

We cannot forget that to-day social science numbers among its friends many of the most earnest Christians; that in England church congresses have taken up for discussion many of these social problems. We have wondered sometimes whether our ecclesiastical bodies would not find it a refreshing change to lay aside oiling and varnishing church machinery, and grapple in high debate with some of the vital social questions staring us in the face. Nor, on the other hand, can we forget that if any persons were to be named as specially in earnest on these questions, it is the school of Herbert Spencer. He, by his work on social statics and the study of sociality, has educated many to serious thoughts and strenuous purposes. All praise to him and to them for their living interest in the great issues. But if the church of Christ is to assume its true position, and lead rather than follow; if our Christianity is to make itself felt as a regenerating force; if it is to bring the solution for some of the problems now seeming to baffle the best effort, the Christian ministry must take the initiative. They must lead. I could easily name laymen at home and abroad whose hearts are in the work, and who have done yeoman's service in it. But the ministry cannot hand over the responsibility to them. They cannot divorce the pulpit from its relations to society. No parish boundaries can lie in any pastor's sphere of responsibility. The field is the world. But the parishes are very few where, in some form, the problems treated by social science do not exist. If the pulpit had only the first and great commandment to teach, it might perhaps hold aloof. But the second, which is like unto it, lays its, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" upon every preacher's heart and conscience, and it never needed exposition more than now.

Surely this point needs no further comment. Its corollary does, however, demand our sharp attention. For the ministry to deal with social science in any thorough-going way involves study of the subject; *study*, not smattering knowledge picked up in occasional reviews or newspaper articles, and then retailed at second-hand in sermons. Random talk does little good on this or any other subject. It is sad to see in any sphere a good subject belittled by a superficial treatment. What is needed is large and thorough acquaintance with facts, and with the accepted generalizations from the facts, and on the basis of this fruitful study of the subject, then some rousing of the public mind to face and consider the old question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Take such a subject—one of several that might be named—as the criminal classes, and what is to be done with them before they get to prison, and after they get out, if they ever do. Such a subject surely needs handling. It touches vital interests of morality and of public safety. Such a subject needs study, if any pulpit is to speak worthily upon it. But it is such study as any minister might be glad to give. And, beyond the sphere of pulpits, the Christian ministry should so master