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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE VII.

## CRITICAL NOTES.

## THE CLERGYMAN IN POLITICS.

THE earnest parson of to-day, who is eager to serve his present age with efficiency and force, is often in an exasperating dilemma. For instance, Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst, in his recently published Yale Lectures on Preaching, strenuously urges that the minister should enter the political arena as a champion of decency and righteousness; and now comes to hand an article in the April *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA*, from the pen of Professor Karl Geiser, of Oberlin, in which he bemoans ministerial activity in politics, and pleads that the parson retire and give the field over to the political scientist. What is the poor over-advised minister to do?

It seems a bit strange to have such counsel as Professor Geiser's come from Oberlin, where religion has always busied itself with political affairs, and where there has never seemed to be the least incongruity in a sermon on some great political issue, or in the transition of a clergyman from the pulpit to the political platform.

The chief burden of the Professor's complaint is that his science is neglected in the American democracy, that the specialist in political science gets scant hearing to-day. There is nothing particularly strange about that. One inherent right in a democracy is that the people shall learn how to govern themselves, if necessary, by making their own mistakes. It is a costly process to be sure, but there is scarcely any other way in which to develop a self-reliant people. Democracy will doubtless continue for some centuries blundering along, trying its experiments and enjoying the privilege of tinkering with its own machine, the government. It will not readily consent to stand, cap in hand, at the door of the univer-

sity classroom, and wait for the expert to give it the word to proceed with a new piece of business. We shall not see very soon in this country a government turned over to bureaus of specialists.

The truth of the matter is, that with all his training and importance the expert is sometimes guilty of bungling. Every step forward in learning and civilization has been opposed by scientists who knew all about the subject. The trouble is, that the trained mind often becomes provincialized, and fails to take in, adequately, new data. An Oberlin professor of physics loudly proclaimed years ago that it was impossible for a man to throw a curved ball, and he proved it scientifically in the classroom; but out on the lawn a little later some students set up a row of sticks and one of their number pitched a curve, and then science yielded to common sense, and went into the laboratory to correct its findings in accord with experience. It has often happened that the trained political scientist has told democracy that certain things were against all precedent and out of harmony with the history of government, but democracy has gone cheerfully on its way, achieving its purposes, and then the scientist has had a new set of data to reckon with. Professor Geiser cites the argument of Governor Baldwin at the Kansas City Council of Congregational Churches to the effect that the regulation and prohibition of the liquor question is a state and not a national interest. Without going into the merits of the particular issue, one feels like saying that there is something very familiar about that claim. We read of it in the history of the slave controversy. It was gravely asserted then, by men trained in legal and political affairs, that the issue was one for the States to settle for themselves. The developments proved otherwise. Neither the slaveholder nor the abolitionist saw it that way, and finally the whole country refused to believe it that way, and when it became a national affair it was quickly settled.

This does not mean that the specialist in political science is a useless member of democracy. He will doubtless be

called into council in great affairs of state with increasing frequency as the people find themselves and realize the tremendous difficulties of government, but leadership will not be granted him until he shows himself more capable of enthusiasm and less inclined to worship the past.

As to the complaint that the minister stands in the political scientist's way and prevents the sound wisdom of the scientist from filtering down through to the popular mind, there is something in it which tickles the modern parson's vanity, to say the least. It has been urged with discouraging frequency of late that the influence of the clergyman is on the wane, that he is a negligible factor nowadays, that his place has been usurped by the press and many other agencies; so the result has been that the average clergyman has had a rather modest opinion of himself as a leader in the community. Now to be told by a college professor, a keen student of the tendencies of the times, that he is so great an agent in the shaping of public opinion as to stop the wheels of progress and to be an influence courted by the politicians, will go far toward restoring self-confidence in the ministerial mind. But Professor Geiser seems to exaggerate the political activity of the minister and to be a bit confused as to the function of a minister in a community, so that one feels warranted in raising the question as to the relation of the minister to politics.

To begin with, ministers are not as ignorant of the science of government and politics as the Professor seems to think. There is little doubt that often some minister in the excess of enthusiasm says some foolish things about politics and incites his people to unwise activity for particular causes, but this is the exception and not the rule. The college-trained man in the ministry is in the ascendancy and has for the most part had some training in political science. The truth is, that there is not a body of men more alert and intelligent on political issues, nor more constantly students of public questions, than the ministers. One will find in their libraries the latest and leading works dealing with the fun-

damental problems of democracy. Further, the theological seminary is now paying close attention to the minister's training on this side. There is hardly a seminary of any prominence in the country that has not on its faculty a specialist on social and political problems.

Further, the Professor seems to be under some delusion as to the specialty of the minister. One would infer that he conceived the minister to be a specialist in theology and higher criticism. Now the fact of the matter is, that the minister is no more a specialist in these things than a poet is a specialist in grammar or a diplomat in foreign languages. Theology is the specialty of the teacher of theology, and higher criticism that of the teacher of Biblical literature. The minister must know theology and be trained in the study of the Bible, just as the poet must know grammar or the diplomat know foreign languages. They are his tools, not his sphere. His specialty is the application of religion to life, he is a specialist in spirituality. Specifically, the Christian minister's vocation has three aspects. He is the exponent of a great faith, set in the community to win adherents. He is an instructor, appointed to lead the people given to his charge in spiritual culture and the development of Christian character. But there is another aspect not always recognized. It must be remembered that the men and women who sit before the pulpit on Sunday are not divested of their interests in life just because they have come to church. They are not there simply to pay tribute to an absentee God, nor to keep valid their passports to another world. They are members of families, they are workers in the world of economic production, they are citizens of a democracy, and unless religion is conceived as being entirely concerned with getting the individual safely out of a wicked world into a future heaven, the minister must touch on all these phases of life and interpret them from the Christian viewpoint and in accord with the ideal of Christ. So it comes about that the minister's specialty includes leadership in all lines of activity that are

affected by religion. Hence, his function as a molder of public opinion. His specialty touches all phases of life, because religion and morals touch all life. He becomes active in politics in so far as his influence affects people's ethical attitude toward public questions, and whenever he discerns in politics tendencies which are morally detrimental to society, or notes an opportunity to promote righteousness through civic action. With the technique of government, and with mere partisanship he has, and should have, as a minister, little to do, but the affairs of state are inextricably mixed up with moral issues. The minister has awakened to this fact more alertly than even the political scientist. It has been the steady ignoring of this fact that brought about much of the acuteness of the present political situation. The minister is quite within his province, therefore, when he deals with the moral values involved in politics; and in exercise of this function it is often his duty to urge legislation on certain questions, or advocate certain political principles.

There is this added consideration which places on the minister the duty of utterance on political issues. Often his is the only untrammelled voice in the community. The press is notoriously subservient to "vested interests." The advertising columns dictate to the editorial page. A newspaper owned by an absentee capitalist will scarcely utter an unbiased word on the injustice of the wage system. An editor whose paper has a large revenue from brewery advertising will not be inclined to vigorous advocacy of temperance. It very frequently happens that in his contact with the people of his community the minister becomes aware of a seething discontent over some social or political evil, or discerns some pernicious activities among legislators and executives. There is no tribune in press or political platform to give voice to the people's demands or needs. It is then that the pulpit may become a vital force in a democracy; and the minister is recreant to his duty if he contents himself with the utterance of pious platitudes, and shows no capacity for moral

indignation, or ethical suggestion for political or social crises.

One feels like charging Professor Geiser with perpetuation of an outgrown heresy in his seeming division between the religious and the secular. He is somewhat disturbed lest we return to the old-time alliance of church and state. He need not be alarmed so far as United States is concerned. The last person to advocate such a reversion is the intelligent minister. But what the average minister is concerned about is the permeation of the state with the religious ideal. The Ten Commandments are a political document, so is the Golden Rule. There is a vast difference between ecclesiastical authority in the affairs of a government, and the earnest religious zeal that seeks to make all life, the state included, reflect the ideals of Jesus. There is some distinction to be made between a church seeking to perpetuate its organization through control of the government and the efforts of Christian leaders aiming to make the state a fit environment for Christian character. When Jesus founded the Kingdom of God he set up on earth the banner of an enterprise that aims at nothing less than the domination of all life by the rule of God. His followers have made sorry blunders in their attempts to realize his ideal and have often mistaken form for substance, but the Christian consciousness will never abandon the restless, eager anticipation of that "far-off divine event," when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdoms of the God.

It may not be amiss to point out that the exercise of this public function on the part of the minister calls for care and good sense. If he has so much influence in the shaping of public opinion, he must use it wisely. It will not do for him to weaken his power by continual scolding, or foolish utterance on questions concerning which he is ill-informed, nor need he busy himself as a ward worker, or speak on all conceivable political questions, but if he is wise and brave he will keep careful watch of the state and the people, and when

he notes a tendency away from the laws of God, or an inclination to tamper with the public conscience, he will, in a moment when his words count the most, speak forthright the whole counsel of God, and refuse either to equivocate or hesitate.

WILLIAM H. SPENCE.

*Oberlin, Ohio.*

#### THE CLERGYMAN IN POLITICS.—A REJOINDER.

If the above note by Mr. Spence were not intended as a reply to my article entitled "The Minister in Politics" in a preceding number of this journal, it would elicit no comment from me. But since my position seems to have been both misunderstood and misconstrued, I will briefly restate my original argument and point out what I consider the most obvious fallacies in "The Clergyman in Politics," leaving the issue to the judgment of the readers.

A word as to the purpose of my original article may serve to direct our thought upon the issue in question. As every one knows, much has recently been written concerning the church in its relation to social service; and ministers themselves have differed as to the advisability of having the church enter many new activities. But, so far as I know, little attention has been given to the relation of the church to that field of activity which lies in the domain of politics, and especially that branch of politics which falls under the sphere of government. It was the relation of the church and the minister to this particular field that I attempted to discuss. I naturally assumed that my remarks were addressed to critical readers who had followed the current thought upon these questions, and who would distinguish between social and political action, between ends and means of attaining ends.

The writer of the above note, however, disregards the most elemental, as well as elementary and universally accepted, distinctions, and it is therefore extremely difficult to give an adequate reply without exceeding the proper limits of space as well as the patience of the reader.



Briefly summarized, the original article calls attention to the fact of politics as a science and to the need of a more universal regard for it as such; it calls attention to the frequent confusion of ends and means in political discussion and political action, to the unfortunate attempt to legislate and regulate by legal means beyond the sphere of effective political action, and it asserts that the minister is often responsible for this confusion and ineffective legislation in so far as he insists upon a specific form of action to attain a moral end; it is argued that the means of attaining political action should be left to the expert or to those trained or experienced in legislation and administration if real and lasting progress is to be made. Nowhere in my article is the *right* of the minister to do as he pleases denied or even discussed; nowhere is the *right* of the people to govern themselves brought into question. In general, the article maintains that in politics, as in everything else, we should, as far as possible, apply the scientific method.

President Lowell of Harvard has wisely observed that we train men for every kind of service but public service; that an exception should be made of the latter, he considers unfortunate. Mr. Spence, however, finds this as it should be. Against my plea for the scientific spirit in politics he argues that inasmuch as scientists have sometimes been "guilty of bungling," they should generally be discredited, and, instead of yielding to their leadership, society should follow the guide of "common sense." Just how the learning requisite for scientific standing divests the scientist of common sense he does not explain, but he is thoroughly convinced that ministers themselves are the most "intelligent on political issues." Now there is no arguing with a man who says he knows more about some one else's field than does the specialist in that field; but does Mr. Spence really mean what he says when he asserts that "every step forward in learning and civilization has been opposed by scientists"? Was it for this reason that Copernicus was persecuted by the church, or Galileo put in prison, or Lavoisier condemned to die by the

guillotine? Just how did Goethe, Helmholtz, Pasteur, Lister, Adam Smith, and Benjamin Franklin oppose learning and civilization? In view of such assertions it is not strange that the writer should have an unusual definition of theology or assert that the Golden Rule is a "political document." Moreover, his assumption that political leadership will not soon pass into the hands of the few, is not well founded. It is already in the hands of the few in the best-governed countries of Europe, and no single fact in American political life to-day is more strikingly apparent than the general tendency to recognize the expert. What is the new movement establishing commissions in local, state, and national government but a recognition of this principle? What is the "short ballot" but a means of getting the skilled administrator? Colleges and universities everywhere are now modifying their curricula and adding courses and departments with a view to prepare men for public service. States are creating reference and drafting commissions, cities are coöperating with research bureaus, and the national government itself, in following the leadership of President Wilson—the trained political scientist—is applying the same principle on a large scale.

The conception of a minister as a specialist on all lines, as one who should sit in judgment over the state or the people acting in a political capacity, is an exceptional view. It is not held by the leading clergymen of to-day; and many an observing layman is skeptical enough to doubt the faith of that clergyman who feels that the old-fashioned conception of his field of duty and labor—the establishment of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men—is too limited for his energies, and that he needs to enter other fields in search of something worth while. Most intelligent critics believe that the unique position of the ministry, set apart from material things, constitutes its very loftiness and strength; and that the work of the political economist, the political scientist, and the statesman would better be left in the main to specialists.

This does not mean that government should be turned over  
Vol. LXXI. No. 284. 11

to the few, but that representative government presupposes specialization. That is its cardinal virtue. It is true that a vital contact between the governing and the governed should always be maintained; but that contact does not demand that the people should directly decide the means of attaining ends. Moreover, when the minister confines himself "to the creation of a spirit and temper out of which right acts will naturally flow" rather than to the enjoining of specific acts, which in politics would imply laying down a political program or giving advice as to positive law, he touches every field of human activity most vitally. Mr. Spence falls into the popular error, pointed out by John Stuart Mill, of failing to recognize that a distinction should be made between legislating and getting good legislation enacted. This distinction, so important and yet so seldom recognized, is so clearly set forth by Bryce in his "American Commonwealth," that I will conclude my reply in his own words: "Since every question that arises in the conduct of government is a question either of ends or of means, errors may be committed by the ruling power either in fixing on wrong ends or in choosing wrong means to secure those ends. It is now . . . agreed that the masses must be allowed to determine ends. This is in fact the essence of free or popular government, and the justification for vesting power in numbers. But assuming the end to be given, who is best qualified to select the means for its accomplishment? To do so needs in many cases a knowledge of the facts, a skill in interpreting them, a power of forecasting the results of measures, unattainable by the mass of mankind. Such knowledge is too high for them. It is attainable only by trained economists, legists, statesmen. If the masses attempt it they will commit mistakes not less serious than those which befall a litigant who insists on conducting a complicated case instead of leaving it to his attorney and counsel. But in popular governments this distinction between ends and means is apt to be forgotten."

KARL F. GEISER.

*Oberlin, Ohio.*

**THE WAR.**

It is of little profit to attempt to distribute praise and blame for the war which now convulses the world. In the full sense it is a judgment of God to reveal the extent to which man is in rebellion against his Maker. Only as we take a long look into the future can we justify the ways of Providence which have permitted such a catastrophe. It points to a millennium that is either far off, or that is to be ushered in, as many expect, by the personal second coming of the long-looked-for Redeemer; and it reveals the futility of all mechanical and superficial efforts to abolish war. The hearts of the people must be changed before nations can have confidence in one another. In the prophet's description of the millennium the climax is not so much that the "wolf shall lie down with the lamb" as that "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim." The great problem now, to take the most conspicuous cases, is to prevent Germany from envying England and England from vexing Germany.

It is futile to expect that, in the near future, self-interest will be so enlightened that it alone will prevent national misunderstandings to such an extent that wars will cease. Self-defense is the first law of nations as it is of nature. In the present instance, all parties have made themselves believe that they are fighting in self-defense. With this belief the war is thought to be no more in contravention of the New Testament than of the Old. For, according to the best authorities, the announcement of the angels at the Saviour's birth was not a general one of "peace and good will to men," but of "peace to men of good will." And the great Apostle to the Gentiles could say no more than, "If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men." In the present low condition of knowledge and morality it is not possible always to live at peace with all men, and in judging nations as well as individuals great allowance should be made for "invincible ignorance."

All civil governments rest on force. The representative of civil authority "is the minister of God, a revenger to execute

wrath upon him that doeth evil." In forming a new state the first building to be erected is a prison. It is useless to provide a court of justice without providing at the same time a police to enforce its decisions. In a confederation of states like that of our Union, an army and navy are as necessary as a congress and a supreme court. And so, as pointed out a few months ago by our valuable contributor Mr. Raymond L. Bridgman,<sup>1</sup> any effective world's peace congress must have in the background the right and the ability to employ force for the suppression of disorder. The Civil War in America in 1861 illustrates situations which are likely to arise. The States of the Union formed a confederation, with a central army to enforce obedience to the decrees of Congress and the Courts. But this arrangement did not prevent a war that extended to the very limits of the Union. Were there now a World-Confederation of Nations a similar result would follow. No nation could be neutral. The United States as well as all the nations of Europe would be involved. and there would be no way of localizing the war. Thus the latter end would very likely be worse than the first.

However they may have come into power, the rulers of a nation are not their own masters. They are the heaven-appointed protectors of the interests of their people. This duty they must fulfill to the best of their own judgment. A nation that is not protected from the undue encroachments of other nations is sure to be overrun by those that have superior power and preparation. However much we may regret this condition of things, the facts remain and must be faced. Before we may hope for the cessation of war, the hearts of the people must be changed, so that nation can trust nation. Enlightened self-interest will not be effective while Ephraim envies Judah and Judah vexes Ephraim. The church has still before it the long, slow process of transforming human nature through the preaching of the gospel.

Again, we repeat, wars of self-defense are not unchristian. The soldier who lays down his life in defense of his country

<sup>1</sup> Art. "A Bureau of National Assistance," *Bibliotheca Sacra*, vol. lxx. pp. 545-561.

does it not for himself but for others. The soldier's self-surrender in defense of his country commands our admiration, even though it be a mistaken effort to right the wrongs of his nation and the world. Indeed, war brings out the noblest elements of human nature, and calls for a devotion to duty that has no equal in any other sphere of activity. There are no places more subduing and instructive than such national cemeteries as those at Waterloo, Sebastopol, and the numerous ones that dot our own land, both north and south. Those whose remains fill these receptacles of the dead may have given their lives for mistaken causes, but they were not wholly mistaken. The devotion with which they surrendered their lives shines out with a splendor that cannot be dimmed by time or obscured by the casuistry that would condemn all war. And rarely is it that the fault is all on one side.

Such being the case, it is by no means certain but that the incidental lessons wrought into the souls of men by the spectacle of those who surrender their lives on the battle fields of nations in conflict may be the most valuable of all. War is indeed costly beyond all estimate, but it presents to us the noblest spectacle of human self-sacrifice and devotion. The offering is the most precious conceivable. But, as David said he would not offer burnt offerings unto Jehovah which cost him nothing, so must we admit that if the depravity of the human heart and the heights of devotion to which it may rise, can be taught in no other way so fully as through the horrors of the battle field and the devotion of the patriot soldier, the providences which force these sacrifices upon us "are true and righteous altogether."

Leaving, therefore, to statesmen the regulation of affairs between nation and nation, the minister of the gospel may most profitably devote himself mainly to his specific work of ameliorating the present sorrows of the world, and of helping to secure by heaven-appointed means that stage of moral development in which it will be safe for the lamb to dwell with the wolf, and for the kid and the leopard to lie down together.

and when they "shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." We may be thankful that God is able to make the wrath of man praise him, and to restrain the remainder of wrath.

G. F. W.

**A STATEMENT CONCERNING MY PARTICIPATION IN THE  
PRESENT DISCUSSION OF MODERN PENTA-  
TEUCHAL CRITICISM.<sup>1</sup>**

IN the July number of the *BIBLIOTHECA SACRA* (page 466, note), Mr. Harold M. Wiener, in referring to my book "Die moderne Pentateuchkritik und ihre neuste Bekämpfung," says: "He has not ventured to mention the great majority of the arguments against the critical case." With reference to this statement I am compelled to make the following observations:—

1. The expression "ventured" is unjust for several reasons. My book contains, as the words of the title "und ihre neuste Bekämpfung" indicate, a critical examination of Dahse's works, "Textkritische Materialien zur Hexateuchfrage," etc., and his arguments have been more thoroughly examined in my book than in any other writings which have appeared opposing his views. Several of Mr. Wiener's assertions I touched upon only incidentally; and for this reason alone it is not just, in referring to my book, to use the expression "he has not ventured." Moreover, this method of expression is all the more out of place, in view of the fact that, during my whole life, I have ventured everything for the sake of the religion of the Bible. Finally, the word "ventured" is unjust for the following reason: One who deals with a theme needs to touch upon only as many arguments as he deems necessary to prove his point. This method is followed by others as well as by Mr. Wiener himself. Or, did he in his book "The Origin of the Pentateuch" develop all sides of his theme and examine all proofs pertaining to it? If it were one's duty, in examining a case, to mention, without exception, every opinion his predecessors had uttered in regard to it, then Mr. Wiener has grossly neglected his duty;

<sup>1</sup>Translated by Florence Chaney Geiser.

for, in his publications concerning the Pentateuchal question, he has by no means taken account of my previous works on this subject with any degree of completeness, if, indeed, he has taken account of them at all. Now, as a matter of fact, my work mentioned above gives him, and every one else, an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the most important material I have found in this field.

2. This occasion may properly permit me to add the following observations: The documentary treatment of the Pentateuchal problem is little suited to its solution. For this reason the fourth main division of my recent examination of the Pentateuchal question contains a *systematic* presentation concerning it, and in the conclusion of my book I hope to have shown that the truth of the Old Testament religion is not endangered by my critical conception of the Pentateuch. This also proves, according to my opinion, that it is I who recently ventured not only to defend the existence of the Pentateuch, but also the religion of the Patriarchs as the divine beginning of the legitimate religion of Israel.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, I venture to hope that such an old defender of Biblical truth as I, may inspire a confidence worthy of respect.

ED. KÖNIG.

*Bonn, Germany.*

<sup>1</sup>This work has been commented upon in many highly appreciative notices as the principal work against the Wellhausen theory of religious history. Professor James Orr has also praised my book in the highest terms.