

# **Dr. Roger Green, American Christianity, Session 20, The Social Gospel in America, Part 2**

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This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 20, The Social Gospel in America, Part 2.

Okay, I'm on page 15 of the syllabus, so that's where we are, and we're pretty much where we should be.

We're talking. first of all, we gave an overview of Walter Rauschenbusch, and you're reading the Evans biography of Rauschenbusch, so you have read it probably a couple of times now, so you're familiar with that biography, chapter by chapter. So, Walter Rauschenbusch, but a very, very, very important person in Christianity in America, kind of reshaping some things, no doubt about that. So, we did a lot on him and on his life and so forth, and we're still at A, we're still at Walter Rauschenbusch and talking about him, and then we'll talk about the theology of the social gospel, and then contributions of the social gospel to American Christianity.

So, that's kind of our outline. So, where we are with Rauschenbusch is we're really at his works, and we really, I think we, yeah, Here are the works, Christianity and the Social Crisis, that he wrote in 1907. Now, you're probably not going to read Christianity and the Social Crisis this week.

We hope you'll read it this summer. So, what I've done with that is give you five basic points about Christianity and the social crisis, and the last point is, where do we go from here? Isn't that where we stopped? I think that's where we stopped. I don't think we moved.

So, let's say a couple more things now about the book and about what Rauschenbusch was trying to do in the book, and then we'll journey on to the next book, The Theology of the Social Gospel. But, if we didn't mention Christianity and the Social Crisis, 1907, that he really believes in the concept of the kingdom of God. That is a central concept for Rauschenbusch in his books, in his writings, in his teaching.

And what he is trying to do is, he's trying to bring the kingdom of God's language into the modern world, into the 20th century. He is trying to help the 20th-century church understand how the kingdom of God relates now to the 20th century, which, of course, he sees as the central message of Jesus, which it was. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. And so, Rauschenbusch, in the book, is trying to recover that great message. Now, he also believed, in the book, that the 1907 date is important; he also believes that the church, the body of Christ, now, the church can be instrumental in bringing about the kingdom of God.

The church can help bring about God's kingdom, and partly, it can help by alleviating evil in this world, fighting evil, alleviating evil, and so forth, to help usher in the kingdom of God. So, he has a high view of the work of the church. Again, the church with a capital C. We mentioned the other day that when it comes to the work of the church, he sees more democratically oriented churches like the Baptists and the Methodists as being more in a position to do that.

Because, as far as he's concerned, the Baptists and the Methodists represent the primitive church most clearly. So, he sometimes kind of gets after the hierarchical churches a bit because they're standing in the way of this kind of democratic impulse in the church, as well as in the nation. So, Christianity and the social crisis.

The date of the writing is very important. Okay, one more thing here about the book itself. What Rauschenbusch will try to do in the book, and his writings in other books, is wed biblical studies or religion and ethics.

So, biblical studies, religion, ethics. He's trying to bring those all together. He's trying to make that kind of one-piece in his teaching.

And so, he tries to do that in the book. If any of you had me for the Christian theology course, you know that one of my professors used to say that all good theology ends in ethics. Well, that would be true.

Rauschenbusch would believe that. That all good theology ends in ethics. So, he tries to see kind of the ethical mandates that are coming out of the biblical record and coming out of religion.

So, that is really, really important for Rauschenbusch. If you're going to read one book by Rauschenbusch, this would be the book to read: Christianity and the Social Crisis. We're also going to talk about a second book, a theology for the social gospel.

Now, notice when he wrote it, 1917. So, we're in the midst, in the throes of World War I during that time. So, theology of the social gospel.

Okay, what Rauschenbusch needs to do in this book is to come to terms with evil. He needs to come to terms with the reality and the chaos that World War I has produced upon culture and upon Christianity. And so, he realizes that things that he said in 1907 were very optimistic compared to now that we're living through World

War I. And so, he tries to do that in this book, but he's really forced to do that in this book.

Now, what he says, if you compared Rauschenbusch to Lincoln, would be a very interesting comparison and a contrast. Remember, we said with Abraham Lincoln that the Civil War was not an easy way to navigate why we had a civil war. You know, here's the good guys, here's the bad guys.

Well, that's an easy way to look at it. However, the nuances that Lincoln proposed for overcoming the Civil War were kind of corporate guilt and a need for repentance and confession if we were going to move forward. Well, Rauschenbusch does the same thing.

He believed that total evil is not found in just one nation; there's enough evil to go around with all of the nations. There's enough evil to go around with all of the people in this world.

And so, he says that the ultimate cause of evil in terms of corporate evil is two things. So, let me mention the two things that ultimately caused the evil that we are living through here in 1917, the theology of the social gospel. Number one is what he called the lust for unearned gain.

The lust for unearned gain. Rauschenbusch also said that all nations demonstrate lust for unearned gain. Gain that they have not earned, and they are lusting after that gain from other nations and from other peoples.

So, that is problematic as far as Rauschenbusch is concerned, and all nations have that. There's nobody exempt from that. The second one he talked about was imperialistic powers.

Imperialistic powers. All nations share that kind of imperialism and that desire for colonialization. It's just not one nation that does this, so here are the good guys and the bad guys.

We all share, he felt, in that kind of corporate evil. So, the beginning of theology of the social gospel is to acknowledge where we are today. We're in the middle of a chaos.

We know that it has destroyed some of the hopeful signs that we had, that I had, Rauschenbusch would say, in 1907. We know that. Let's face that head on and let's try to deal with it.

Okay, so now another thing about the book where he goes is, in the rest of the book now, he holds out hope for the future. In spite of the chaos, in spite of the evil, in

spite of what we find ourselves engulfed in now, there is hope for the future, no doubt about that. And what he wanted to do was he wanted to restore the notion of the kingdom of God.

So, in spite of the days we're living through, we have hope to believe that we're going to come through this and that we're going to see the restoration of God's kingdom in spite of how bad things seem to be. So, he comes back to kind of his kingdom theme and reminds people, which we try to do in that Christian theology course, reminds people that the Bible is not the story of good and evil, and we're standing back and wondering which side is going to win. Is God going to win, or is evil going to win? Well, we're not sure.

So, no, that's not the biblical record. That's not the biblical story of Rauschenbusch. The Bible is a story of God winning over evil.

The Bible is a story of the conquest of God. So, the hope, as far as Rauschenbusch was concerned, was that the hope in God's kingdom was a hope lodged in the Bible itself. So, very hopeful.

When we come through this, let's see how it is restored. Then, he also, in the book, wants to think through how Christians can especially be helpful in this restoration process. And he talks about Christianizing international relations.

So, one place he wanted Christians to enter was the political realm and the international political realm. He thinks that's a good place for Christianity after the war is over. Of course, we're still at 1917.

He died in 1918, remember? But he's holding out good hope for Christians entering into political international relations and bringing the Christian message to bear on the broader culture. So, that's very important for Rauschenbusch. So, it is a very hopeful book and obviously a helpful book as people try to get on the other side of this.

So, that's Rauschenbusch. Now, two names that we haven't mentioned just to conclude with Rauschenbusch. We mentioned Washington Gladden.

We did not mention Adolf von Harnack or Joshua Strong. So, there are a couple of names you might want to just jot down: von Harnack and Strong. Because both von Harnack taught at Berlin University, Strong was an American theologian.

However, both of them have a firm belief that Christian values can instill themselves in individuals and, therefore, can influence the broader society. So, both von Harnack and Strong are big on that. Christian values influence the individual, but then through the individual into national life.

And, of course, that's what Rauschenbusch hoped for as well. So, there is a kind of congruence in the sense of people who are thinking similarly about these things. We mentioned especially how important Washington Gladden was earlier for Rauschenbusch.

Okay, so that's a little bit about Rauschenbusch's life. You're reading the book. If you aren't reading it one chapter a week, it's not too late.

Get started because there's a lot from the book on the final exam. So, I want to know that book really, really well for the finals. Are there any questions about his life? Kind of his life, his ministry, what he was all about, what motivated him to write and preach and teach, and so forth.

Remember the 11 years in New York and then going back to Rochester? Yes, he taught with a helper, but he could still speak. But the helper made sure that he was articulating and so forth.

Then, I gave the questions to him and so forth, sometimes writing them out. But he did have helpers, and it seemed to work quite well, even with large groups. Because Rauschenbusch was so well known, so there was a demand for him everywhere to come and speak, preach or speak or talk about his books and so forth.

Something else about Rauschenbusch and about his life. Okay, I hope you'll enjoy the biography. It really is a wonderful biography.

Okay, number B, the theology of the social gospel. Because Rauschenbusch gets this going, he's known as the father of the social gospel.

He gets it underway. But then, what is the theology that came out of the social gospel? Number C is the contribution of the social gospel to American Christianity. Okay, first, at the top of the list of theology of the social gospel is something we've already mentioned with Rauschenbusch, but that's the kingdom of God.

If I were to choose one preeminent theme from the social gospel movement, it would be the kingdom of God. Now, as far as the social gospelers were concerned, Rauschenbusch included, but then people who followed him. The kingdom of God had to do not just with the community of the redeemed.

It had a lot to do with that, obviously. But the kingdom of God doesn't stop there. It doesn't stop with the community of those who are redeemed.

It doesn't stop with the community of those people who belong to the kingdom by faith. The kingdom of God also moves on from there to the transformation of society,

to bringing society and bringing culture back under the umbrella of the kingdom of God, where it belongs, as far as the social gospelers are concerned. And so, they look for, this is like a, for them, this is like a coin with two sides of the coin.

One side of the coin of this is social action. And the other side of the coin for this, I'm sorry, one side of the coin is social reform. And the other side of the coin is political action.

So social reform, political action, that's a coin with two sides, so you can't divide the coin in half; otherwise, it's worthless, and you can't have one-half of these things. You've got to have both. And so, between social reform and political action, there are signs of the kingdom's work that are going on besides in the churches.

Here are three signs of kingdom work that are going on: social reform and political action. First of all, government. You look to government, and you see signs of kingdom work done in the government, even though people in the government might not necessarily be Christian, but they and they might not, you know, articulate it this way, but they're actually working for kingdom results.

So, the government is one place. The second place, of course, is commerce and business. Commerce and business, these, it's up to theologians and social gospel theologians to remind commerce and business what they're, that they exist for the sake of the common good, and they're existing, they're doing the work of the kingdom of God, even though they might not recognize that, so.

And the third is something we talked about the other day. I think it was through a question, but the third is very important for Rauschenbusch, and that is the life of the family. Family life, as far as he was concerned, was kind of the heart of it all, and a very strong, and we talked about his own family life, and a very strong family life is really the foundation for kind of a kingdom society.

These three areas, government, business, and family life, are three kinds of community areas that are very important for Rauschenbusch. And we mentioned the other day, remember, he set up Rochester as kind of a model for how these things work together to help shape the kingdom of God. So, Rochester, for the rest of his life after he moved back, this city became the model city.

It's kind of like Calvin's Geneva, in a sense. So, there it is. So that's one thing.

A second thing about the theology of the social gospel is the perfectibility of humanity. Social gospelers believed in the perfectibility of humanity. So social gospelers believed that this was evident, as far as they were concerned, by the swift movement of Christianity since the Reformation.

When they look at the history of the church since the Reformation, they see Christianity moving and developing and shaping and so forth. That is especially true in American life and culture. Because as far as they're concerned, the Christianization of American life and culture has been really accelerating.

It's been really rapid. And that is a sign of the perfectibility of humankind. Now, I would say that second-generation social gospelers overemphasized this because Rauschenbusch was still evangelical.

So, on the one hand, he recognized the perfectibility of humankind. But on the other hand, he recognized the sinfulness of human beings as well. Rauschenbusch was able to keep the nuances here.

But people who followed him weren't. And so they forgot the sin part, it seems, and they accentuated the perfectibility part of humanity. But there's no doubt that the theology of the social gospel really kind of zeroed in on this perfectibility kind of stuff.

So that's a second. All right, number three, a third kind of theology of the social gospel. And that is, with whom does the Church associate? The Church, the Body of Christ, capital C. With whom should the Church associate in this world? Whose side should the Church be on? Well, the social gospelers said that the Church should ally themselves with the working classes.

The Church is on the side of the working classes. If the social order is going to be transformed, if culture is going to be redeemed, it can only be done through the forces of the working classes. And so religious strength and moral kind of strength coming from religion must undergird the work of the working class, the job, and the ministry of the working classes because they are the ones who are going to kind of renew society, renew the social order.

Okay, so who is in control of this then? Well, the Church can help people by standing on the side of the working classes, by standing on their side, by supporting them. The Church can ultimately help to control the work of the job, the ministry of the working classes. So, people have to be involved in this.

Now, under this point, the social gospelers emphasized not just personal sin. In fact, they kind of let that go, but we'll talk about that later. They emphasized not just personal sin, but the social gospelers were kind of a wake-up call to corporate evil.

It is not just the sin of the individual but the evil of the system, the evil of the enterprise, and so systemic evil. So they started to address things like poverty, oppression, injustice, racism, and so forth. That's what they felt was the work of the Church, to not just talk about personal sin, but corporate and systemic evil as well.

So, when you start to develop the theology of the social gospel, especially from Rauschenbusch, that is some of the theology. Now, before we leave theology, I think that this, and Reinhold Niebuhr, helps us with this, but that's later, so we don't have to worry about that today. But I think that as it developed, it got itself into three really major theological difficulties.

And I want to just mention those three. So that's under B, theology of the social gospel. Now that we've seen a bit of the theology, what are the difficulties of that theology? What are the problems of that theology, of the social gospel? Okay, I think there are three, so let me just talk about those three.

Number one, it is really debatable whether they're understanding Jesus' message of the kingdom. The message of the kingdom was paramount to the social gospellers, but did they have the message of the kingdom absolutely right? Because I don't think there's any place in the New Testament where Jesus even hints that the kingdom that he's talking about is a political kingdom. I don't think Jesus talks about it; I don't think he uses kingdom language in a political way.

I don't think he certainly doesn't go to war against the political forces. He wasn't a zealot. So, I have serious doubts about whether they're understanding the kingdom of God the same way exactly Jesus understood the kingdom of God.

So that becomes problematic because their major focus is on the kingdom of God. Are they interpreting it correctly? Is their hermeneutics on target correctly? And I think there are problems there. Secondly, I think that the social gospel movement is wonderful in accentuating some things, but once it gets into that second generation, third generation, and begins to deny the reality of sin, of rebellion of the individual, the sin of the individual, the need for God's grace for the individual, all the kinds of things that Rausch and Bush still believed in and still held in tension, once you start to let those things go, then the social gospel movement becomes a reactionary movement.

It's not always that it's for justice, but it's a reaction against pietism. And what they perceive to be a pietistic strain in American Christianity. So that becomes problematic because in reacting against pietism, they're reacting against very, very critical theological matters in the Bible and in Christianity as well.

So that's a second kind of criticism of the movement. I'm glad that it was for something, but a second or third-generation is more of a reactionary movement against their perceived pietism. And the third thing.

Now, Evans is going to come down hard on this third thing, so I'll just mention it here. Then, when you read Evans, please look for this. But a lot of the social gospel



people associated the kingdom of God with the advancement of Western culture. So a lot of the people of the social gospel were very, very culturally bound people.

And so, if Western culture advances, they're interpreting that to mean, well, the kingdom of God is advancing. There's a difference between the kingdom of God and Western culture. And I think a lot of the social gospellers after Rauschenbusch didn't recognize that difference and those uniquenesses and so forth.

So, that becomes problematic. If you're going to associate the kingdom of God with Western culture, then what kind of criticism are you going to have of non-Western cultures? How critical are you going to be of non-Western cultures? How inclusive are you going to be of non-Western cultures? If you associate the kingdom of God with Western culture, with the advance of Western culture, this becomes problematic. This is something that Evans will bear down on in his book.

Okay, so that's just number two here, the theology of the social gospel. So, yeah, Hannah? Right, yeah, he is. He is a father of the social gospel, no doubt.

The person who is probably most influential and kind of precedes him just a bit is a man by the name of Washington Gladden. And Gladden had started to talk about the need for social reform and so forth in Columbus, Ohio. He was a famous preacher.

And Rauschenbusch comes along and puts remarks like that into more cohesive theology and so forth. So, he is aware of Christian social thought and Roman Catholic social thought. But we mentioned the other day that he is a bit critical of kind of hierarchical church structures because they seem to be at odds with a democratic, not only with a democratic culture, but they seem to be at odds with kind of a congregational, more congregational culture of the Baptists and Methodists and so forth.

So, certainly, he's aware of that. But he's pretty; he is an innovative person, Rauschenbusch is. As he's getting this from various, you know, hearing this talked about and then opening his Bible, he's the one who really is putting this thing together for Protestantism.

He's aware of Catholic social thought, but in terms of Protestant thinking, he's the father of this social gospel. But he's evangelical, as Evans will say. He's very nuanced.

He believes in personal sin, personal redemption, personal holiness of the individual, God's grace. But he also believes in, you know, we've got to do something about systemic evil as well. So he's able to nuance those things beautifully, I think.

He was a friend of Dwight L. Moody, as we mentioned. He went to the prophetic conferences up in Northfield. So, he wasn't hearing much social gospel from Dwight L. Moody.

No doubt about that. I don't know. Does that help a bit? Evans also gets into a couple of these influences, especially Washington and Gladden. Something else Rauschenbusch and this theology of the social gospel kind of thing.

Stuff. Okay? Are you all set with this? Yeah. He is looking for, that's more, he did have a doctrine of sanctification or a doctrine of holiness.

But it wasn't as strict as Wesley's. So, he had a pretty high view of the sin of people and so forth. But he believed we are sanctified in a kind of process as we go through life.

But he also believed what he was holding out hope for, kind of standing on tiptoes; he also believed that that kind of sanctifying perfectibility may come to the whole world. You know, he was kind of almost a post-millennialist in that way. So he had, even in the second book that he wrote, had high hopes for the future.

Yeah, so perfectibility of human beings. He died still believing that, even though he died right at the end of World War I. Something else about him or the theology stuff. Doing okay with this? Yeah.

Yeah. Right. And imperialistic powers.

Imperialistic or colonizing powers. That is, wanting to rule over other people. And for him, as far as he's concerned, all nations share that sin.

All nations have a desire to rule over their neighbors. So that's not just Germany. It's not just America.

All nations share that pervasive evil. And he wants to recognize that for all nations. So, does that help? Something else? Well, take a five-second break.

And then we'll do C. Okay. One contribution that I think the social gospel really made was bringing an understanding of the impact that Christianity can make on the social and social concerns. What is the impact Christianity can make on society and on social justice? So, I think that's really, really important.

And we're going to talk about some ways in which that can be achieved. Now, it is very important in American Christianity because even though Finney emphasized social concerns along with evangelical concerns, the person who followed him, Moody, Dwight L. Moody, great evangelist, great revivalist, but much more pietistic

of the individual, a pietism of the individual. Moody had a great influence on American Christianity, especially American Protestantism.

So, this kind of individualization of the gospel tended to come into American life. Rauschenbusch knew that by going to the prophetic conferences in Northfield, by knowing Dwight L. Moody, and so forth. So, one of the good contributions of the social gospel movement is to kind of shine a light on corporate aspects of evil and sin and so forth.

So, what kind of social injustices came to light? I'm going to mention five of them that came to light because of the social gospel people. We're grateful to them for that. Okay, number one, the first thing that came to light, of course, was very bad working relationships between capital and labor.

Horrendous working relationships between the owners and the workers. The social gospel movement has a light going on here to see what is going on and how we can work on this. Second thing, and you're not surprised because we've already, in a sense, mentioned these things.

The second thing is unfair wages. The social gospellers, remember we mentioned the Brotherhood of the Kingdom the other day, Brotherhood of the Kingdom. Brotherhood of the Kingdom brought to light unfair wages.

Number three, poor working conditions, of course. And we've already kind of talked enough about that. Number four was unfair working hours.

Remember, it's hard for us to remember, but in the time of Rauschenbusch, people worked 14, 16 hours a day, sometimes seven days a week. Try that out sometime. Standing at a loom for 14 hours, seven days a week, you're pretty bad.

So unfair hours. And then finally, number five is kind of a summary of all four, but that is the plight of the poor. The plight of the poor.

The acknowledgment of the social gospel people is let's acknowledge this. There are very, very few extremely wealthy people, and they've made that money on the backs of millions of poor people. So we have to remember that.

We have to kind of bring that to light. That is important. Now, under this fifth point, you'll see this in Evans, too, under this fifth point.

Rauschenbusch kept asking himself the question, how can we encourage wealthy people to help the poor? How can we convince? Do I have a word here? How can we convince the rich to give to the poor to alleviate the suffering of the poor? Is there a way to do this? Is that the job of the gospel? Is that the job of the pastor? Is that the

job of the minister? Is that the job of the church, to convince the rich to give, to help with the ministry toward the poor? How can you do this? Is it possible? Or are the wealthy so isolated in their own world, without any knowledge of what is happening among the poor, that they would have no understanding of what is going on here? Now, in that way, it's like the slave trade in England. Remember we talked about the slave trade in England? How did they finally overcome the slave trade in England? Well, they made the issue of slavery. They brought the issue of slavery into the face of the wealthy.

And you remember the little clip that we showed, the little video that we showed about that. So that's one thing. Okay, so that's the first thing.

The social gospel focuses attention on the corporate aspects of life, not just the individual aspects of life or religion. So that's number one. Okay, number two.

The social gospel movement influenced major places in America major groups in America to study theology and ethics. So it influenced churches, it influenced seminaries, it influenced colleges to inaugurate studies of these very kinds of things, theology, and ethics. And those studies crossed denominational lines.

So, these were not limited to just the Baptists or just the Methodists, or just the Congregationalists. The study of theology and ethics crossed denominational lines. It had a good way of kind of gluing together various denominations in American Christian life.

So that was true not just of churches but of seminaries as well. Number three. Finally, whole denominations started to have offices of social ministry.

So, whole denominations started to take on social ministry as a kind of a biblical and theological project. Number four is really important, and that is the social gospel movement began a lot of institutional life that was important for the poor. Schools, daycare centers, housing.

But they started to take on a lot of hospitals. They started to develop institutional life, but the institutional life was, first and foremost, helping the poor in every way possible. So it really tried to help out there.

Now, okay, so helping the poor. Daycare centers, hospitals, and schools in every way possible. There was an interview on television about two years ago that was really hard to watch because the guy on television was trying to make a case for what we have to do is we have to separate social ministry from churches and from religious groups and so forth.

We have to separate. We've got to get these churches out of the way of this ministry we're trying to do in the cities. If we could just get the churches out of here, we'd be in good shape.

And then when he was questioned, of course, about this, he said, well, see, the churches have never been involved in this. So now, all of a sudden, in the last 20 years, they're muddying the waters by starting daycare centers and hospitals and so forth. Now, what do you do in the face of such absolute ignorance? What do you do? It was just unbelievable, the ignorance of this person that was trying to get faith-based groups out of the work.

The case can be made that the reason America is so rich in daycare centers, schools, hospitals, and so forth is that it is so rich in that, not because of the government. I feel I'm coming on now, but they're so rich in that, not because the government has instituted those things. It's because, in the history of American life and culture, the church has instituted those things out of compassion for the people.

That's why we have daycare centers. That's why we have hospitals. That's why we have institutions for the poor and so forth.

So, who do we thank for that? Well, one of the groups we have to thank for that is the social gospel movement because it wasn't just social gospel; it was not just a philosophical idea that they had. They put it into practice, and they cared for the poor in those kinds of ways. We are where we are today in Americans' cultural life largely because of these people, so we're grateful for them.

So, I don't know when you hear people talking like that, it's just an ignorance of American Christianity total and an ignorance of the help that they have provided for the poor. So we're grateful for that. So lots of social services, if that's what you want to call them, came in because of the social gospel movement.

And finally, the social gospel movement also had an impact on the missionary work of the church. There had been not everybody, I'll say this very clearly, not everybody, but with a lot of missionaries going out in the 19th century, their sole concern had been with saving the souls of those people that they ministered to, which is fine. That's part of the gospel.

However, the social gospel really had an influence on colleges, seminaries, pulpits, and churches, and people started to see that missionary work was saving the souls of people, but that's not all. So missionary work is agricultural missions. I've written down three: agricultural missions, medical missions, and educational missions.

So, in agriculture, medicine, and education, that kind of corporate understanding of the work of the missionary is largely because of the people of the social gospel. So,

saving the souls is fine, but it goes along with agricultural, medical, and educational ministries. Now, the whole theology that undergirded that was that when you deal with people, you have to deal with themselves as persons.

So, you do not value them if you're only dealing with them spiritually because they have physical needs as well. You're valuing those people when you recognize their physical needs, their medical needs, their agricultural needs, and their educational needs. You're valuing them as people.

But on the other hand, you do no service to those people if that's all you do if you just help them physically in some way. Unless you also help them spiritually, you're devaluing them as persons. So, there's a holistic gospel here that people want to try to hold on to.

But the people of the social gospel reminded us that missionary work is not just about saving the soul. It's also helping people because you value them. It also helps people physically in those kinds of ways.

So, there were contributions of the social gospel movement in America, no doubt about it. Influence upon seminaries, churches, and colleges. There were lots of contributions in spite of some theology that I think needs to be called into question.

Okay, lecture number 15, social gospel in America. Do you have any questions here? Any questions? Social gospel in America is very important. Rauschenbusch, very important.

That's why I have you read a biography of Rauschenbusch. Very important here. Yes, there was actually a reaction to the social gospel movement because people saw that the second, third or fourth generation of social gospelers were not faithful to the message that Rauschenbusch was preaching.

And so I wouldn't say that more denominations picked up on it. I would say that within denominations, there was some division in the ranks regarding how far you should go in social ministry. You know, how far is too far or whatever?

So, I'd say that's what you got. You had some movements that were very tied to this all along and part of this whole movement, the Salvation Army certainly was one of them. The Quakers were another movement that was very important for the Quakers.

So, you had that, too. So, you had some division in the ranks over this, I would say. Now, we haven't yet talked about fundamentalism, but that's kind of a reaction to the social gospel movement, among other things.

Other questions of the social gospel movement? Very important here. Okay, we'll just get this started. We'll just get this going and then we'll pick this up again on Wednesday.

This is lecture number 16 on the top of page 15. This is lecture number 16 on the top of page 16. Okay, so here we are.

Lecture number 16, Neo-Orthodoxy and the Social Crisis. Neo-Orthodoxy and the Social Crisis. Okay, there's a long background here, and I'm not sure that we're going to finish this whole background here on Neo-Orthodoxy and the Social Crisis, but let's get it started here.

Okay, first of all, here is a definition of Neo-Orthodoxy, the New Orthodoxy. Let's give a definition. Now, I should say that we've got to be careful with labels.

Labels help us to identify people, but we don't want to just put people in a box, and you understand that. We've used labels in the course, like social gospel. We don't want to put people in a box, but it helps us to identify them.

Okay, Neo-Orthodoxy, the New Orthodoxy. The New Orthodoxy is a group of people who are 20th century, mainly 20th-century theologians who are committed to the Bible. They are committed to the biblical message.

They think that there's a strength in the biblical message, and they know that Protestant liberalism has watered down that biblical message. Protestant liberalism, because it's taken hold of extreme biblical criticism, has really watered down the biblical message or even done without the biblical message. And so these people want to bring us back to the message of the Bible and the strength of that message.

All right, now the question is under this first thing, under this definition, the question is this New Orthodoxy. What lenses are they going to use to interpret the Bible? We all interpret the Bible in various ways. They're going to use the Reformation as their lens for interpreting the scriptures, and especially with many of them, they're going to use John Calvin.

Calvin is going to be the person, among other reformers, but Calvin's going to be the person that they will use to help them understand the greatness and the glory of the biblical message for the 20th century. So, it's the New Orthodoxy. And what you want to take note of is, in a sense, not the way that it was in the First Great Awakening or not the way it was in the Puritan, but what you want to take note of is, in a sense, it is Calvinism brought back into the American Christian experience.

And this would be the third wave of Calvinism, wouldn't it? Because we saw it first with the Puritans, then we saw it with the First Great Awakening, and then we saw it

again somewhat with New Orthodoxy. Not to the extreme of Puritanism or the First Great Awakening, but Calvinism as a kind of theology comes back into some consideration here. Okay, now here is another thing we want to take note of.

The New Orthodox people felt that America had been American Christianity; we're talking about Protestantism here because the Roman Catholics and the Eastern Orthodoxy are pretty much a world unto their own still, in a sense. New Orthodox theologians felt that American Christianity was seriously divided and that there was a big gap left in this division. Okay, on the left-hand side of that division, so I'm facing you, this looks like it's going to be on the right-hand side.

On the left-hand side of that division is Protestant liberalism. Protestant liberalism according to many of these New Orthodox people, Protestant liberalism was pretty much bankrupt. Protestant liberalism had not produced its promises.

And so, on the left-hand side is Protestant liberalism, and it's not giving the people what they promised to give the people. It's really not, and there's not much there. We'll talk about that much later when we talk about fundamentalism and evangelicalism.

On the right-hand side now, there is a movement that began at the end of the 19th century, coming into the 20th century and became very strong. And that was American fundamentalism. Now, we lecture on fundamentalism later on, so we won't worry about it here.

But American fundamentalism is on the right-hand side, and God bless you, and American fundamentalism, as far as the New Orthodox theologians were concerned, American fundamentalism was not producing on its promises. American fundamentalism was too rigid. It was too cultic.

It was too narrow. And so it wasn't producing on its promises to be a biblical Christianity. Okay, as far as the New Orthodox theologians were concerned, that left a gap.

That left a huge gap in American Christianity. Those were the two choices that people had. Should my church be liberal, or should my church be fundamentalistic? Which should we be? The New Orthodox theologians come along with a strategy, and their strategy is to appeal to the broad middle Protestants in American life who are disaffected by liberalism and fundamentalism.

Let's make an appeal to them. And what is the appeal that they're going to make? The appeal is we've got a sound biblical theology, and we're giving you that theology in a very carefully prescribed intellectual way. So, there's a real appeal to the intellect here among the New Orthodox theologians, to the life of the mind.



So, we've got the Bible. We want to interpret the Bible critically and carefully through the use of our minds, and that appeal, in a sense, won the day because many people were convinced New Orthodoxy was right. Now, with that appeal, the New Orthodox theologians allowed for certain things to go on.

So, I'm going to mention four that they allowed to happen in the broader culture. Okay, so here they are. Number one, they allow for scientific freedom.

All truth is God's truth. Follow that. Scientists should follow the truth wherever they find it.

Science is not the enemy of religion. Science is just not the enemy of religion. It's not at war with religion.

Now, for a lot of people in the middle of the way in Protestantism in America, that made sense to them. So, okay, that's number one. Number two, and here, this becomes a bit problematic, but they did allow for biblical criticism.

They felt that the way to deal with biblical criticism is to deal with it intellectually and not just to see it as something that is going to fight against Christianity all the time. So, they allowed for biblical criticism. So, they felt that the liberals were too loose on biblical criticism.

They felt that the fundamentalists didn't acknowledge any biblical criticism at all, but they're going to allow for that. So that's number two. Okay, number three, they allow for and indeed embrace the development of urban culture.

They're not running; this was a New Orthodoxy movement that was not going to run away from the challenges of urban life. A lot of Christians were running away from that. A lot of Christians didn't want anything to do with it.

This was evil as far as they were concerned, not for the New Orthodox theologians. We allow for the freedom of urban life, and we want to see how the church can embrace the culture and the urban culture and minister to the urban culture. So that's number three.

All right, and number four, they allowed for and indeed were critical of, as we'll see, pretty heavily, pretty strongly critical of the social and the economic structures of American public life. So, they allowed for criticism, economic criticism, and social criticism of the structures of American life, the political structures, the economic structures, the business structures, and so forth. So, they allowed for criticism of that and were pretty critical themselves of that because they saw that as non, they saw that as unbiblical.

So, they were not happy about that. Okay. This is just the beginning.

So, we'll talk about New Orthodoxy for a couple of days. This is an important group of people. So have a good day.

This is Dr. Roger Green in his teaching on American Christianity. This is session 20, The Social Gospel in America, Part 2.