture. Kierkegaard exposed the self-deception that went on in the social gospel-oriented church and recognized the forces in society that were beginning to depersonalize human beings.[57] Under such negative attacks, by the 1930's, Christians of conservative and reactionary social viewpoints became more articulate and aggressive. In 1935 the Reverend James W. Fifield, Jr., pastor of a large Congregational church in Los Angeles, founded Spiritual Mobilization, a movement which opposed "pagan stateism" and stood for very conservative social and economic positions.[58] Although going to opposing extremes on the matter, both liberals and conservatives agreed that Christians should be genuinely concerned about social realities as part of their faith and that their attempts to deal with public issues should not be divorced from religious conviction. Both because of changes in the social and economic situation and as a consequence of the attacks made upon it, the social gospel as a movement declined after 1940. Protestant awareness of major public issues did not subside, however; the

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[57] Ibid.

[58] Ralph C. Raughley, Jr., New Frontiers of Christianity (New York: Association Press, 1962), p. 72.

social gospel had left too lasting a stamp on the areas of life for that.[59]

Slow as the churches were to recognize the importance of the new social problems, the academic world was still slower. Washington Gladden and Josiah Strong were already preaching the social gospel before the science of sociology came into existence. The term "social science" was coined by Robert Owen about 1820. Professor W. G. Sumner at Yale was the first to make the study of society an academic discipline, and the new science of sociology did not rise to the dignity of a separate department until Albion W. Small became the creator and head of such a department in the new University of Chicago in 1892.[60] After the turn of the century no other intellectual interest excited more general enthusiasm than protest against political, social, and economic ailments and grievances. The social gospel grew not only out of the dynamic interplay of distinctly religious and theological factors but also from secular ideologies and socio-economic factors.[61]

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[59]Ibid.

[60]Garrison, op. cit., p. 154. (All the preceding facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[61]Cauthen, op. cit., p. 85.

> On the cultural side, according to Waldo Beach, the social gospel drew (1) from the Marxists and English socialists a realization of the power of social conditioning on personality, (2) from the Utilitarians the ideal of social reform to extend happiness to the greatest possible number, and (3) from Darwin and his followers the evolutionary theory of the progressive development of human affairs.[62]

Some of the more prominent of the intellectual currents which entered into the making of the social gospel were the socialistic critique of laissez-faire capitalism, Spencerian social science, the Social Darwinism of Sumner, the social telesis of Lester Ward, the utopianism of Bellamy, the single-tax theories of Henry George, the radicalism of Tolstoy, the ethical economics of the American Economic Association, the philosophies of John Fiske and Henry Drummond, and Henry D. Lloyd's crusade against monopoly.[63]

In the early days of the social movement in American Christianity, the most important works were written not by clergymen but by writers in the field of political economy. One of the earliest significant books to treat the problems of an industrial order viewed from the perspective of the Christian ethic was written by Stephen Colwell, wealthy Philadelphia manufacturer. In 1851 he published the book, New Themes for the Protestant Clergy. This was a discussion

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[62]Ibid.

[63]Dombrowski, op. cit., p. 49.

of the relationship of religion to the political and economic order. The influence of the author's wide reading of European literature was evident. He said that the function of the church was to make religion operative in human relations and to develop a social economy consistent with the teachings of Jesus. While this book was received with scorn by Colwell's professional religious contemporaries, it served the purpose of drawing attention to the neglected social obligations of Christianity, specifically to industrial problems.[64]

Richard T. Ely used his influence to organize the American Economics Association with a semi-religious motivation. The purpose of the organization, according to Ely in his Social Aspects of Christianity, was to

> study seriously the second of the great commandments on which hang all of the law and the prophets, in all its ramification, and thus to bring science to the aid of Christianity.[65]

It is significant that the third of the fundamental principles listed in the book was to recognize "the Church, the State, and . . . Science"[66] as the major factors in the solution of the vast social problems brought out by the conflict between

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[64]Ibid. (All the facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[65]Ibid.

[66]Ibid.

labor and capital. Ely was a trail-blazer in the interest of organized labor. He pioneered in the effort to make America intelligent with respect to socialist theory. Just back from studies in Germany, he published in The Christian Union in 1884 a series of articles under the title, "Recent American Socialism." It attracted wide attention and provided material for pulpit polemics against increasing power of capitalism.[67]

In the realm of economics, the social gospel era was a gilded age for financiers and held unlimited opportunities for promoters of new enterprises. Laboring groups suffered. A government report at the end of 1866 showed that wages had increased on the average of sixty percent in six years, and the cost of living had increased ninety percent. The wage of ordinary skilled labor was two dollars for a ten-hour day. Women workers in factories got three dollars and fifty cents to four dollars a week. To combat these conditions, eight-hour leagues were formed in several states; and a congress was held in Baltimore in 1866 to promote this reform. Six state legislatures passed laws which made eight hours a legal day's work. Not until labor unions became effective was there any real improvement in wages, hours, and conditions of labor. At the beginning, labor unions were feeble in that they lacked organization and commanded little public respect. One of the most successful of the early unions was the Knights

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[67]Ibid., p. 51.

of St. Crispen, organized in 1867 to protect the interest of labor in the shoe industry. Although named after St. Crispen, patron saint of shoemakers, the church gave no support to the organization. The union collapsed after a few years. While the middle class people felt sympathy toward underpaid labor, they developed righteous indignation against any disturbance of peace that occurred when labor tried to better its conditions.[68]

Another economic factor was the increasing flood of immigration that complicated the social and industrial problem in the late nineteenth century. Industrial leaders brought European workers to the United States. Rail and land owners, in particular, did this. This depending on foreign labor is illustrated by Andrew Carnegie's action at his steel mills when American workmen were unhappy about their low wages. Carnegie imported foreign labor to replace the dissatisfied Americans.[69]

In contrast to this type of action was an effort to propagate a Christian love which seeks the society of all men in mutual understanding and justice. Faith, joined with the values and hopes of the democratic spirit, became the

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[68]Ibid., p. 150. (All the facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[69]Ibid.

social gospel. It led to a searching critique of modern industrial society. Many of the ways in which economic exploitation, racial prejudice, and anarchic international relations thwart and destroy the growth of persons were brought to the judgment of the prophetic Christian conscience.[70]

> Although the masses of churches and the overwhelming majority of pastors were, as usual, characterized by devotion to the status quo, social gospel Christianity captured only the most creative and far-seeing minds of the age.[71]

CONTINUING INFLUENCE OF THE MOVEMENT

The heightened social conscience which this movement encouraged has outlived the formal organization of the movement itself. Today, racial problems have to be considered in coordination with industrial problems.

The national and regional assemblies of many denominations and of various interdenominational bodies began to take clear stands favoring desegregation in the churches and in society. In the Protestant world, the councils of churches often served both as centers for discussion of racial matters and as channels of action toward desegregation.

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[70]Daniel Day Williams, What Present-Day Theologians Are Thinking (New York: Harper and Bros., 1952), p. 83.

[71]Hughley, op. cit., p. 12.

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America (1908-1950) had been especially active in this field since World War I. Through its Washington bureau the Council became an important lobby, with a "Social Creed of the Churches," adopted in 1912, to provide a reasonably official, minimum frame of reference for a Protestant Christian approach to social and political issues.[72] In 1946 the group issued an official statement on "The Church and Race Relations." On page five of this document, the heart of the declaration proclaimed,

> The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America hereby renounces the pattern of segregation in race relations as unnecessary and undesirable and a violation of the Gospel of love and human brotherhood. Having taken this action, the Federal Council requests its constituent communions to do likewise. As proof of their sincerity in this renunication they will work for a non-segregated Church and a non-segregated society.[73]

After 1950 the National Council of the Churches of Christ in America continued to provide leadership in this area. It revised the resolution of the earlier document. The National Council soon had occasion to follow up its statement concretely, for shortly after the Brown vs. Topeka case, of May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court decision calling for

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[72]Paul D. Carter, The Decline and Revival of the Social Gospel (New York: Cornell University Press, 1956), p. 22.

[73]Ibid.

desegregation in the public schools, it summoned the churches to exert their influence in helping the authorized agencies in the communities to bring about compliance with the decision.[74]

The fight for desegregation and social change has been led, to a great extent, by a Negro, Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., one-time pastor of the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, Montgomery, Alabama. In 1957 he became the first president of the Southern Leadership Conference, founded to extend integregation throughout the South. It is significant to note the influence that the social gospel had on the beliefs of Doctor King. For The Christian Century (April 13, 1960), he wrote an article entitled "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," which treated his intellectual and spiritual growth prior to his position of conspicuous leadership in the Negro American's struggle for dignity. In this article, Doctor King stated that while in the Crozier Theological Seminary he began a serious intellectual quest for a method to eliminate social evil. He stated that he was greatly influenced by the social gospel movement and by reading Rauschenbusch's Christianity and the Social Crisis, a book

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[74]Ibid., p. 23.

which left an indelible imprint on his thinking. Doctor King further told how his nonviolent resistance is an outgrowth of the study he made of the social and ethical theories of the great philosophers and the life and teachings of Mahatma Gandhi.[75]

As long as there are any injustices and inequalities in the freedom enjoyed by man, the spirit and motivation of the social gospel movement is likely to continue. A classic example of the embodiment of this spirit can be seen in the life of Walter Rauschenbusch.

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH'S LIFE

Walter Rauschenbusch was born in Rochester, New York, on October 4, 1861, seven years after his parents had migrated from Germany to the United States. His father, Reverend Augustus Rauschenbusch, and his mother, Carolina Rhomp Rauschenbusch, were of the company of immigrants whom the abortive revolution of 1884 in Germany contributed to the making of the United States.[76] Augustus Rauschenbusch had broken with the family's Lutheran tradition and had

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[75]Martin Luther King, Jr., "Pilgrimage to Nonviolence," The Christian Century, (April 13, 1960), pp. 439-441.

[76]Harry F. Ward, "Walter Rauschenbusch," Dictionary of American Biography, 15 (1935), p. 392.

become a Baptist. After being spurned by his first love, Augustus married a girl he did not love. Walter's home life as a child was not happy. His father drank heavily, and the boy witnessed quarrels between his parents. These parental tensions and the indifference of his father toward his mother profoundly influenced the life of Walter. He came to champion the cause of his mother. She had "quality," and it was from her that he received his urbanity, a strongly pronounced sense of humor, and his appreciation of the beautiful. She taught him to love the outdoors and to have a reverence for nature.[77] Symbols of this parent-child relationship may be seen in Walter's later struggles. All of his life he was champion of the poor and the unloved who were crushed by the strong.[78] One of his cardinal ideas was that "the strong must stand up for the weak."[79]

"At an early age Walter Rauschenbusch showed the distinguishing traits of emotionalism and mysticism present in his social gospel."[80] Profound emotional stirrings

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[77]Henlee Hulix Barnette, "The Ethical Thought of Walter Rauschenbusch: A Critical Interpretation" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 1948), p. 12.

[78]Ibid., p. 13.

[79]Walter Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus (New York: Association Press, 1919), p. 31.

[80]Donald R. Come, "The Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch," The South Atlantic Quarterly, (July, 1950), p. 352.

counterbalanced his shyness. While still a small child, he underwent an attack of "brain fever" which undoubtedly was a kind of nervous disorder.[81]

Rauschenbusch's earlier years were given to study in the Evangelical Gymnasium of Gutersloh in Westphalia, Germany. Here he appropriated the riches of the classics. At fifteen he had mastered Latin, Greek, French, German and Hebrew and was writing to his parents in English, German, Greek and Latin. After graduating primus omnium from the Gymnasium, he began his work at the University of Berlin; and at the close of the session, he returned to the University of Rochester where, after one year, he received his bachelor's degree. Two years later, in 1886, he was graduated from Rochester Theological Seminary. In 1891 Rauschenbusch spent one year at the University of Berlin studying New Testament and sociology. This completed his formal education.[82]

At the age of seventeen, Rauschenbusch decided to become a minister, thus becoming the seventh in a direct line of clergymen and authors whose publications consisted of hymnals; educational textbooks; sermons; controversial brochures;

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[81]Ibid., p. 353.

[82]Barnette, op. cit., p. 13.

historical treatises; theological, devotional and belletristic works; along with several biographies.[83]

His only pastorate was the Second German Baptist Church in New York City. It was situated on the edge of Hell's Kitchen, one of the City's notorious slums. There Rauschenbusch saw first-hand the soul-destroying effects of destitution, Overcrowded, crime-breeding tenements were graphic evidence of economic exploitation. In this position he engaged in religious work among German immigrants until 1897. During the eleven years he carried on his ministry in Hell's Kitchen, there developed the Walter Rauschenbusch who later challenged the American churches with his prophetic declaration of the social gospel.[84]

> During this period he became acquainted with Henry George and his writings, and read Tolstoi, Mazzini, Marx, Ruskin, Bellamy, and others. Most of all, in the eleven years of this, his only pastorate, he became acquainted with the common people, whose champion he became, his first book being written, he declared, to discharge a debt to them.[85]

Rauschenbusch familiarized himself with the leading social thinkers of the past and of his day, while at the same time observing the common life around him.

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[83]Dores Robinson Sharp, Walter Rauschenbusch (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942), p. 15.

[84]Ward, op. cit.

[85]Ibid.

> He read the life stories of Waldo, Francis of Assisi, Wyclif, the seventh Earl of Shaftesburg, Robert Owen, and Abraham Lincoln. Henry George's Progress and Poverty, Bellamy's Looking Backward, Mazzini's Essays, Tolstoi's novels of Maurice and Kingsley are some of the books that profoundly influenced his social insights. Rauschenbusch also maintained a wide reading and personal acquaintance with contemporary American and European leaders in the fields of economics, labor, social amelioration, and Christian Socialism.[86]

Travel was an important element in his education. He spent two four-year periods of travel and study in Europe during his youth and two one-year periods during his maturity. The result was a broad bi-cultural background that proved highly significant in his preparation for writing.[87]

Rauschenbusch began writing in 1887 when he wrote his first essay about Henry George. From that time on he wrote sensitively about social questions. Some of his early endeavors included writing Sunday School lessons for the Christian Inquirer, editing the German Baptist young people's organ, Der Jugend Herold, for four years and contributing special articles for the Sunday School Times. His pungent critiques on the social situation in the Christian Inquirer, The Examiner and For the Right established him as a social

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[86]Claude J. Williams, "Walter Rauschenbusch: A Prophet of Social Righteousness" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 1952), p. 45.

[87]Ibid., p. 31.

thinker among religious leaders.[88] In November, 1889, Rauschenbusch and Leighton Williams, together with Elizabeth Post and J. E. Raymond, started the monthly periodical entitled For the Right. The first issue of this monthly contained this statement of purpose:

> This paper is published in the interests of the working people of New York City. It proposes to discuss, from the standpoint of Christian-socialism, such questions as engage their attention and affect their life. This paper is not an organ of any party or association whatever. Nor has it any new theories to propound. Its aim is to reflect in its pages the needs, aspirations, and longings of the tens of thousands of wage-earners who are sighing for better things; and to point out, if possible, not only the wrongs that men suffer, but the methods by which these wrongs may be removed. The editors freely give their time and labor to this undertaking, animated solely by the hope that their efforts may aid the advancement of that kingdom in which wrong shall have no place, but right shall reign forever more. The friends of social reform are invited to write for the columns of this paper and wage-earners are especially requested to do so.[89]

Until the publication ceased in March, 1891, Rauschenbusch used this periodical as the medium through which his views on economic and industrial issues, on politics, on separation of church and state, on religion and the Kingdom of God were expressed.[90]

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[88] Ibid.

[89] Walter Rauschenbusch, For the Right (November, 1889), p. 1.

[90] Vernon Parker Bodein, The Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch and Its Relation to Religious Education (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 10.

Walter Rauschenbusch wrote numerous articles for periodicals of his day. One such article, published in several magazines in 1894, was entitled, "How Rich Have I A Right To Be?" His thesis was

> . . . that the rightfulness or wrongfulness of wealth does not lie primarily in the amount of wealth a man has but in the relations which he sustains to God, to himself, and to his fellow men in acquiring his fortune.[91]

Rauschenbusch published four books in German during his early years: Leben Jesu, 1895, a small book written for its theology; Das Leben und Werken von Augustus Rauschenbusch, 1901, a biographical account of his father's life and work; and Die Politische Verfassung unseres Landes, which was used for many years as a handbook for the orientation of German immigrants in the United States. In 1909 he contributed the section about the United States to Krueger's Kirchengeschichte.[92]

In 1897 Rauschenbusch was called to Rochester Theological Seminary to take the chair of New Testament interpretation, a position his father had held before him. From 1902 until his death, Walter was Professor of Church History in the seminary. Walter visited Germany in 1907 to do research work in the universities of Kiel and Marburg.

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[91] Ibid., p. 31.

[92] Williams, op. cit., p. 56.

While in Germany at this time, Walter Rauschenbusch visited Sidney and Beatrice Webb, who promoted his interest in co-operative living and Fabian socialism.[93] Although becoming a socialist, Rauschenbusch never belonged to the Socialist Party. He was a socialist only in the sense that he believed the land and all natural resources that can become monopolies should be socialized and democratically managed for the benefit of the people. He saw "the menace to individual liberty in the schemes of socialism as promulgated by some socialist leaders."[94] Rauschenbusch regretted that socialism emerged in a period when

> . . . naturalism and materialism was the popular philosophy of the intellectuals, and these elements were woven into the dogma of the new movement. Great movements always perpetuate the ideas current at the time they were in their fluid and formative state.[95]

"Back in 1893, he had said, 'The only power that can make socialism succeed, if it is established, is religion. It cannot work in an irreligious country.'"[96]

While associated with the Rochester Theological Seminary he had become the most influential figure in the

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[93]G. Bromley Oxnam, Personalities in Social Reform (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 75.

[94]Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), p. 110.

[95]Oxnam, op. cit., p. 77.

[96]Ibid.

development in the United States of what is known as the "social gospel."

> When the task of moral leadership fell upon the young professor from Rochester, he was not unprepared. From the standpoint of intellectual acquirement he was richly equipped through his formal schooling, travel, pastoral experiences, personal associations, social studies, historical research, and Bible study.[97]

This position of leadership came to him immediately upon the publication of his Christianity and the Social Crisis in 1907. This book made him a national figure, in constant demand for addresses and for magazine articles. It revealed the fact that he knew both books and people. The success of this book encouraged him to write other books. From 1909 to the outbreak of World War I, Rauschenbusch wrote his books at his Canadian summer home. The years that he devoted to writing (1907-1914) were the happiest of his life. He had security, an unusually harmonious family life, a wide audience, national and international fame.[98] His writings, however, cannot be well understood without understanding Rauschenbusch. What put his message over was, in a large measure, the man himself--his dynamic personality; his prophetic passion which combined humility and courage; his

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[97]Williams, op. cit., p. 37.

[98]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 16.

profound understanding and experience of the Christian gospel; his dedicated care for people who were being hurt, exploited, and degraded by the evils of the social order; his identification with the social revolt which in the Christian churches of the early twentieth century was urgently needing a voice to speak for it; and his ability to write in a powerful and persuasive manner.

Rauschenbusch's personality was dynamic; he had power to kindle others to action as well as to give them vision and direction. Few of his opponents could resist the graciousness of his spirit. An unfailing sense of humor gave additional power to his passion for justice and his search for fellowship. No one who had ever heard the hearty chuckling laugh of this great, friendly soul or who had seen his face drawn with sympathy for the unfortunate could doubt that his social philosophy was rooted in a native passionate love for his fellowmen.[99] "Rauschenbusch was a man of great tenderness, strength of mind, sweet reasonableness, and brightness of humor. He had a deep passion for righteousness."[100]

For over thirty years he suffered the handicap of deafness. It came as a result of going out in the great

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[99]Justin Wroe Nixon, "Walter Rauschenbusch--Ten Years After," The Christian Century, (November 8, 1928), p. 1359.

[100]Barnette, op. cit., p. 40.

blizzard of 1888 in New York to minister to sick and needy parishioners before he was fully recovered from epidemic influenza. From that year, his wife was the medium through which the spoken word reached him.[101]

Although an ordained minister and a seminary professor, Rauschenbusch was not a theologian and admitted this in a letter to William Gay Balltine on January 24th, 1912. He wrote, "I have to confess to you that I am not a theologian, and never shall be."[102] He was, however, as a pupil puts it,

> a teacher of extraordinary learning and insight, a devoted lover of his kind, a friend who made friendship itself luminous with new meanings, the foremost interpreter in his time of modern social Christianity, poet, mystic, saint, prophet of a new reformation in religion, he was the greatest human being some of us have ever known.[103]

Walter Rauschenbusch died of cancer in 1918 at the age of fifty-six, broken in spirit by World War I, rejected by many Americans because of his German background and his attempts to keep the United States from fighting. With blood kin on both sides of the battle line, his spirit was

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[101]Ward, op. cit., p. 393.

[102]Oxnam, op. cit., p. 81.

[103]Nixon, op. cit., p. 1360.

desolated by the war's obvious violation of ideals by which he had lived and for which he had labored.[104]

Rauschenbusch was truly "a child of his age."[105]

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[104]Reinhold Niebuhr, "Walter Rauschenbusch in Historical Perspective," Religion in Life (Fall, 1958), p. 530.

[105]Hopkins, op. cit., p. 220.

CHAPTER III

THE WRITINGS OF RAUSCHENBUSCH

Walter Rauschenbusch's literary career began when as a young student he wrote "bits of stories"[1] and sent them to his friends. While traveling and studying abroad from 1879-1883, he wrote many detailed letters that were packed with unusually observant descriptions of his European travels.

> He loved art and had contact with artists, poets, writers and economists during this period. He was urged to become a novelist, and a wealthy, childless uncle tried to induce him to study law by offering to pay his way through the university.[2]

Dores Robinson Sharpe, one of Rauschenbusch's biographers, states, "At this period (1882) he sought a closer acquaintance with German and Greek literature, especially Plato and Sophocles 'with whom I am very much in love,' as he put it."[3]

About 1887 Rauschenbusch began to express his social theories in writing, at first in newspapers, religious journals, special articles, and later in his epoch-making books.[4] It was primarily through his books, however, that he

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[1]Dores Robinson Sharpe, Walter Rauschenbusch (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1942), p. 44.

[2]Ibid., p. 46.

[3]Ibid., p. 49.

[4]Ibid., p. 80.

reached and influenced the churches. The books were written with painstaking scholarship, but they were free from academic jargon; their style was concise, pithy, picturesque; homely metaphors and similes illuminated what otherwise was obscure; and the personal impact of the writer could be felt as though he were speaking directly to the reader. "When Rauschenbusch wrote his books he intended that they should be read, and he succeeded."[5]

CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOCIAL CRISIS

Rauschenbusch's Christianity and the Social Crisis established him as a prophet who was convinced that God was on the side of the weak.[6] This book was published when the author was just arriving at the high point of his intellectual maturity. The book begins with an historical study of the social viewpoints of religion and covers the Old Testament, the teachings of Christ, the early Christian Church, and the Church from early days to modern times. A consideration of the historical roots of Christianity is found in the sermons of the prophets. The "present crisis"

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[5]Benson Y. Landis, A Rauschenbusch Reader (New York: Harper and Bros., 1957), p. xviii.

[6]Ralph Henry Gabriel, The Course of American Democratic Thought (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1956), p. 258.

is depicted, and the stake of the Church in the present social movement is discussed. Rauschenbusch considered both the social aims of Jesus and the social impetus of early Christianity.[7] Of less value is the later and constructive part of the work, "The Present Crisis," where an attempt is made to outline the immediate measures which are to be taken to mitigate the evils of the time. The chapter

> cannot be successfully treated in the form of rhetorical appeals to somewhat vague and elementary feelings and without a mastery of technical economic reasoning which is not revealed in the work itself.[8]

The book has only seven chapters, and the outline is simple. "Nothing in the book is set down in carelessness or in ignorance, and it cannot be ignored by anyone who would understand the social thought of the day."[9] Rauschenbusch stated the theme of the book when he said, "A perfect religious hope must include both: eternal life for the individual, the kingdom of God for humanity."[10] He summed up his conclusion by saying, "The essential purpose of Christianity

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[7]G. Bromley Oxnam, Personalities in Social Reform (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 79. (All facts preceding are from this source.)

[8]Margaret Jackson and Mary Katharine Reely, Book Review Digest (New York: The H. W. Wilson Co., 1918), p. 460.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis (London: The Macmillan Co., 1908), p. 107.

was to transform human society into the Kingdom of God by regenerating all human relations and reconstituting them in accordance with the will of God."[11]

Immediately after handing the manuscript for Christianity and the Social Crisis to a publisher, the author left the United States. Upon returning, a year later, he found the book enjoying a large measure of success and rating reviews such as Joseph O'Connor's for the New York Times in which O'Connor said, "It is a book to like to learn from, and though the theme be sad and serious, to be charmed with."[12] A similar review in the Outlook stated,

> While its argument is strongly based on economic, historical, ethical, and religious grounds, its temper and tone, admirably dispassionate and judicial, commend it to fair-minded men.[13]

Some years after the publication of the book, Rauschenbusch told a group about the reception it received, as well as his own reaction. In an address before the Weet Class of the Second Baptist Church, Rochester, New York, on January 12, 1913, he said,

> I wrote the book with a lot of fear and trembling. I expected that there would be a good deal of anger and resentment. I left for a year's study in Germany right

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[11]Ibid., p. xiii.

[12]James O'Connor, "Book Review," The New York Times, (June 1, 1907), p. 12.

[13]Outlook, 87, (October 5, 1907), p. 264.

> after it appeared so that I only heard the echoes of its reception. I eagerly watched the first newspaper comments on it and to my great astonishment everybody was kind to it. Only a few 'damned' it.[14]

More than fifty thousand copies were sold; and the book was translated into Finnish, Norwegian, Russian, Japanese, French, Swedish and German.[15]

His literary allusion to scholars, religious leaders and historians known for their fame give this book a scholarly and adequately-researched implication.[16] So intent was Rauschenbusch on getting his persuasive arguments across that he used variegated sentence structures and gave the reader supplementary information in an informal manner to support his beliefs or enlarge upon them.

Rauschenbusch builds his persuasive points to a climax and then ends with a series of questions that he does not directly answer but leaves the reader to answer in light of past discussion. He spends three hundred and forty-two pages suggesting solutions. He is aware that he presents an argument when he states, "We rest our case."[17]

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[14]Vernon Parker Bodein, The Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch and Its Relation to Religious Education (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 52.

[15]Oxnam, op. cit., p. 73.

[16]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 328.

[17]Ibid., p. 343.

FOR GOD AND THE PEOPLE: PRAYERS OF THE SOCIAL AWAKENING

In 1910 Rauschenbusch completed his second book, For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening. This book reveals the inner life and spiritual qualities of its author more than any of his other books. Whether the prayers were written for his use or other people's, they are remarkably quotable.[18] Feeling that the liturgy of the church did not provide adequately for its expression, he offered this book as a contribution to this end.

The book is divided into several sections, such as prayers for morning, noon, and night; prayers of praise and thanksgiving; prayers for various social groups and classes; prayers of wrath against war and alcoholism, servants and slaves of mammon, impurity; and prayers for the progress of humanity. These prayers are free from platitudes and stilted phrases which often characterize prayer. They reveal the heart of the author, uncovering his imperishable treasure as well as his sincere yearnings for humanity.[19] "Many of these prayers were written on scraps of paper while Rauschenbusch was riding on Pullmans to meet week-end

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[18]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 283.

[19]Anna M. Singer, Walter Rauschenbusch and His Contributions to Social Christianity (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1926), p. 23. (All the facts in this paragraph to this point are from this source.)

lecture appointments."[20] The author implied in the book that he believed in both the subjective and objective influence of private and public prayer.

> Literary prayers are very hard to estimate. They are indirect methods of informing, illuminating, warning, and inspiring the reader, yet they are addressed to the Diety. They must not be homiletic or 'preachy'; they must truly reflect human needs, yet the language must not be commonplace, for it must lift the reader above the plane of ordinary living and thinking. They must have some of the rhythm and diction of poetry--in a sense they are poetry--yet the language must not soar too much, for then they become a mere transparently artificial type, which gives more freedom, but to compose them in the language of the people. . . called for a religious sense, a literary skill and an insight into the unspoken problems of human lives, which few men have ever had.[21]

Rauschenbusch closes the book on a personal note when he records "The Author's Prayer:"

> O Thou who art the light of my soul, I thank Thee for the incomparable joy of listening to Thy voice within, and I know that no work of Thine shall return void, however brokenly uttered. If aught in this book was said through lack of knowledge, or through weakness of faith in Thee or of love for men, I pray Thee overrule my sin and turn aside its force before it harms Thy cause. Pardon the frailty of Thy servant and look upon him only as he sinks his life in Jesus, His Master and Saviour. Amen.[22]

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[20]Bodein, op. cit., p. 62.

[21]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 183.

[22]Walter Rauschenbusch, For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening (Boston: The Pilgrim Press, 1925), p. 126.

CHRISTIANIZING THE SOCIAL ORDER

Christianizing the Social Order was written in 1912 to answer the demands for further discussion of the social problems raised in his first book, Christianity and the Social Crisis. Two lectureships, the Earl Lectures at the Pacific Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California, in 1910 and the Merrick Lectures at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio, in 1911 created the nucleus for the book. The essential thesis is,

> Christianizing the social order means bringing it into harmony with the ethical convictions which we identify with Christ. A fairly definite body of moral convictions has taken shape in modern humanity. They express our collective conscience, our working religion. The present social order denies and flouts many of these principles of our better self. We demand therefore that the moral sense of humanity shall be put in control and shall be allowed to reshape the institutions of social life.[23]

The author insists several times that this is a religious book in that its sole concern is for the Kingdom of God and the salvation of men.

> It had to deal with the economic life of society because it is necessary to change the economic system for the preservation of religion. On the other hand, religion must be renewed and strengthened in order to help change the economic life.[24]

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[23]Walter Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), p. 125.

[24]Ibid., p. 61.

"Part I" of the book describes the social awakening of religious organizations; "Part II" seeks to show that the Christianizing of the social order was the original aim of Christianity; "Part III" is an analysis of what is and what is not Christian in the social order; "Part IV" shows up the invasion of God's country by the forces of vice and greed; "Parts V and VI" look to the future by discussing "THE" direction of progress and "THE" methods of advance.[25] Dores Robinson Sharpe says that the book which is "not so popular in style, far less simple in outline, and much more detailed in exposition, makes less easy reading than Christianity and the Social Crisis."[26] While this book did not attain the same degree of popularity as his first two, it is considered the most profound and, intellectually, is the finest of any of his writings[27] Approximately twenty-five thousand copies were sold.

Albion W. Small, reviewing Christianizing the Social Order in the American Journal of Sociology, found the book to his liking.

> There is no more stirring plea in our literature for renovation of our social system than Professor

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[25]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order.

[26]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 286.

[27]Ibid.

Rauschenbusch's appeal in this book. It is unequivocal, but after all it is not radical.[28]

THE SOCIAL PRINCIPLES OF JESUS

The Social Principles of Jesus, published in 1916, was written for the Young Men's Christian Association's college, voluntary study courses. "This literary jewel of Professor Rauschenbusch was designed to 'challenge college men and women to face the social convictions of Jesus.'"[29] It was a persuasive appeal to test lives by the standards of Jesus. Proceeding by the inductive method, it reinterpreted familiar passages of the gospel so vividly that one can never forget them.

The purpose of the book is given in its introduction where Rauschenbusch says, "It is an attempt to formulate in simple propositions the fundamental convictions of Jesus about the social and ethical relations and duties of men."[30] He also states, "It was written primarily for voluntary study groups of college seniors, and their intellectual and spiritual needs are not like those of an average church

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[28]Albion W. Small, "Christianizing the Social Order," American Journal of Sociology, 18 (May, 1913), p. 810.

[29]"The Record," The Rochester Theological Seminary Bulletin (November, 1918), p. 48.

[30]Walter Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus (New York: Association Press, 1919), "Introduction."

audience."[31] It is the author's belief that there are three social principles in the fundamental convictions of Jesus: sacredness of life and personality, the solidarity of men, and love which makes the strong stand with the weak and defend their cause. "These social principles constituted for Jesus the very center of religious duty as He found it in the Kingdom of God."[32] Rauschenbusch goes into greater detail in this book concerning his beliefs in socialism than he has in the previous books. He distinguishes between dogmatic and practical socialism, meaning by the former the belief that socialist aims would be realized at once in a coming social catastrophe, and by the latter a belief in immediate social reforms.[33] "Socialism, in the mind of Rauschenbusch, contributes a new sense of social sin. It gives a feeling of complicity and responsibility for the sins of society in which all have shared."[34]

Rauschenbusch seemed to choose his words carefully, making sure that each fully conveyed the intended meaning.

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[31] Ibid.

[32] Bodein, op. cit., p. 64.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid., p. 65.

There are fewer short, choppy sentences in this than other books. Since this is a book to be used in a teaching and studying situation, he provokes thought through the asking of questions. Series of questions are listed at the end of each week's lessons as well as at the end of each daily lesson.

In 1916 over twenty thousand copies of Social Principles of Jesus were distributed by the International Young Men's Christian Association.

A THEOLOGY FOR THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

A Theology for the Social Gospel is an elaboration of four lectures delivered in 1917 on the Nathaniel W. Taylor Foundation lectureship before the annual convocation of the Yale School of Religion. The main proposition is that a social gospel exists and what is needed is a systematic theology large enough to back it. In the first three chapters the author shows that a readjustment and expansion of theology, so that it will furnish an adequate intellectual basis for the social gospel, is necessary, feasible, desirable and legitimate. The remainder of the book offers concrete suggestions as to how some of the most important sections of doctrinal theology may be expanded and readjusted

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to make room for the religious conviction summed up in the social gospel.[35]

Here, in a systematic way, Rauschenbusch relates the social gospel to the theological expression of the Christian religion and thereby rejuvenates the latter.[36] He tries to prove that doctrinal beliefs have had social and economic causes for their formulation. It proved to be a restatement of theological doctrines in terms of the social consciousness. While the author treated a vast number of topics in a running and fragmentary way, he "gave the social gospel a chair in the house of Christian theology."[37]

Reviews of A Theology for the Social Gospel balanced themselves in praise and criticism. "It does not carry the fire of his first volume. Prophets experience a certain quenching of flame when they move from preaching to theologizing."[38] "This book is a combination of beautiful thought, of keen insight, and of one-sided and restricted views."[39]

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[35]H. Sheldon Smith, Robert T. Handy and Lefferts A. Loetscher, American Christianity (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963), p. 402. (All facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[36]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 323.

[37]Ibid., p. 354.

[38]Oxnam, op. cit., p. 80.

[39]Jackson, op. cit., p. 461.

The literary quality of A Theology for the Social Gospel is perhaps lower than that of Rauschenbusch's other writings. It is devoid of the vivid metaphors and whimsical analogies, the stabbing sentences and emotional passages of his previous books. There is, however, greater originality of thought. It represents mature thought and was an intellectual feat for which thirty years of practice had prepared him.[40]

DESCRIPTIVE AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF WRITING TECHNIQUE

Paul Robert Leider and Robert Withington, discussing the essay, "On the Sublime," say,

> Longinus--if it was he that wrote the essay--is the first critic to state definitely that literature exists, not to teach, or to give us learning, but to arouse our emotions, to transport us into ecstasy, to give us pleasure. He admits the necessity of great and weighty thought, but believes that noble ideas give rise to deep emotions, lift us to sublimity, just as, conversely, a deep emotion may give rise to profound thought.[41]

Walter Rauschenbusch's writings were an extension of this type of literature. His own deep emotional feelings toward the social and economic plight of the laboring class found

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[40]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 323. (All the facts expressed in this paragraph are from this source.)

[41]Paul Robert Lieder and Robert Withington, The Art of Literary Criticism (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1941), p. 72.

their release in his books. His persuasive writings were not just to correct social evils but also to justify evangelism. "No outward economic revolution will answer our needs," warned Rauschenbusch. "The thing we need is a new mind and heart."[42] This literary gift was developed and climaxed in books that shook the very foundations of society and that became foundation stones for a new society.[43]

Rauschenbusch is master of the short sentence. He uses brief, compact sentences each of which is an amplification, a qualification, or an explanation of the preceding one and a preparation for that which is to follow. The last sentence sometimes carries an emotional content or finishes the argument off with an epigram that jabs like a dagger.[44] An illustration of the powerful summarizing and descriptive value of the short sentence can be found in Christianity and the Social Crisis:

> The hope of Christ's return dominated the thoughts of primitive Christianity. Christ's return was the inauguration of the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God was the hope of social perfection. The reign of Christ involved the overthrow of the present world-powers.[45]

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[42]Winthrop S. Hudson, "Rauschenbusch--Evangelical Prophet," The Christian Century, (June 24, 1953), p. 740. (All the facts from footnote 41 to this point are from this source.)

[43]Oxnam, op. cit., p. 62.

[44]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 169.

[45]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 111.

Rauschenbusch's consistent use of the short sentence is noted in all five books covered by this study. In Christianity and the Social Crisis, he writes, "The world is getting small. The shuttle of travel is weaving back and forth. The East and the West have met."[46]

> Mammonism stands convicted by its own works. It was time for us to turn. We are turning. . . . It was ebb tide. . . . The gulls were dipping and screaming. Gray ripples far out showed where fish were schooling. The tide was coming in.[47]

The foregoing sentences stand out as examples of the short sentences in Christianizing the Social Order.

In The Social Principles of Jesus can be found the following short sentence construction: "Religion to him was not static. He lived in a moving world. A new age was coming, and he would be the initiator of it."[48]

As a prelude to his own prayers, in For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening, Rauschenbusch gives an exegesis of the Lord's Prayer. In "Introductory: The Social Meaning of the Lord's Prayer," he uses the short, stabbing sentences to drive home his points. Concerning the social effect of the Lord's Prayer on the individual, he

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[46]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 317.

[47]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 5.

[48]Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 88.

says, in part, "It crystallizes his thought. It conveys the atmosphere of his childlike trust in the Father. It gives proof of the transparent clearness and peace of his soul."[49]

His sentence construction follows his discussions in being masterly, terse, pointed and convincing. While he was a logical thinker, much of his writing resembles, in its sytle, an informal, serious conversation; and, like most scholarly composers who write many books, he frequently repeats his ideas and important messages, thus making a concise and satisfactory reclassification of his lessons a laborious task.[50] He is sometimes extreme in the expression of his favorite ideas, and the trend of his thought is then difficult to follow on account of his apparent indifference to logical arrangement. However, his teachings are forcibly and clearly expressed. His original sayings are so striking, so compact, so unique and intense that any endeavor to reconstruct these pithy utterances is like attempting to paraphrase the proverbs of Solomon. Every paragraph contains thought enough for an extensive essay, and many times even his short sentences furnish texts for lengthy sermons.[51]

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[49]Rauschenbusch, For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening, p. 15.

[50]Singer, op. cit., p. 126.

[51]Ibid., p. 127.

The distinctive thing in Rauschenbusch's style is his use of similes. These similes can be long and elaborate or as short as one word. There is hardly a page without at least one figure of speech. They may be whimsical, ironic, or grim; but they are always picturesque and are the expression of a man who visualizes his thoughts. "He loved homely speech, racy with metaphors and similes drawn direct from common daily life."[52]

In Christianity and the Social Crisis, Rauschenbusch's first book, he set the pattern for his multi-use of similes. One, selected at random, reads,

> It is true also that every deep emotion of joy or sorrow acts like the earthquake at Philippi: it opens the gates of the soul in the darkness, and then great things may happen.[53]

Examples of his use of similes can be found in his book, Christianizing the Social Order. "The trees now stretch out their lopped and dying limbs like deformed beggars in the East that wave their handless arms for alms."[54] Another example is, "Nature, our common mother, sits like a captive queen among barbarians who are tearing the jewels from her

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[52]Sharpe, op. cit., p. xi. (All the preceding facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[53]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 307.

[54]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 253.

hair."[55] Continuing in his use of similes that compare ordinary events or knowledge with the point he wants to emphasize, Rauschenbusch declares in The Social Principles of Jesus that "Like a tape-worm in the intestines, these articulated and many-jointed parasitic organizations of vice make our communities sick, dirty, and decadent."[56] There are two books that have fewer similes, A Theology for the Social Gospel and For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening. In A Theology for the Social Gospel, this is doubtless attributable to the nature of the subject matter and the compression necessary in treating many great ideas in a relatively small space.[57] The quality of the similes remains the same, however, as is shown when he said concerning the social gospel,

> It must be understood historically in connection with the social situations which created its parts, like the buildings on an old college campus, or like the Constitution and its amendments.[58]

Once Walter Rauschenbusch, explaining to an inquiring student how he developed many of his striking analogies,

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[55] Ibid.

[56] Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 161.

[57] Sharpe, op. cit., p. 168.

[58] Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 211.

said that he purposely began at the wrong end. That is, instead of having an abstract truth which he wished to illustrate and then looking around for something in life or nature to illustrate it, he habitually asked himself what the things he observed in the concrete world resembled in the world of ideas.

> For example, it is probable that the famous simile in which wealth is compared with manure is arrived at in this way. In some barnyard he observed a pile of manure. Evil-smelling and unsightly, it killed the vegetation beneath it, he noticed, but became a source of life and growth when spread over the farmer's field. Immediately his mind jumped to wealth. It, too, when piled up in heaps, is unwholesome, kills the life beneath it and is rank and unhealthy. But the manure, when spread around evenly, melts into the soil and makes for more life, more vegetation, more health. So wealth, when allowed to flow out freely to all, makes for riches and better life.[59]

Rauschenbusch's mind went from the manure to the wealth, and not the other way about. Mental processes like these stem from an observant and reflective mind. "One suspects that the parables of Jesus had a similar origin."[60]

> There was a timeless and a timely quality about his writing. It is the work of a mind historically trained and of a soul acquainted with the Eternal, but the moral law he proclaims is concentrated on the concrete issue, and his words explode with the devastating effect of a proximity shell. The older missiles were timed to explode at a certain moment, or upon striking the earth,

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[59]Sharpe, op. cit., pp. 170-171.

[60]Ibid.

> with the result that if the range had been incorrectly estimated, the destructive effect was lost. In the proximity shell, a small radar set was installed and set to explode when the radar message indicated the shell was in contact with the target. A sentence of Rauschenbusch's, propelled by moral indignation, was aimed at wrong, but, unlike heavier shells that describe a parabola and hit the earth to explode with damaging but not devastating effect, Rauschenbusch had the inner sensitivity of the proximity shell's radar, and when precisely over the target area exploded with a destructive power that left wrongdoing and social sinning in debris and ashes.[61]

In regard to his historically-trained mind, Rauschenbusch used an occasional but very effective device in the employment of what may be called the dislocation of history in order to emphasize some contrast.[62] This can be illustrated with the scene in which Jesus, "with the dust of Galilee on His sandals," walks into the Church of St. Sophia in Constantinople, in the fifth century, and listens with amazement to a dizzy metaphysical discourse on the union of the divine and human natures in His person.[63] There is the conservative citizen of a staid Pennsylvania town who finds himself in a Syrian village of 4000 B. C.[64] Then, there is also the bringing up to date of Longfellow's

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[61]Oxnam, op. cit., p. 65.

[62]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 172.

[63]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 94.

[64]Ibid., p. 132.

village blacksmith. "Thy smith, a mighty man is he, with strong and sinewy hands."[65] Rauschenbusch discusses the occupations of the blacksmith's sons as if they were living during Rauschenbusch's day. Professor Robins, a pupil of Walter Rauschenbusch's, talking about his teacher's attitude toward history, said that

> As one listened, he could see men emerging from that past--real people, both individuals and groups; he could realize somewhat the world which conditioned these folk--somehow the dead past came alive, human, full of intensest interest.[66]

Doctor Vida D. Scudder, professor of English at Wellesley, in a review of Christianizing the Social Order in the magazine Dial on February 16, 1913, wrote,

> Dr. Rauschenbusch has an exceptional command of sardonic speech. Perhaps it is a power given by fearless honesty. At all events, the trenchant phrases dissipate self-deception and dislodge conscience from many an uneasy refuge. The driving directness renders thought of literary qualities insignificant; yet the author is master of an individual style, admirable in cogency and actuality, rich in metaphor 'pris sur le vif.' In spite of an occasional lapse from dignity, the colloquialisms used are usually effective. Perhaps the book deals too much with transitory and technical matters to be literature in the highest sense; but many of the best qualities of literature are found in it.[67]

Doctor Scudder correctly contributes a sardonic quality to Rauschenbusch's humor. "It is humor, but it is

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[65]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 216.

[66]Henry B. Robins, "The Memorial Service," The Rochester Theological Seminary Record, 69 (November, 1918), p. 33.

[67]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 173.

hardly American humor and not quite fun-loving."[68] While he could tell effectively a humorous anecdote, the things he thought amusing did not always seem so to others. On discussing the impact organized business had on fashions, he said,

> For several years now our women have been wearing hats that were candle extinguishers of beauty and reduced thousands of charming heads to pitiable insignificance. When the wind blew, any grace of carriage became impossible. The Women's clubs missed an opportunity in 1910. They ought to have organized great auto-da-fe all over the country to burn the big hats and to hang in effigy all those who compelled them to wear them. The world of men would have stood by to applaud, and it might have been the beginning of a great revival of morality and religion.[69]

In Christianity and the Social Crisis he relates this anecdote:

> I knew a man who preached a course of sermons on social questions after reading his first book on the subject. He may have been equally rash in discussing the ways of the Almighty, but God is patient and does not talk back.[70]

This sardonic quality may be attributed to a Germanic strain rather than to his habitual seriousness. Sardonic was the suggestion, made more than once, that religion ought to have another symbol to put alongside the Holy Grail, the symbol

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[68]Ibid.

[69]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 256.

[70]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 359.

of Pilate's wash bowl.[71] Although he leaned to the caustic side, Rauschenbusch's dexterity with words, phrases and images never turned its cutting edge against individuals.

> Existing conditions might be excoriated, and even whole social groups ridiculed, but the purpose was to touch consciences, never to injure the self-respect of individuals.[72]

His books on the social questions are said to have no hate in them. Close examination reveals that there was no hate for any living person enmeshed in the toils of an evil society, but there was deep hate for the evil conditions themselves.

Only a person with a deep and abiding love for his fellowman could write with such a unique and poetic style.[73] Rauschenbusch's beautifully poetic passages consist of splendidly rhythmic prose, exalted religious feelings, loving appreciation of nature, and joyous gratitude for living. The imagination in his writing is revealed in the envisioned color picture of his thoughts. This quality, more than anything else, captivated the reader and gave pungency to the argument. With few exceptions there is always rhythm in the accents and never a harsh combination

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[71]Sharpe, op. cit.

[72]Ibid., p. 174.

[73]Ibid., p. 159.

of words. His love and understanding of poetry influenced his writing. In his earlier years he translated many English poems into German for the benefit of German immigrants. Occasionally he wrote poems of his own.[74] "His own unpublished verse reveals him as a poet and mystic."[75] The deep personal religion of Rauschenbusch found expression not only in prose but also in poetry. One poem, "The Postern Gate," written in the spring of 1918, while he lay ill, has become fairly well known:[76]

Whereat, when I enter,
I am in the presence of God.
In a moment, in the turning of a thought,
I am where God is.
This is a fact.

This world of ours has length and breadth,
A superficial and horizontal world.
When I am with God
I look deep down and high up,
And all is changed.
The world of men is made of jangling noises.
With God is a great silence.
But that silence is a melody
Sweet as the contentment of love,
Thrilling as a touch of flame.

In this world my days are few
And full of trouble.
I strive and have not;
I seek and find not;
I ask and learn not.

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[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., p. 158.

[76] Barnette, op. cit., p. 39.

Its joys are so fleeting,
Its pains are so enduring,
I am in doubt if life be worth living.
When I enter into God,
All life has a meaning.

Without asking I know;
My desires are even now fulfilled,
My fever is gone
In the great quiet of God.
My troubles are but pebbles on the road,
My joys are like the everlasting hills.
So it is when I step through the gate of prayer
From time into eternity.
When I am in the consciousness of God,
My fellowmen are not far-off and forgotten,
But close and strangely dear.
Those whom I love
Have a mystic value.
They shine, as if a light were glowing within them.
Even those who frown on me
And love me not
Seem part of the great scheme of God.
(Or else they seem like stray bumble-bees
Buzzing at a window,
Headed the wrong way, yet seeking the light.)

So it is when my soul steps through the postern gate
Into the presence of God.
Big things become small, and small things become great.
The near becomes far, and the future is near.
The lowly and despised is shot through with glory,
And most of human power and greatness
Seems as full of infernal iniquities
As a carcass is full of maggots.
God is the substance of all revolutions;
When I am in him, I am in the Kingdom of God
And in the Fatherland of my Soul.

Is it strange that I love God?
And when I come back through the gate,
Do you wonder that I carry memories with me,
And my eyes are hot with unshed tears for what I see,
And I feel like a stranger and a homeless man
Where the poor are wasted for gain,

Where rivers run red,
And where God's sunlight is darkened by lies?[77]

The music of a little Jewish boy on a golf course delighted Rauschenbusch and evoked the following poem:

We applauded, and called for more.
His eyes shone.
He gave us all he had.
Then came three golfers across the road,
Glancing sideways, and wondering;
For they were stout and very respectable,
And knew me to be highly respectable
And accustomed to hold up my end;
And here I sat in the dusty grass
Beating time to an aged music box,
And nodding in sober intoxication to the little Jew.
So we paid the artist his obolus,
And parted, bowing almost as courteously as he.

But my little daughter said to me, gravely,
"Now I understand you better, Father."
So my bit of virtue had reward,
Spot cash, a hundred fold,
In the life that now is,
According to the promises.

But wouldn't it be fine
If my little musician,
Grown radiant and strong,
Should come on me,
Sitting by the asphodel golf-links of heaven,
And should play to me the music
Which we both faintly heard
In the dust and heat of the earth?[78]

Had Rauschenbusch used any approach other than a poetic one, many of his subjects would have been dryly economic or dryly political. His poetic touch reaches its

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[77]Sharpe, op. cit., pp. 451-452.

[78]Ibid., p. 431.

heights when he discusses his personal religious experience. He longed to devote his time wholly to the writing of the mystic deeps of spiritual experience.[79]

An exquisite example of his poetic touch dealing with a personal experience is in the small book, Dare We Be Christians. In part, Rauschenbusch says,

> God's world is great; too great for all little minds like mine to hold. I have traveled over thousands of miles of it, but for the most part, my memory holds only a blue of space and movement.
>
> But there are a few places which my memory has made all my own. I know a place just above Little Mud Turtle Lake, where the Gull River tilts around the rocks and sweeps in a curling crescent of foam around the wooded basin below the rapids. That place is mine because I swam in it with my boys; the river carried us down the rapids and around the whirlpool, shouting and laughing. Way up on the Ox Tongue River is a high, straight fall, and above it a platform of rock. I lay there one night in the open, while the cool night moved the tree tops, and watched the constellations march across the spaces between them. That place is mine by the emotions and prayers it inspired.[80]

Lack of sentence connectives are associated more generally with poetry than prose.[81] This suited a man whose approach to truth was less through workaday reason than through feeling and intuition.

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[79]Ibid., p. 430. (All facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[80]Walter Rauschenbusch, Dare We Be Christians (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1914), pp. 7-8.

[81]Lieder, op. cit., p. 2.

Although he spoke through a poetic mind, Rauschenbusch was a reasoner, with the cogency of a lawyer. He always built up a case. The points he makes are clearly conceived, sharply outlined, then piled logically one upon another until they become a structurally solid edifice. The decoration, if there is any, is put on after the structure is finished; it never takes the place of the structure. He seldom relies on impressionism or emotional outbursts to carry his point--at least not until after the point has been made and proved on a rational basis.[82]

> Rauschenbusch had a clear, incisive mind, trained to the logical process. He had moreover rare ability to express his mental reactions and conclusions in simple, direct, pregnant and often colorful English. He employed language, not for purposes of showy rhetoric nor yet to conceal thought, but as an instrument for truth and righteousness. His pen was a powerful weapon in his fight against injustice.[83]

"Writing compelled him to think clearly and to make careful statements."[84] The ability of Rauschenbusch to express his judgments in terse, pointed, and convincing form added force to his message. His fearlessness and honesty gave directness to his applications. The vital human element in the historical process was etched on the minds

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[82]Sharpe, op. cit., p. 169. (All facts in this paragraph are from this source.)

[83]Ibid., p. 176.

[84]Barnette, op. cit., p. 34.

of his hearers by adept use of picturesque and sometimes ludicrous reconstructions of events. Vivid word pictures punctuated his observations on the social scene.[85] For example, concerning the moral effects of grinding poverty, he said that "one could hear human virtue crumbling and cracking all around."[86]

Rauschenbusch uses his literature critically to condemn the conventional understanding of the social gospel. The great defect in the popular interpretation of the social gospel, he asserted, is that it lacks an adequate appreciation of the power of sin. On the whole, his books are stronger in criticism than in construction. This, however, is not to be wondered at; and Rauschenbusch's keen sense of the humor of situations plays around this critical aspect of his task.[87]

Rauschenbusch's literary effectiveness was all the more remarkable in view of the fact that his first books were written in German, his parents' native tongue. His first teaching post was in the German department of Rochester

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[85]Claude J. Williams, "Walter Rauschenbusch: A Prophet of Social Righteousness" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, 1952), p. 58.

[86]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 328.

[87]Hudson, op. cit., p. 742.

Seminary. He was equally adept in English. Doctor Vida Scudder of Wellesley wrote,

> Dr. Rauschenbusch has an exceptional command of sardonic speech. Perhaps it is a power given by fearless honesty. At all events, the trenchant phrases dissipate self-deception and dislodge conscience from many an uneasy refuge. The driving directness renders thought of literary qualities insignificant; yet the author is master of an individual style admirable in cogency and actuality, rich in metaphor.[88]

Many of his witty and most brillant expressions have the tone and ring of a German scholar; nor is it any wonder that his trend of thinking and his philosophy should sometimes have been influenced by German men of letters, since he received a broad education in European schools of the highest rank. His mind was so completely absorbed in the thought of his message that he seemed to pay little attention to his English.[89]

Donald R. Come, in his article, "The Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch," emphasized the German influence on Rauschenbusch's writing when he said,

> It was the more complete immersion of Walter Rauschenbusch in Germanic and General European thought that took him beyond his American-ministers in the advocacy of extreme solidarity and a complete socialistic system. It was this firm advocacy which made Rauschenbusch's opinions seem so startling to the American people and which gained for him a great popularity among those who realized the existence of social

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[88]Donovan Smucker, "Rauschenbusch After Fifty Years," The Christian Century, (April 17, 1957), pp. 488-489.

[89]Singer, op. cit., p. 126.

> problems of utmost gravity and who saw hope for institutional perfection in plans for social engineering on the grand scale.[90]

Another literary technique that Walter Rauschenbusch makes extensive use of is that of question-asking. In Christianity and the Social Crisis, Rauschenbusch asks questions that he has just previously answered. This device tends to sway the reader to adopt Rauschenbusch's conclusions. This technique can be illustrated when he tells about the revolutionary character of the millennial hope of the Christian. After describing the revolutionists and the revolution, he closes the discussion with a question, "What else is a revolution?"[91]

For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening, because of the nature of the book, has very few questions.

Using questions as a means of personal conviction and soul-searching on the part of the reader is utilized in Christianizing the Social Order at the end of several chapters.

> Were you ever converted to God? Do you remember the change in your attitude to all the world? Is not this new life which is running through our people the same great change on a national scale?[92]

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[90]Donald R. Come, "The Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch," The South Atlantic Quarterly, (July, 1950), p. 345.

[91]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 108.

[92]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 6.

Rauschenbusch makes extensive use of questions in Social Principles of Jesus. These he uses to provoke thought. Some he answers, and others he leaves to the reader to search for an answer. In his discussion of "Property and Common Good," he asks,

> What is the relation between property and self-development? At what point does property become excessive? At what point does food become excessive and poisonous? At what point does fertilizer begin to kill a plant? Would any real social values be lost if incomes averaged $2,000 and none exceeded $10,000?[93]

Rauschenbusch continues in A Theology for the Social Gospel to teach by using the question technique. Two types of questions stand out. These are the ones that are asked in such a way as to assume that the reader is in agreement with the ideas expressed. To illustrate, Rauschenbusch asks, "Is not our heaven too much a heaven of idleness?"[94] The other type represents a series of questions that may or may not be specifically answered. In a discussion of primitive eschatology, he asks,

> What sort of religious ideal was this which pictured fertile fields and vineyards, lots of babies romping, and old men holding on to life for a hundred years? How did that chime with a holy desire for heaven and the 'angelic life' of asceticism? Moreover, how did

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[93]Rauschenbusch, Social Principles of Jesus, p. 127.

[94]Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 263.

> the theocratic and fraternal social order pictured in the millennial ideal square with the Roman Empire, the present distribution of property, the eminence of the upper classes, the permanence of church institutions, and the power of the bishops?[95]

THEME ANALYSIS

In a comparative study of the five selected books, three themes seemed to stand out. Rauschenbusch's conception of each theme remained the same from the first book published to the last one. The repetition of these themes--the human family, the kingdom of God, and industry in its many forms--are frequently mentioned.

> The family is the structural cell of the social organism. In it lives the power of propagation and renewal of life. It is the foundation of morality, the chief educational institution, and the source of nearly all the real contentment among men.[96]

Rauschenbusch makes this statement in his first book and continues in the same vein when writing For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening. Eighteen of his prayers deal directly with people. Some of these are, "For Immigrants," "For Public Officers," "For Children of the Street," and "For all Mothers." Many references in Chris-

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[95]Ibid., p. 222.

[96]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, pp. 271-272.

tianizing the Social Order concern the personal and human families. Rauschenbusch's concluding words in the chapter, "The Conservation of Life," are these:

> To break down a man's sense of his own worth murders his power of aspiration. It chokes the god in him just as surely as faith in his higher possibilities awakens the soul in a lost man to a new birth. The conservation of life demands the emancipation of the soul.[97]

The second chapter of The Social Principles of Jesus is devoted to the family as a unit and to the relationship in which each individual is a brother to every other person. He opens the chapter by saying,

> Every man has worth and sacredness as a man. We fixed on that as the simplest and most fundamental social principle of Jesus. The second question is, What relation do men bear to each other?[98]

Perhaps less is said concerning the family in A Theology for the Social Gospel than in any of the other books. In the framework that all men are brothers, Rauschenbusch condemns racial sins as being evil. In part, he says, "They are the direct negation of solidarity and love. They substitute a semi-human, semi-ethical relation for full human fraternity."[99]

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[97]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, p. 418.

[98]Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 17.

[99]Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 256.

The heart of the social gospel, the kingdom of God, is the dominant theme of the works of Walter Rauschenbusch. Christianity and the Social Crisis reveals that the teaching of the kingdom of God is paramount in Jesus' ministry. "The kingdom of God continued to be the center of all his teachings as recorded by the synoptic gospels."[100] For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening continues with this theme. One prayer is entitled, "For the Kingdom of God." In his "Introductory: The Social Meaning of the Lord's Prayer," Rauschenbusch explains the desire Jesus had for the coming of this kingdom and what its coming means in the world today. "The desire for the Kingdom of God precedes and outranks everything else in religion, and forms the tacit presupposition of all our wishes for ourselves."[101]

Christianizing the Social Order defines the Kingdom of God as

> . . . an ideal demanding both the highest spiritual fervor and the most practical sagacity for its realization. The fervor was absorbed by mysticism and the longing for heaven; the sagacity by the tasks of church life and organization.[102]

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[100]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 54.

[101]Rauschenbusch, For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening, p. 19.

[102]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, pp. 76-77.

Rauschenbusch devotes three chapters in The Social Principles of Jesus to this topic. He describes the "kingdom of God" as ". . . a conception which is not universally human, but which Jesus derived from the historic life of the Hebrew people. . . ."[103] The three chapters discuss the values, tasks and standards of this kingdom. A Theology for the Social Gospel is permeated with the kingdom of God idea. Chapter XIII is "The Kingdom of God" and lists eight points that enlarge upon the aspects of this idea.

The third theme that weaves its way through the five books in this study is that of industry and the industrial revolution. Chapter V, "The Present Crisis," in Christianity and the Social Crisis, points out the simple but good life of American people before the industrial revolution and then compares that life with the one after the revolution. The comparison is not favorable. In listing his grievances Rauschenbusch says,

> One of the gravest accusations against our industrial system is that it does not produce in the common man the pride and joy of good work. In many cases the surroundings are ugly, depressing, and coarsening. Much of the stuff manufactured is dishonest in quality, made to sell and not to serve, and the making of such cotton or wooden lies must react on the morals of every man that handles them.[104]

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[103]Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 49.

[104]Rauschenbusch, Christianity and the Social Crisis, p. 234.

Rauschenbusch's concern for the people enmeshed in the evils of a rising industrial age is revealed in six of his prayers found in For God and the People: Prayers of the Social Awakening. He titles them, "For Children who Work," "For Women who Toil," "For Workingmen," "For Employers," "For Men in Business," and "For Public Officers."

The greed for wealth by a few at the expense of the lives of many prompted Rauschenbusch to say in Christianizing the Social Order, "Industry is like a guillotine dropping minute by minute, year in and year out, on some part of a human body."[105] He adamantly pursues the subject throughout the book.

In The Social Principles of Jesus, Chapter VIII, Rauschenbusch writes concerning private property. In his discussions and questions he shows Jesus' attitude toward wealth. Associating wealth in America with industry is implied when he says, "The child-drivers, monopoly-builders, and crooked financiers have no fear of men whose thought is run in the moulds of their grandfathers."[106]

While Rauschenbusch continues the theme of industry and wealth in A Theology for the Social Gospel, it is not the

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[105]Rauschenbusch, Christianizing the Social Order, pp. 242-243.

[106]Rauschenbusch, The Social Principles of Jesus, p. 126.

dominant factor in the book. He does, however, vividly drive home his points in the form of true illustrations.

> I know a woman whose father, back in the nineties, took a fortune out of a certain dirty mill town. She is now living on his fortune; but the children of the mill-hands are living on their misfortune. No effort of hers can undo more than a fraction of the evil which was set in motion while that fortune was being accumulated.[107]

As is seen from this quotation Rauschenbusch used picturesque language to press for social justice.

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[107]Rauschenbusch, A Theology for the Social Gospel, p. 18.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

Endowed with a deep love for mankind and a desire for all men to have equal opportunities, Walter Rauschenbusch used the talents he possessed to work for what he considered a better America. While he was an excellent teacher and speaker, his writings were the principal channel through which his message reached the people. However, the man and his writings are so inextricably interwoven that one cannot be explained satisfactorily apart from the other.

RAUSCHENBUSCH THE MAN

Walter Rauschenbusch had a natural talent for and interest in writing. His career as a writer started when he was a young student writing short stories, and he continued writing until his death. The many letters that he wrote home while a student in Germany also reflect this bent.

He was a compassionate person. This was seen in his reactions to his own home life as a child, in his response to social conditions as a young minister in New York City's Hell's Kitchen area, in preaching, and in all of his writings.

He was a well educated man, in fact, a scholar. This is evident from the position he held in a recognized

theological seminary and from his writings. Rauschenbusch had a thirst for knowledge and found in many life situations a learning or teaching process.

He was a dedicated Christian. Although he did not consider himself a theologian, he lived, preached and taught within the circle of what he believed to be God's will for his life. Because of the radical social stands he took, it is evident that he was not primarily concerned with earthly profit or popularity but rather with divine sanction.

Finally, he was a prophet. This term has been applied to him more frequently than has any other. As such, he was unquestionably an idealist, perhaps even a utopianist. Even his critics respected his ability to see through a social crisis, analyze its implications, and predict the probable outcome.

RAUSCHENBUSCH THE WRITER

The social gospel books of Rauschenbusch reveal several literary characteristics and a distinct form. He had a sardonic humor that reflects more of a German influence than American. His style was concise, pithy and picturesque. He peppered his writings with similes and metaphors. Although his books were written with painstaking scholarship, they were free from academic jargon. He liked to think of himself as a poet; but, while he was poetic,

he did not really succeed in this area. His "Prayers" can be called poetry in a deep sense.

Rauschenbusch was repetitious in both theme and style. His consuming concern for social injustices and social betterment probably explains the repetition of theme. The repetitious style may be explainable, at least in part, by the fact that he was a preacher and popular public speaker, perhaps given to frequent recapitulation for the sake of the audience. Although the author of this thesis never heard Rauschenbusch speak, there is a strong suspicion that his writing style was derived from his speaking rather than vice-versa. When some of his works are read aloud, they "listen" better than they "read."

One thing that helps to alleviate what might otherwise be oppressive repetition is the author's obvious sincerity. His writings pulsate with this quality.

Perhaps the most striking thing about Rauschenbusch's writings is his use of short, stabbing sentences. While the lack of connectives may tend to give a choppy appearance, this style lends a dramatic emphasis to the message he is imparting. Again, this may be a by-product of his speaking style.

When he is occasionally extreme in the expression of his favorite ideas, the trend of his thought is then difficult to follow because of his apparent indifference to

logical arrangment. His original sayings are, however, so striking and unique that they tend to make up for these short-comings.

SUMMATION

Rauschenbusch, the man, has virtues that leave a lasting imprint. From his biography, it is evident that only a person whose heart was filled with love for God and his fellow man could have ministered as he did. His messages are reminiscent of the sayings of Jesus, the wisdom literature of Solomon, and the thundering Hebrew prophets of the eighth century before Christ.

Rauschenbusch, the writer, will never be called an outstanding literary figure in the sense that Shakespeare is; but he could be classified as a classic writer according to the definition of Lieder and Withington in The Art of Literary Criticism:

> A true classic, as I should like to hear it defined, is an author who has enriched the human mind, who has really augmented its treasures, who has made it take one more step forward, who has discovered some unequivocal moral truth, or has once more seized hold of some eternal passion; who has rendered his thought, his observation, or his discovery under no matter what form, but broad and large, refined, sensible, sane, and beautiful in itself; who has spoken to all in a style of his own which yet belongs to all the world, in a style which is

> new without neologism, new and ancient, easily contemporaneous with every age.[1]

If Ezra Pound's definition of great writing is accepted, then Rauschenbusch might even be termed great. Said Pound, "Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree."[2] The writings of the Prophet of Rochester, called by many "the father of the social gospel movement," in this sense could be judged great.

Whether judged great, near-great, or just ordinary, the words from the pen of Walter Rauschenbusch had a profound effect, directly, upon the theology and religious institutions of his times and, indirectly, upon the whole American social order. Whatever else he was, he was an effective writer who moved men to action and whose impact far outlived his own life span. This in itself is a mark of his significance as an author.

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[1]Paul Robert Lieder and Robert Withington, The Art of Literary Criticism (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1941), p. 474.

[2]Kellogg W. Hunt and Paul Stoakes, Our Living Language (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 562.

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