

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM AS PRECURSOR OF LIBERATION THEOLOGY by PROF S S MAIMELA

Among many other important developments in the nineteenth century which laid the foundation for a more explicit theology of liberation, the most important is the so-called "Christian Socialism". This is a theological movement which was dedicated to the radical reconstruction of society in accordance with the ideal of the Kingdom of God. This theological movement of the socially concerned christians, developed into what was later to be known as the "Social Gospel." It is characterised by a changed understanding of the relationship between the christian faith and the socio-political order, especially in economics.

If we are to see the emergence of the "Social Gospel" in its proper perspective, and appreciate its contribution towards a broader, more holistic and inclusive understanding of salvation in all its spiritual and physical dimensions as propounded by Liberation Theology, we need to look again at the preceding centuries to see what factors contributed to the rise of this movement.

First, during the Enlightenment there was a greater appreciation of and interest in the political, economic and cultural achievements of humanity. There was a greater interest in the world and earthly needs, which led to major socio-political upheavals in Europe (the French Revolution) and North America. In the medieval period and during the Protestant Reformation the emphasis was on what is "above" and "beyond. Life on earth was seen primarily as a preparation for the life hereafter. While Luther, Calvin and other reformers believed that social institutions were ordained by God, they thought that the main purpose of these institutions was to further the religious life of christians, and not the satisfaction of people's bodily needs.

The "humanist" stream of Renaissance thinking, however, focused on human achievements, the goodness of human nature and culture, and valued human freedom as an ideal. Calvinism, in its activist and "this-worldly" aspect, regarded the world, though fallen and evil, as God's creation, a gift of God to the human race, and these views were embraced by the thinkers of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. These factors, combined with the development of science, gave rise to a religious perspective that emphasised the achievement of human happiness on this side of the grave. The result was growing optimism about human possibilities and achievements on earth. Ernst Troeltsch, in his two-volume work, *The*

Social Teachings of the Christian Churches (1911/1960)' factually substantiated Weber's view, and adopted it with certain qualifications.

Secondly, the Protestant concept of a christian calling or vocation helped to emphasise the importance of human achievements on earth. This understanding of the christian role in the world led to a rejection of the supposed superiority of the so-called religious vocations over secular vocations. The difference between the calling of a farmer and that of a priest was understood for the first time as a division of labour, and the two callings were regarded as equally important. The farmer and the priest both serve God in their own way. Luther argued that each person is called to serve God and his fellows in whatever situation he finds himself. In Calvinism, according to Weber and Troeltsch, this idea of vocation, in which God is glorified through daily work, led to an "activistic" trend in social life.

Thirdly, there was the profound christian concern for the welfare of the oppressed which first appeared among the seventeenth-century Quakers, and expressed itself in the call for social reforms during the nineteenth century. A good example of this concern was the campaign of Wilberforce and others to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the British empire. Another example was the contribution of Lord Shaftesbury to the improvement of factory conditions during the Industrial Revolution and his fight against the extensive use of child labour.

Though these reforms were advocated by devoted and sincere christians and did improve conditions for people who had been oppressed, they were conceived largely within the socio-economic structures and conditions of the time. None of these reformers called for the dismantling of the existing oppressive and exploitative socio-political and economic system. Instead these social reformers concentrated on the removal of specific abuses and their concern for reform was overshadowed by the priority they placed on the life hereafter. It is therefore not surprising that Wilberforce, in his book entitled ***Practical View of the System of Christianity***, suggests that the value of Christianity lies in making social inequalities less bitter to the lower classes. He counsels them to lead a life of diligence, humility and patience².

Implicit in the beliefs of these reformers was the view that the christian religion sanctioned the inequities of the economic order, and their reform programmes were designed to give temporary relief because they thought that the imbalance would be redressed and that justice would be done for the oppressed in the life after death.

From a different perspective, despite the positive aspects of the Protestant ethos referred to above, the Church was unable to stop the gradual watering down of its prophetic ministry and social concern when, in the prevailing economic trends of the nineteenth century, there was an increasing call for a separation between Church and State. As a result, the church's view that secular life should be shaped by the ethics of the gospel was gradually abandoned. The result was a growing tendency to harmonise christian goals with the major social forces such as free enterprise, democracy, and patriotism, leading to an implicit and explicit sanctioning of the social, political and particularly the economic status quo.

It was this uncritical acceptance of the inequitable socio-economic system as a whole which was to call forth the most vigorous criticism from the nineteenth-century thinkers to whom we now turn our attention.

SOCIAL CRITIQUE FROM OUTSIDE THE CHURCH: THE CHALLENGE OF MARXISM

An important external attack on the church's alliance with the ruling classes came from Marxist socialism following the publication of Marx's *Communist Manifesto* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1867). In Karl Marx's view, history is dictated and determined by economic forces which give rise to class conflict. Marx's thesis is simply that all human institutions and ideas are to be understood as reflecting directly or indirectly the interests of the ruling (dominant) class in the economic struggle.

Marx argued that capitalism by its very nature necessitates the continual expansion, concentration and centralisation of the means of production in the hands of a few capitalists. Hence it thrives on the exploitation of the workers for the benefit of the owners of the means of production who in Marxist theory are called "capitalists". The interest of capital and labour are in principle irreconcilable, and so Marx predicted that they would grow steadily further apart until there would be whole societies divided into only two classes: the exploiting capitalists and the exploited working class (proletariat). This conflict would intensify until finally resolved by a revolution to be brought about by the working class, which would result in the establishment of a communist (egalitarian) society in which each person would produce according to his/her ability and share in the goods of society according to his/her need.

In Marx's view, religion is also a product of the economic forces that shape the structures of society. Because it reflects the interests of the ruling classes, religion is used by the capitalist class as an instrument to maintain their power and justify their exploitation of the

working classes. In other words, religion keeps the proletariat docile by promising the poverty-stricken and exploited masses a wonderful future in the life to come. By focusing their attention on the life to come, religion diverts the attention of the exploited workers from the parlousness of their present economic and social conditions. It was for this reason that Marx called religion the ‘‘opium for the masses’’.

Marx’s sharp critique of the church’s collusion with the dominant classes was not altogether unjustified because, as has been pointed out already, even such prominent and influential christians as Wilberforce still held the view that religion was a means of making social inequalities less bitter to the lower classes.

When Karl Marx made his observations about contemporary economic conditions in Britain there was abundant evidence to support his contentions. As Morris correctly points out, no slave or servile class was more brutally exploited than the industrial proletariat during the Industrial Revolution in late eighteenth century England, and ‘‘in no age perhaps was the use of Christianity as an antidote to social unrest more blatant’’³ than during that period.

To be sure, Marx was not the first to express horror at the church’s misuse of religion to underpin the socio-economic interest of the ruling classes. But Marx’s critique, based on social analysis of the evils of capitalism, was so persuasively argued that the church could not simply ignore him. He passed judgement on the injustices and exploitation of the Industrial Revolution with tremendous force and conviction. Nobody before Marx had ever been able to produce a reasoned critique of such persuasive power — a critique in which he unequivocally declared that the church was implicated in the oppression of the working classes. Indeed so forceful was his critique that even today the church still reels under the impact of the Marxist critique of Christianity, especially in Third World countries.

CRITICISM FROM WITHIN THE CHURCH: THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIALISTS AND OF THE ‘‘SOCIAL GOSPEL’’

At about the same time that Marxism appeared on the scene, a school of thought arose within the church itself which questioned and eventually came to reject the identification of Christianity with the existing socio-political and economic order as manifested in the Western civilisation of that time. This school went beyond the reformers and philanthropists with their deep concern for the corrections of social abuses, and developed a more inclusive social criticism which dealt with the underlying structures of society. This movement, which began in the nineteenth century, is being carried

forward today in the work of the liberation theologians as they search for a more humane and just social order.

Before considering the role that the "Social Gospel" movement played in the struggle for human freedom and justice, we should look at the work of some of the theologians who laid the foundations for the present-day Christian critique of the role of the church in society. We shall limit ourselves to two figures, one British and the other American.

Frederick Maurice

Frederick Denison Maurice (1805-1872) and his colleagues were the most prominent theoreticians in the Christian Socialist movement in Britain. They were inspired and challenged by the atheistic Marxist critique to find an appropriate christian method of social reform as an alternative to the Marxist class struggle. Maurice was one of those who recognised the failure of the church to be the voice of the voiceless and of the oppressed, and he devoted his energies to change and social reform.

Traditionally, theologians regarded theology as a special kind of speculative thinking. Maurice's basic thesis, however, was that theology is not speculation. In contradistinction to this traditional view, Maurice believed that theology is a reflection on the ultimate relation of oneself as a believer to the family of God (the church), society and God. These three relationships provide a healthy social environment for christians to be free to devote their lives to the service of their fellows.

Maurice's theological outlook was heavily influenced by his fundamental belief that human beings are essentially social. He therefore postulated a definite connection between individual redemption in Jesus Christ and christian morality which he expressed in social terms. He argued that the structure of creation is grounded in the triune being of God and, as such it constitutes a set of relationships in which an individual person is a member of a family and is, by nature a son or daughter. This set of relationships, according to Maurice, provides the spiritual basis of the human race, one in which all various social arrangements such as the family, the nation and the church are to be understood.

This theological emphasis on the social nature of all human beings became the fundamental tenet of the Christian Socialist Movement in Britain. Maurice and his colleagues (Kingsley and Ludlow) offered their view of the human condition as a christian response to the Marxist theory of the class struggle. Maurice contended that the christian view of humanity is truly socialist, but that this socialism

needs a spiritual rather than a materialist basis. Writing to Ludlow in the *Tracts on Christian Socialism* (1850), he observes that "Christian Socialism" seems to him to be ...the only title which will define our object, and will commit us at once to the conflict we must engage in sooner or later with the unsocial christians and the unchristian socialists.⁴

Maurice rejected christian quietism as well as the unspiritual activism of the Marxist socialists and pointed out that society needs to be transformed and reconstituted in accordance with the principles of its spiritual constitution, namely: existence in Christian love in fulfilment of Christ's command that christians should love one another. Maurice also felt that socialism is the best expression of this "existence in love" because it insists on the principles of mutual co-operation and partnership as the basis for building a more humane and just society.

Kingley agrees with Maurice's rejection of both unsocial christians and unchristian socialists when he observes:

We have used the Bible as if it were a mere special constable's handbook, an opium for keeping the beasts of burden patient while they are being overloaded.⁵

Armed with these basic convictions, christians socialists under the leadership of Maurice worked hard to improve the conditions of the working class through religious regeneration and the formation of producers' co-operatives in which workers might be their own employers. They also encouraged the formation of trade unions to work peacefully for better conditions for their members. All this was inspired by Maurice's ideal of co-operation and co-partnership in society.

The spirit of Maurice and his colleagues permeated both the Anglican church and British society at large, and helped to prevent intensification of the hostility between the organised militant labour unions and the church which was a characteristic feature of societal conflict on the European continent at that time. Maurice was a living example of the church's prophetic ministry. The Christian Socialists showed that the church has a duty both to analyse critically the social evils that characterise industrial society and to work for the radical transformation of society so that a more humane and just social order might be created. Maurice's Christian Socialism influenced later British socialism and the Labour Party in England. Although its effectiveness in dealing with the social and economic abuses of its time should not be overestimated, the movement inspired widespread theological reflection about the social order and, in so doing, was a precursor of Liberation Theology of today.

Horace Bushnell

Horace Bushnell (1802-1876) took the age-old debate about the freedom of the will as the starting point for his theology of social reform. This debate, in Bushnell's opinion, fails to take into account the social nature of human existence. Arguments for free moral agency and those which deny a capacity for moral choice on the part of the individual were both based on the assumption that people exist as isolated entities rather than as social beings.

Bushnell's contribution to this debate was to insist that each child is indeed born into a world of sin and is a slave of sin because it is in the power of a network of sinful relationships. But being "born," according to Bushnell, means much more than a biological process; it means being formed or shaped in the organic unity of the human family. Hence he speaks not only about the "influence" that society exerts on individuals to move them towards some desired end but also of the psycho-spiritual bonds between the individual and his/her social environment so intimate and internal that they are unintended and even unconscious. This effects a reproduction of parental characteristics in children and parents find themselves reproducing certain features of themselves in their offspring whether the latter will it or not⁶.

In addition to this organic social matrix into which individuals are "born", Bushnell propounded a theory of the individual self coming to be itself only in a continuous process of gradual becoming. According to him, there is no single moment at which an individual becomes a moral agent, passing, as it were, from "moral nullity" to being an independent moral agent. A child gradually moves from dependence on its parents' moral judgement towards accepting moral responsibility on its own. Because of this, Bushnell thought that neither virtue nor sin can be interpreted adequately as the product of the separate and independent choice of an individual person. Because the self is a social self, virtue and sin are states or conditions, rather than specific acts.

In Bushnell's view, therefore, sin and redemption can only be adequately understood in social, psychological and historical terms rather than in metaphysical terms. Bushnell thus interpreted the traditional notion of original sin in terms of an organic unity of humanity in sin, a view similar to St. Paul's teaching about the corporate sinfulness of humanity in Adam⁷.

In other words, Bushnell rejected the understanding of original sin as something biologically transmitted from parent to child. In his view sin and guilt cannot be transferred from one person to another, and people are only responsible for their own sins. Nevertheless

the human race constitutes an irreducible social, historical and biological unity, and thus there exists in human society a principle of moral causality by means of which human beings affect one another for better or for worse. Because of the operation of this principle, Christian virtues are implicated in an actual struggle between good and evil; similarly, Christian redemption, in the context of the postulated organic unity of the human race, is social and corporate⁸.

According to Bushnell, Jesus Christ thus initiated a fundamentally new order of relations or organic causes which continue to operate redemptively in history. True Christian education should therefore mean nurturing a child within this new social order of relations so that the child might grow up as a Christian without being selfconsciously aware of it.

Bushnell's organic understanding of Christian community, both in sin and in redemption, became a very useful tool when the "Social Gospel" movement emerged. It enabled theologians to see more clearly the extent to which society might have to be transformed in order to bring about a free and just social order. Indeed, theologians past and present are forever indebted to Bushnell's insights as they try to reshape society and human relationships politically, economically and otherwise.

RITSCHL AND CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM IN EUROPE

Those on the continent who had been influenced by the theology of Albrecht Ritschl also advocated the reconstruction of society in the light of the gospel. As an advocate calling forth for justice, Ritschl insisted on the uncompromisingly ethical character of the gospel. This together with the sensitivity of Christian social reformers to the injustices in industrial society, made them aware of the church's responsibility for righting the wrongs of society, and for establishing new social structures which would be more consonant with the ideal of the Kingdom of God.

In reconstructing Christian faith Ritschl reduced, so to speak, the gospel (teachings of Jesus) to practical affair, that is — morality. In discussing the doctrine of justification and reconciliation accomplished in Jesus Christ, Ritschl is persuaded that Christ's redemptive work is now mediated through the church with a view to delivering humanity from bondage to the sensual nature, so that Christians might enjoy dominion over nature. This victory over sin was initiated by Christ who taught that moral and religious pursuits are in accordance with the will of his Father, whose goal is to establish the fellowship of freed persons, namely, members of the Kingdom of God. In Ritschl's view, therefore, reconciliation accomplished in and

through Christ was for the sake of the Kingdom of God, defined as the “organisation of humanity through action inspired by love.”

In other words, Ritschl’s contribution to the promotion of Christian socialism lay in his attempt to harmonise the ethical ideals of Christianity with some of the ideas (such as the widespread demands for social justice) prevalent in the culture of his time. This particular activity came to be known as “Kultur-protestantismus” (culture-protestantism). Many people regarded this as a confusion of cultural goals with Christian faith⁹. However much we may disagree with Ritschl, his rediscovery of the idea of the Kingdom of God as the key element in the teaching of Jesus gave a powerful impetus to the development of the “Social Gospel”. It also helped to develop the social conscience of the church.

The Christian socialism of Ritschl was carried further by his disciple Harnack who also stressed the ethical character of the gospel and the importance of the Kingdom of God in the teaching of Jesus. Ernst Troeltsch also made a valuable and constructive contribution to this school of thought.

In conclusion, we may note that these social tendencies in Protestant thought are mainly interesting because they gave birth to a form of Christianity that was prophetic and socially relevant and because it emphasised the importance of working out the consequences of one’s faith in the spheres of economic and social justice — what Jesus called “bearing fruit”. This development gave the church the moral authority to confront the challenges of secular socialism and the rise of militant labour unions. It also enabled the church to take the lead in doing something constructive about the evils of modern industrial and exploitative society.

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSH: THE EMBODIMENT OF PROTESTANT SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

The most impressive and powerful expression of Protestant social conscience in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is to be found in the American movement commonly known as the “Social Gospel”. This movement reached its zenith just prior to the First World War. Its proponents called even more strongly than their European counterparts for a radical reconstruction of society along Christian lines in conformity with the ideal of the Kingdom of God. They believed in the possibility of human virtue on a large scale and the sacredness of human life. As a corollary to this they also believed that human society could be changed. The theological foundations for the “Social Gospel” movement had already been laid by Bushnell and Maurice who had effectively criticised the extreme individualistic conception of sin and salvation. These two men

emphasised that human beings cannot be redeemed in isolation from society but can only be redeemed in and with society because human social solidarity exists both in sin and salvation.

The champion of this Christian socialism in America was Rauschenbush (1861-1918) who was concerned about the problems created by industrialisation; problems such as the breaking up of social and family life, the failure of technology to provide for the needs of the masses of workers, the growing labour unrest, the exaggerate individualism of American capitalism, and the disregard for human rights reflected in the prevalence of poverty and slum conditions.

Rauschenbusch identified the conflict between capital and labour as the key problem in modern industrial society. As a theologian he insisted that the relations between capital and labour were theological and moral issues which had to be dealt with by the church. His most powerful exposition of both the individual and the social aspects of Jesus' ethical teaching is found in his ***A Theology for the Social Gospel*** (1917)¹⁰.

Like Bushnell, Rauschenbush stressed the unavoidably social dimensions of personal existence. Society is organic and holistic rather than an aggregation of individuals. In Raudchenbusch's opinion, there is a profound solidarity in the fabric of human society. It is for this reason that Rauschenbusch advocated for an intensive and systematic study of social conditions as a precondition for devising an effective programme to heal the social and spiritual malaise of society.

One of Rauschenbusch's basic tenets was that establishment of the Kingdom of God lies at the heart of the gospel. For him the "Social Gospel" demands a re-establishment of God's Kingdom in accordance with this central message of Jesus. But he was careful enough to qualify his central thesis by stressing that the Kingdom of God cannot simply be reduced to the social dimension. He was convinced that the most important part of the gospel is one's personal encounter and relationship with God and that this personal rebirth is the necessary precondition for social involvement. In Rauschenbush's theology, a person's relationship with God is of such central importance that his/her thinking cannot be understood without taking it into account.

Although Rauschenbush stressed the importance of a personal experience of the redeeming power of the gospel, he nevertheless insisted that a personal relationship with God should make people more aware of social and economic ills and abuses.

Rauschenbush, and others who thought like him, believed that Western societies should be reorganised in accordance with the ideal of the Kingdom of God, especially in the economic field. They feared that, if the church did not take the lead in the transformation of society, millions of oppressed and exploited people would ultimately experience moral dissolution leading to spiritual destruction.

Rauschenbush also called for a scientific approach to social problems so that accurate and reasonably complete information about societal problems could be accumulated. He hoped that the wisdom thus gained would find its way into programmes of religious education. He was one of the first prominent theologians to advocate for an interdisciplinary approach to theological studies at seminaries and other theological institutions.

Rauschenbush had a sensitive appreciation of the complexity of the human condition and of the problems which bedevil the human race. Because of his appreciation, he understood that the gospel might be experienced in many different ways. He argued persuasively that changes in the traditional ways of understanding the doctrine of salvation need not threaten the integrity of the gospel itself. This was his main argument against those fundamentalists who raised objections to the social involvement of the Church because they saw it as something new. He believed that it is sometimes necessary for the form in which the gospel is experienced to change. During the Protestant Reformation, for instance, almost everything had changed. Thus, although the reformers established a new ecclesiastical order without a pope, bishops, priests, monks, rosaries, saints pilgrimages or indulgences, they nevertheless retained the gospel itself. Although contemporary Roman Catholics felt that these innovations signalled the end of personal piety, what in fact happened was that a new type of piety came into being. In the same way, the development of socially concerned Christianity was not a threat to personal dedication to God, but merely a different way of showing the empowerment of the gospel.

Fired by this vision, Rauschenbush called for a restatement of Christian teaching in terms of the new social vision. One of his major works in which he attempted just such a restatement of the Christian faith was appropriately entitled ***A Theology of the Social Gospel***. Ernst Troeltsch had earlier published his ***Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*** in which sociological and religious themes were interwoven, and he demonstrated how important doctrines of Christianity could be reformulated to take into account the particular social, economic and philosophical concerns of Christians in a given society.

Rauschenbush's theological restatement eliminated all hierarchical, absolutist and despotic imagery from discourse about God. This was done in order to bring those conceptions into line with the democratisation of the Fatherhood of God already initiated by Jesus' teachings. (This is the view that God is the father of everyone, rather than of the chosen few, such as the kings of Israel). Rauschenbush did not follow the traditional Christian line of emphasising the personal nature of sin: sin, to him, was more like the expression of a malign social force embodied in the very structures of society. He emphasized that sin could influence the lives of people in a terrible way if it were to become institutionalised in social structures. Parallel to this, he emphasised that redemption can also be understood as a social force. This force can be applied by groups of Christians who are motivated by the love of God. Redemption thus becomes complete and permanent when each individual person takes his or her place as part of a social organism which is ruled by love, righteousness and purity. In other words, for Rauschenbusch, genuine salvation requires a Christian social order which will provide the spiritual environment in which individual Christians can live their faith.

Rauschenbush's reformulation of Christian teachings brought to an end the old conflict between religion and science. He pointed out that the establishment of the Kingdom of God in which individuals are motivated and governed by God's love requires less dogma and theology but calls on everyone to use their scientific know-how and work together for the transformation of society. In this way righteousness would become manifest in the world. Rauschenbush felt that, if this programme were acceptable to Christians, there could never be a conflict between science and religion because Christians would have to use scientific knowledge as a means of transforming society. Many modern Christians are attracted to a formulation of their faith which emphasises an awareness of social and economic injustices: the kind of Christianity which contains a "Social Gospel" component. The reason why many Christians are attracted to this expression of the gospel is that it enables them to express their solidarity with the suffering and oppressed people of the world. It also enables them to contribute towards the worldwide struggle for equality, liberation, and kinship of all people.

Rauschenbush did not fail to appreciate that there would be people who were truly involved in the life of the church who would become so involved in the struggle for social justice advocated by the "Social Gospel" that they would lose all perspective and cease to be Christians in any orthodox sense of the word. He nonetheless felt that it would be the fault of the institutional church (and not of the "Social Gospel") should such breaks occur. Rauschenbush

believed that so many Christians have such a tenuous, uncommitted or merely formal relationship with the institutional church, that it is scarcely surprising that they abandon it once they become fully committed to the struggle for social justice. It would be quite wrong, in Rauschenbush's view, to imagine that individual salvation and social redemption are opposed to each other, because the gospel of Jesus Christ offers humanity a full and all-embracing salvation, which does not disregard any aspect of human life and which cannot be reduced to a purely individualistic piety. It is important to note that Rauschenbusch's theology of the "Social Gospel" is often misrepresented as denying the importance of personal salvation and a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Rauschenbusch's theological proposals were bold and imaginative even though they were tainted by the optimism of nineteenth-century liberal theology. After the First World War there was a reaction against liberal Protestantism, and its optimistic outlook came in for a lot of criticism. In spite of this, the "Social Gospel" of Maurice, Bushnell, Ritschl, Harnack and Rauschenbusch was prophetic in its insistence that it is those Christians who are not afraid to champion the cause of the oppressed, suffering and exploited peoples of the earth who are, ultimately, the most effective defenders of the Christian faith. It is not, therefore, surprising that it has had such a far-reaching influence on the social activism of the World Council of Churches in the twentieth century, as well as on liberation theology. The exponents of liberation theology continue to argue that it is the church's resolute cooperation in participating in the worldwide struggle for the oppressed majority of the human race which has regained for the Christian faith the credibility which it had lost when it was perceived to be in league with the oppressors of the poor and dispossessed. Indeed, it is the ethical imperative of the "Social Gospel; the emphasis on Christian social responsibility; the concern for both the individual, and for the welfare of the oppressed, that remain the legacy of the proponents of the "Social Gospel" such as Rauschenbush. The contemporary Christian world is indebted to Rauschenbush and all those other theologians who provided the basis for a worldwide prophetic witness against the evils of exploitation and oppression. By providing the theoretical basis for such a witness these theologians helped to ensure the future of the Christian faith in a changing world and have also contributed towards restoring the moral and ethical integrity of the Christian religion, emphases currently propounded by liberation theology.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, New York: Harper, 1960.
2. Cited in Dillenberger, John and Welch, Claude, *Protestant Christianity*, New York: Scribners, 1954, p.238.
3. Ibid., p.240.
4. Ibid., p.242.
5. Ibid., p.242.
6. Maurice Bushnell, *Christian Nurture*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947, pp. 93-947.
7. Romans 5: 12-15, 17.
8. Romans 5: 15-21.
9. George Rupp, *Culture-protestantism*, Montana: Scholars Press, 1975, pp. 33-35.
10. Walter Rauschenbush, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, New York: Abingdon Press, 1945.