

# THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST AND THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

Donald Townsley

My purpose in this article is to show how the “social gospel” perverts the gospel of Christ. The sole purpose of the gospel of Christ is to save men from his sins that he might be saved eternally in heaven in the after awhile. Its primary intent is spiritual. The word “gospel” means “good news”, and the good news is that men can be saved from his sins and be reconciled back to God in one body (Eph. 2: 13 – 16). Paul said, “ *it is the power of God unto salvation*” (Rom. 1:16), and told the Corinthians they were saved by it ( I Cor. 15:2). The gospel of Christ teaches that the things of this earth are passing and that one who is wise will attach more importance to his eternal welfare than to his social and material wellbeing ( I Tim. 6: 7 – 8). Paul told the brethren at Colossae to “*seek those things which are above*” (Col. 3:1). The gospel of Christ holds eternal life before the sinner as a reward for yielding his heart to Christ.

We mean by the term “social gospel” the concept held by many that the social problems as such are of primary concern in the scriptures. One who has this concept of the scriptures has a dual-purpose concept of Christianity. He believes that one fundamental purpose of the gospel is the improving of social circumstances of mankind and the church should be used as a tool to aid this work. The “social gospel” concept is the crux of our problems in the church today. Those who believe that the church should take a stand on social issues that are raging in state, and that the church should contribute to all kinds of human institutions for man’s betterment, have this dual concept of the gospel.

On the other hand, we who oppose these things being supported from the church believe that the gospel has but one primary intent and that is spiritual, the salvation of mankind. We grant the fact that the gospel has social implications which are byproducts; a group of Christians living in a community make it a better community, but they are Christians that they might be saved in the after awhile, not just to make it a better community.

But someone says, “Did not the New Testament churches engage in benevolent work?” Yes, the churches did help their own, but this is far from making the church a “social utopia” with social objectives. The question would be raised as to whether the purpose behind this is social or spiritual. If the Lord established this provision just to spare the saints extremes in human suffering, this would be the one and only God-authorized social function of an otherwise solely and completely spiritual kingdom (John 18:36; Rom. 14:17). It is my belief that the social provisions of the gospel which provide for the physical care of needy saints by the church have deep spiritual undertones; by providing the physical needs of the saints, the church has insured its ability to accomplish its spiritual purpose, that of saving souls.

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