

THE THREAT OF THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

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Years ago when I began to preach I heard and read of the "social gospel". Since this was a new gospel and practiced only among denominational people I knew very little about it. So far as I knew, it was unknown among those who claimed to be Christians only. But as time passed, I continued to hear more and more of the social gospel. I learned that this new philosophy placed a great deal of stress on the "here and now". That it was more concerned and more interested in the social wellbeing than in the salvation of the soul. The social gospel has so much attraction to offer and is so appealing that it made its wonderful and rapid strides among denominational churches. Attention began to be focused on the young people. Many forms of entertainment were introduced to hold and attract the young people of the community. Churches began great programs of social and community improvement to "make the world a better place in which to live." Gospel preachers began to cry out against these things and to emphasize that the church was a spiritual institution whose mission was to preach the gospel of Christ and save the souls of men. In those days we did not realize that the churches of Christ would soon be invaded with the same philosophy. Little did we think that the day was not far distant when the churches of Christ would be following the same path. Today church buildings are being equipped with kitchens, banquet halls, recreation facilities, etc. More and more stress is being placed on Bible camps and other forms of fun and frolic mixed with religion. Witness the following news item taken from a religious publication:

"The summer Bible camp for boys and girls provides opportunities for Christian learning and guidance that cannot be achieved elsewhere in the program of Christian education. If there is such a thing as an ideal teaching situation, it will probably be found at summer camp." These humanly devised projects are, in the main, supported by groups of individuals, but they are gradually being tacked on and supported out of the church treasury. Camping, outing and recreation of the right kind is good, but such things are no part of the mission of the church. But now that this trend has begun, it will be continued until the church will be found engaging in every kind of secular and social project. The mission of the church is to preach the gospel of Christ and save souls. The matter of entertainment and social work should be left to the home and to individuals where God placed it. Those who love the church should do all within their power to stop this growing tendency to secularize the church and the promotion of humanly devised projects.

(from The Town Creek Reminder, July, 1959)