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Scholarship and Social Agitation

Albion W. Small

The primary purpose of this paper is to challenge the claims of that type of scholarship which assumes superiority because it deals only with facts. The latest god in the world's pantheon is science. The only orthodox theophanies of this divinity have their eyes in the backs of their heads. The scholarship which has the forward look is tolerated with the stepmotherly reservation that "it may be useful in its way, but it is not science."

Very well; let us go about our business with the understanding that within the scope of scholarship there is first science, and second something better than science. That something better is first prevision by means of science, and second intelligent direction of endeavor to realize the vision.

I would have American scholars, especially in the social sciences, declare their independence of do-nothing traditions. I would have them repeal the law of custom which bars marriage of thought with action. I would have them become more profoundly and sympathetically scholarly by enriching the wisdom which comes from knowing with the larger wisdom which comes from doing. I would have them advance from knowledge of facts to knowledge of forces, and from knowledge of forces to control of forces in the interest of more complete social and personal life.

The scholars of this generation are so dazzled by the play of evolution that they cannot see its operation in their own environment. Many an evolutionist can trace the processes of progress in every moment of history except the present. It is neither consistent nor intelligent to act as though evolution terminates in us. The things of today are but crude products which yesterday began to shape, which a thousand tomorrows will mould toward perfection. A primary inference from the law of evolution as we now read it is the decree to every intelligent person: "Apply today's force to make tomorrow's fact!"

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Men's instincts accept more frankly than their intellects the provisional and mediate character of present institutions. In order to contend that improvement is the present and the future order of the day, it is necessary to presume that the things of the present are defective. This premise is virtually an impeachment of established order. It is a reflection on accepted institutions. Hence it is easy for conservatism to regard it as a letter of marque sanctioning piratical intentions on the ship of state. Although every advance of civilization in the past has been by virtue of the provisional character of institutions, which permitted a certain self-surrender of the old order and the installation of a substitute, conservatism is timid about becoming party to the continuation of this cosmic process. In preferring the ills he had to others that he knew not of, Hamlet was the eternal conservative.

Scholarship is likely to become retrospective, and so not conservative but obstructive, in proportion to its insistence that nothing belongs in its province except demonstrative evidence. The only things which to our minds are absolutely certain are accomplished facts. Scholarship which would guard against becoming speculation and adventure, dreads departure from this sure region of the has-been, for exploration of the somewhat conjectural realm of the more reasonable and possible and desirable which is to be. But the stage of human evolution upon which we have entered presents an order of facts which scholarship cannot much longer ignore. Man is beginning to discover himself, and this self-discovery by man incites to new world-discovery and world conquest.

Once only a human animal demanded of the world animal comforts. Now this animal is become a self-conscious center of myriad wants, expressed in an infinity of physical and psychical desires. Men are consequently attacking the resisting material and moral environment at more points than ever before. In this conflict mind wields the balance of power, and mind is swinging over into alliance with man. This make-weight mind once decreed man's temporal damnation, under the theory that this mortal life is for the subjugation and repression and crucifixion of man. Mind now begins to declare that this mortal life is man's opportunity to possess and expand and enjoy. The irrepressible wants of this newly self-asserting sovereign man make a new order of facts, which scholarship may not despise. Laws of moral motion begin to discover themselves in man's movements, as positively as the laws of physical motion in their sphere. Laws of moral affinity begin to suggest psychical uniformities as regular as the action of chemical affinity. The ultimate social fact—man—is a fact whose many phases and many potencies already enter with new powers into the social equation. Man always wanted life and liberty and happiness, but never did these wants mean so many things to any man as they do to some men today. Never did the mass of men bring within the sweep of their wants so large a fraction of that which complete man will demand and obtain.

The things which to our view make life and liberty and happiness are more and larger than to any previous men. Our bodies today are covetous of more and

more complex satisfactions than physical man ever claimed before. Men's minds once yearned for the one sedative of authority, they now thirst for the thousand stimulants of criticism. Men's social wants seemed, a century ago, to be potentially assured, with the conquest of political freedom. Social man today finds political freedom, without industrial security, a delusion, a fraud, and an insult.

The latest phase of man is thus a new order of fact. Scholarship cannot contemplate these facts without finding itself face to face with the tardily unsealed order of nature—"Be thou a forceful part of that continuous cosmic enterprise which forever unmakes the things of today to recreate them in the things of tomorrow!"

Man, tugging to master the contents of newly surcharged consciousness, is the supreme fact which today's scholarship encounters. We cannot deal with this fact without "forgetting the things that are behind and reaching forth unto the things that are before." Scholarship must either abandon claims to the function of leadership, and accept the purely clerical rôle of recording and classifying the facts of the past, or scholarship must accept the responsibility of prevision and prophecy and progress.

Political philosophers, from Plato to Montesquieu, treated problems of government most of the time as though there were no deeper questions involved than the efficiency of forms of administration. Social philosophers of certain schools today would have us believe that the consummation of social philosophy will be reached when we shall have formulated the physics of group reactions in past and present human associations. The majority of contemporary social "reformers" act as though society would at last have its foundations on the rock, if it would adopt this or that expedient—civil service reform; equalized taxation; the referendum; profit-sharing; government ownership; industrial arbitration. The paramount duty of social scholarship at this moment is to reckon with the epoch-making fact that today's men have gradually cut the moorings of ethical and social tradition after tradition, and that society is today adrift, without definite purpose to shape its course, and without a supreme conviction to give it motion.

Let us listen to the anarchistic indictment of society.*

Injustice is enthroned in the statutes of civilized nations; for example—in the laws relating to land tenure, to the money of commerce, to public franchises, to public and private corporations, to the collection of debts, to the enforcement of contracts. In consequence of this perversion of law, the privileged class is built up at the expense of the poor, the land of the United States has passed into the hands of the few, opportunity for self-employment is closed, wage slavery has been substituted, the condition of the poor is grow-

*Report of the Congress of Anarchists, Chicago, October 1893.

ing worse. It follows that a republic is as impotent as monarchy to do justice. Despotism belongs to the principle of government as such.

Let us hear from the other extreme. A Christian minister declares that professed disciples of Christ must revise their working creeds after the following fashion:*

It is the object of this book to point out some of the changes in men's thinking which the present conditions of Christian society most clearly indicate. There must be clearer ideas of the fatherhood of God, and the brotherhood of man; there must be reconstruction of ideas concerning the independence of the individual as related to the solidarity of society; there must be revision of our ideas of the sacred and the secular; there must be reconstruction of our ideas of property; we must clarify our views of the relations of religion and politics; we need to reconsider the relation of individual to public opinion; we need to detect modern Pharisaism; we need to overcome irrational partisanship.

If our practical principles are assailable at all these points, Dr. Gladden is surely justified in his summary: "Needed social reconstruction depends upon a new conception of life and duty."

Let us consider the anarchistic and the Christian diagnoses together as signs of present psychic facts, and let us consider what they connote. These divergent estimates of society are themselves symptoms of the unique condition of the thinking parts of society. Men are more generally conscious than ever before of a discrepancy between the demands made upon life by the various principles of human desire, and the possible output of satisfaction from the operation of traditional social doctrines and institutions. All our kicking against the social pricks means that men are agreed that something is wrong, though they cannot agree what is wrong.

Scholars ought to be able to see that the fault lies deeper than the popular reformers suspect. All our contemporary discontent with social institutions and conditions runs back to the fact that the present generation is trying to make dead trunks of social ideas bear living fruit of social force. We are trying to feed the humanity of today from the desiccated stalks of yesterday's conceptions. All the familiar denunciations of social evils, and of the individuals or classes that are said to cause or aggravate them, point to the one radical fact which men have hardly begun to admit, viz., that the words around which our civilization has rallied no longer convey our ultimate ideas; or rather they stop short of

*Dr. Washington Gladden, *Ruling Ideas of the Present Age*

notions which we will accept as ultimate. They are irredeemable currency, and men are clamoring for liquidation. Thus we declaim of "liberty," but men are wondering whether we have begun to know wherein liberty consists. We have boasted of "rights," but the suspicion is rife that the majority of men have never understood a tittle of their rights, and that the rights which our institutions assure are possibly not more than a tittle of the goods upon which complete men will insist. We have appealed to "ethics," but at this late day there is no more open question than, What is ethical? We declare the sacredness of life, but men are asking, What is life? What does life presume? What does life involve? What should life contain? To whom does the prerogative of life belong?

These conditions are the setting of the urgent problems that confront today's men. Scholars are shirkers unless they grapple with these problems. It is for this that society supports us. We are presumed to be exponents of the higher excellencies of thought and action. We are expected to hold up ideals of the best, to guide the endeavors of the masses of men. It is squandering money to put more endowments into the keeping of educational institutions that are not devoting their energies in larger and larger proportion to search for solution of these moral problems, together with the solution of the physical problems, through both of which the larger welfare of men is to be secured.

Scholarship may get in its work in either or both of two ways: first, in clarifying fundamental or general conceptions; second, in perfecting and applying subordinate devices and plans. The second purpose of this paper is to indicate by an illustration the sort of share which scholarship ought to have in prosecuting the former of these methods. I turn, therefore, not to the most fundamental relation which needs exposition, but to discussion of the institution of property, with its incidents, inheritance and bequest. Certain agitators declare that the institution of property itself, and still more its satellites, inheritance and bequest, are inventions of criminal purpose to strengthen the strong and to weaken the weak. Human welfare of every sort is so generally dependent upon property relations that stable equilibrium in society can certainly not be expected so long as men entertain and act upon incompatible conceptions of property and its consequents. My argument is, then, that in this, as in every like case of impeachment of an existing institution, or in case of demand for trial of a new institution, it is the scholar's duty to hold his services at the disposal of his fellows, for the purpose of reaching permanent and convincing conclusions.

Let it be understood, then, that the position to be maintained in the discussion which follows is that there is ground-course work for scholars in strengthening the rational basis for settlement of disturbed or threatened social relations. For illustration, property relations are selected, not because the considerations to be dealt with are new to sociologists, nor because it is desirable to advertise individual opinions, but in order to make the point that, whether the assumptions behind this particular institution of property are tenable or untenable, there is

call for such review and restatement of the principles of property that we shall have common premises for theory and practice with reference to details and applications. The argument is that, as in the case of property, so in the case of other social institutions and relationships, referee work by scholars is in demand. The main contention throughout this paper is that when institutions hedged about by the sanctions and sanctity of tradition begin to provoke men's skepticism, it is the business of scholars to rise above the superstitions which forbid inquiry into the rightfulness of the traditional, and to represent the people in dispassionate examination of the things in question. Our relation to the people creates a demand upon us to do this work for the people, with as little reluctance or prejudice as though the things under examination were defective or untried mechanical inventions.

More than this, many men of all classes, business men and rich men, as well as theorists and poor men, are beginning to cherish an ambition to assist in so readjusting industrial relations that manhood may be held not less deserving of conservation than property. The only way to save that purpose from deserved ridicule is to discover flaws in the industrial premises which have logically led to despicable conclusions.

I cannot wonder that hard-headed men of affairs have nothing but contempt for those garrulous peddlers of reform programmes who can find no fallacies in the postulates upon which industrial and political administration is based, but declare implacable feud with the consequences of the postulates. Large and satisfying improvement of present social order must wait upon deepening and broadening of the foundations of order. Reforms cannot amount to much so long as they aim principally at details of the finished social edifice.

It is, accordingly, one of the present duties of scholarship to reconsider all that is assumed and involved in the existing institution of property. We must go back to the immemorial perception that human beings cannot live to the best advantage without mutuality. It is one of the conditions of large personal happiness that individuals shall be helped by their fellows to maintain personal claims to things and opportunities, against all encroachment. Conversely, the realization of this condition makes civilization first possible, then progressive. It may come about, however, that the establishment and maintenance of private, personal, possessive rights to things and opportunities, which were appropriate and socially useful in a less complex civilization, may become obstructive and reactionary in a more complex civilization. It is hardly to be doubted that we have reached such a stage in civilization, and that our conditions call for partial reconstruction of the philosophical basis on which the institutions of ownership and property are supposed to rest.

To recall another elementary principle—it is not denied by anybody, so far as I am aware, that ownership is a concession by organized society to persons within the society. Whatever be the principles of abstract right to which indi-

viduals may appeal, ownership, as an institution, is a gift of society to its individual members, *i.e.*, ownership, whether absolute or limited, is possible only as men in masses agree to recognize and enforce ethical claims of single or associated individuals.

This agreement is entered into on the part of society not because multitudes of men think that single persons are more important, and deserve more consideration than the many, but because societies instinctively perceive that the interests of the many can be conserved only by safeguarding the interests of the units. The many combine to establish and maintain what are held to be the just claims of individual persons, because the good of the many is thereby assured. Thus it comes about that the thing which is supposed to belong by right to the individual is guaranteed to him in all civilized societies by the agreement of the whole community.

When, however, it becomes apparent that the enforcement of these claims to ownership is harmfully affecting the whole society, there sooner or later arises suspicion that somehow or other mistakes have been committed in men's judgment as to what constitutes individual rights. Thus men have held ownership of certain allegiance and service on the part of others; they have had legal ownership of right to control the movements of others from place to place; of right to give or withhold consent to the marriage of certain parties; men have had ownership of right to exercise certain magistracies, to confer certain "livings," to be exempt from certain pecuniary dues, etc. In the earlier history of these possessions the claims under them have been regarded as applications of the principle, to every man his own—*suum cuique*. It has dawned upon men later that these things were no man's own, and, in the nature of the case, they cannot be, because they deprive other men of a part of their own. Hence there have been striking changes in conceptions of what may be owned, and of what constitutes just as contrasted with legal title to ownership. Back of each separate doctrine and policy with reference to ownership has been the vague tacit reservation that rights of exclusive ownership must be compatible with, and tributary to, the general good.

Now, without attempting to draw a final and specific line between things which may be owned and things which the common interest forbids men to hold, except upon certain enforceable terms of use and release, I argue that we have sufficient reason today for beginning to challenge the rationality of the prevailing extension of the concession of ownership.

Let us resort to the homely precept: "It is lawful for a man to do what he will with his own." Let us assume that the proposition is valid, but it raises the preliminary question, "What is one's own?" The answer to that question is not today as clear as it has seemed hitherto.

In the first place some men are surely forgetting that even in the fundamental law of civilized states there is no such idea as absolute ownership by individuals. In theory, approached in practice whenever necessity dictates, the state may

impoverish every individual of its membership, to defend national honor and national existence. Not goods alone are thus subject to social draft, but no citizen can call even his life his own when his nation demands his service. The idea of absolute ownership is therefore at best an accommodation.

But while states have grown so secure that the eminent domain and the final ownership of the nation does not ordinarily put onerous limitations upon individual ownership of wealth, personal relations within modern states have so changed that applications of the fiction of ownership have led to anomalous relations between individuals and classes. Men are not only working today with their shop and office mates in a real partnership, but we are working with thousands of thousands whom we have never seen; yes, with thousands of thousands who are no longer living. The legacies of past generations become part of the equipment of the living generation, and we cannot reasonably refuse to consider whether we have allowed certain classes of persons to appropriate more of the heritage of the past than they may justly claim. The equipment with which men work today can be divided into separate individual shares only at the cost of incalculable embarrassment to industry. Before the days of machinery, and aggregated capital, and the application of science to methods of production, no calamity less than war, famine or pestilence could produce equal industrial disturbance. Accordingly the reasons which have been held to make property so sacred are today less simple, their interpretation is less evident, and their relations are different from those which once obtained.

These changes call for revival and enforcement of a radical distinction between classes of claims upon opportunities and things. As was said above, absolute ownership is after all a legal fiction. Our lien upon things which we call our own has recognized limits even in law, and there are still further limits prescribed by justice to every man who has a conscience. But allowing for this accommodation of ideas, it is true that as between man and man there are two classes or degrees of just individual claim upon things and opportunities. I venture to apply to these respectively the terms *ownership* and *proprietorship*.* Probably there is little usage to support this antithetical use of the words, but for our present purpose I may use the term *ownership* for the claims that are practically absolute, and *proprietorship* for claims that have institutionalized limits.

My thesis at this point is that we have brought over, from other social conditions, concessions of rights to ownership which are anomalous and dan-

*The poverty of our vocabulary in this connection is doubtless an evidence of lack of precision in our thought. We have no nouns for the things held under the different tenures which I want this antithesis to represent. If the lawyers had not given the word *personalty* another meaning, I should try to use it for possessions to which right of ownership may be conceded, and the word *property* would then be left for the less absolute possessions, but even this usage would be arbitrary.

gerous in present conditions. Moreover, if we continue to concede to individuals ownership claims according to present legal rules, there is no escape from gradual retrogression into more abrupt caste separation than ever existed before. I urge, therefore, that the ethical and functional distinction (and I call it ethical because it is functional) between ownership and proprietorship must receive sharper definition, and must become more prominent and decisive. I do not profess ability to complete this definition, but I may offer certain suggestions about the principles by means of which the distinction may be drawn.

That must be recognized as one's own—necessary governmental deductions being eliminated for simplicity—which is one's just portion of the fruits of one's labor, whether independently or in combination with others. That must be recognized as property—for convenience left under the administration of the proprietor—which it is possible to utilize to the combined advantage of the worker and of society. This vague and involved statement corresponds with the involutions of reality. The fact is that the legal qualifications of absolute ownership are much less intimate than the automatic practical qualifications, whenever it is attempted to couple ownership with use and enjoyment. The kinds and quantities of goods and opportunities which any man can appropriate without admitting other men to some sort of partnership are limited indeed, and the point upon which I am insisting is that so soon as this partnership is entered into, whether for consumption or for production, absolute ownership ends, and a new relation with new ethical limitations begins, viz., the relation which I designate as proprietorship. I mean more specifically that natural resources, accumulated capital, perfected methods, processes, devices, no less than hygienic, chemical, medicinal discoveries, belong to man, not to men. The laws of nature make it impossible for individuals to own them. The extent to which the laws of the state shall become the accomplices of individuals, in turning proprietorship into monopoly, is a matter for social intelligence to determine.

To develop this suggestion somewhat more in detail, things which are a fair equivalent for the individual's labor, things which in their nature are useful only as consumed by individuals, may fairly be considered proper objects of absolute ownership in the sense already indicated. Thus, food, clothes, household utensils, books, pictures, means of recreation, money held as the equivalent of these, assuming of course that each is the rightful reward of the owner's service, are indisputably objects of ownership. On the other hand, there are goods and opportunities which cannot be exclusively owned without infringement of just claims which have accrued to others. Thus any of the natural or artificial agencies for controlling the universally necessary means of happiness, such as land in its widest economic sense, acquired science, inventions, accumulated knowledge, methods of organizing capital or labor, may have become available to men as the result of the labor of individuals. Society ought to be willing to err on the side of liberality in providing that such labor shall receive due reward. Our patent

and copyright laws are intended to carry out this policy. After the laborer has received his hire, however, the new power over nature which he has found out how to exert should become an addition to the endowment of the race. Again there are results of past and present labor and social combination in which the combined product is vastly greater than the arithmetical sum of the contributions of individuals, and in which the absolute share of individuals is undeterminable. These classes of goods and opportunities cannot be claimed by right as any man's own. They are correctly viewed only when they are regarded as equipments of civilization, which are not primarily for consumption but for production. They cannot be made the absolute possession of individuals without dispossessing other individuals whose ethical claim to some of this social heritage is equally clear. These latter classes of goods are reasonable objects of proprietorship, but not of ownership.

Shall we then conclude that the institution of private property should be abolished? No more than we are to conclude that private individuality should be suppressed. Proudhon taught a doctrine more to be dreaded by the weak and the poor than by the strong and the rich. Our conclusion is that we must keep on learning how to socialize both individuality and possessions. Nor does this conclusion involve toleration of the equally anarchistic assumption that present forms of the institution of property are too sacred to be reshaped. The question, "What may all of us profitably permit some of us to own?" is not closed, and it will not be so long as human activities continue to grow complex. From the point of view just defined, civilization is tending neither toward abolition of property nor toward deification of property, but toward discrimination and delimitation of degrees of property. Scholars ought to be most effective agents in promoting this gain. Proudhon was more picturesque than precise when he charged that "property is robbery." It is the scholar's duty to search out the fraction of truth in such wholesale error, to show that some property has been robbery, and to assist in refining principles by which we may guard against permitting any man to call his own what should be partly the franchise of others.

Without attempting to justify it by argument, I suggest one other point of departure for the boundary line between ownership and proprietorship, viz., ownership is possession unlimited by obligation. Proprietorship is possession under bonds for the use of the thing or opportunity possessed as a joint trust with and for others interested. I simply assert that the measure of irresponsibility permitted by our legal and moral codes to owners who should at most be proprietors, is an impeachment of our social intelligence.

The view thus defined is in equal contrast with plutocratic and with socialistic conceptions. The type "proprietor" here contemplated would be neither the plutocratic "owner" of our acquaintance, nor the expropriated ward of the state, into which the present owner is transformed in the socialistic vision. The "proprietor" here contemplated would be a new order of manager-magistrate.

He would be created not by state appointment but by industrial selection. He would serve because fit to serve. He would draw pay in accordance with his value to the business. He would have the same relation to the business, after the term of his usefulness had expired, that retired political magistrates now have to the government in a democratic state.

I have thus presented only the syllabus of an argument, none of which is new, but simply newly related. I do not presume that this brief will be conclusive. I hope that it will be of some effect in winning assent to the assertion that the postulates concerning property which society is accepting offer points for re-consideration.

To further emphasize this claim, the illustration may be extended to consideration of the probable effect upon certain corollaries of the current conceptions of property, in case anything like the principles of discrimination which I have proposed should be adopted. It would be interesting to trace the logical consequences of such discrimination as effecting the theoretical relations between stockholders and employees. As this subject could not be treated briefly, further illustrations will be confined to the institutions of inheritance and bequest.

Basing my position on the ethics of ownership and proprietorship just posited, I deny that there is any necessary reason for supposing that the privilege of bequest must forever be added to the emoluments of proprietorship. It will doubtless for a long time be expedient to continue the addition of that incident, but it is an addition and by no means an element inherent in proprietorship itself. In other words, nothing which is property merely is to be considered necessarily subject to the bequest of the proprietor, or, in the other case, no man has any natural right to inherit what was only the property of a relative.

This conclusion was contained by implication in the distinction above proposed between ownership and proprietorship. Proprietorship involves service. In one of its elements proprietorship is trusteeship. The legitimate social assumption behind maintenance of the privilege of bequest is that the service supposed to accompany proprietorship will be secured better under the sanctions of bequest, or of prescribed lines of inheritance, than by any available alternative. Thus it is supposed superior utility, not inherent sanctity, which supports these accidents of proprietorship. Bequest is not an essential incident of proprietorship, and Herbert Spencer's attempt to make it such by calling it a "postponed gift" convinces only those who had made up their minds before; because the right of gift is not properly an incident of proprietorship either. Transfer of possessions from one person to another is socially justifiable only on the presumption that the service belonging with the proprietorship will be equally well performed after the transfer.

If a person appointed as guardian of a child or as receiver of a corporation should venture to delegate his office to another person incompetent to perform its duties, he would be held legally responsible for the mismanagement of his

representative. The law rightly makes such transfer of function either a crime or punishable neglect. Now that which is contrary to public policy between living men cannot by legal decree be made entirely satisfactory as the regular order between living persons and the shade of a dead man. If it is contrary to public policy for a father to have liberty while living to put an incompetent son in charge of a business which it is the father's duty to manage, it is also and much more subversive of public interest to establish for that son an owner's right in such management in case of the father's death. The only ground upon which these propositions may be challenged is the presumption that a poor social device is the best possible device; but neither in mechanics nor in civics is limitation of possibility assumable until the limits of experiment have been reached.

In order to show, therefore, the invalidity of the presumptions by which the institutions of bequest and inheritance are buttressed, I call up the perception that ownership of the managerial functions which are essential to the administration of capitalistic enterprise is a concession by society, for which there is plain historical ground, but that ground is not sufficient to justify recognition of such ownership as a natural right. Claim to control of such a function, to the extent of liberty to confer it upon another at will, regardless of his fitness to discharge the function, is as baseless in ethics as the obsolete claim of political classes to the right of conferring political magistracies at will upon relatives and favorites.

The conventional doctrine in the premises would reply to these claims; "But the guardianship of minor children or the receivership of a corporation is a responsibility for other people's interests. The law necessarily limits the agent's liberty to delegate such responsibility. There is no proper parallel, however, between this relation and that of a great employer managing his own business. Consequently the analogy just alleged does not exist, and there is no such anomaly as that asserted in permitting gift bequest or inheritance of captaincies of industry, regardless of managerial fitness."

My rejoinder is that this demurrer represents the very lack of intelligence that I am pointing out with reference to the social significance of business management. The organizer or manager of a capitalistic enterprise is as truly a trustee of the interests of others—viz., both stockholders and employés—as is the guardian of an orphan, or the receiver of an insolvent corporation, or the master of a passenger steamship on the Atlantic. The business is created by the union of many men; it is the combined action of many men; it operates for many men. In short it is of, for, and by not one, but many. The organizer contributes much brain power, and perchance much wealth power and brawn power, to the combination; but after all, these are only factors, not the whole of the combination. Over against all the ownership rights which do and should accrue to such manager, social responsibilities on the part of the management arise and develop with every stage in the progress of the business. These responsibilities are ob-

ligations to cooperators in the business, and to the society more remotely affected by the business. These obligations fix the ethical limits of ownership, and define the duties incumbent on proprietorship.

Conceding, then, every item of justly acquired ownership on the part of the manager, when we turn to the obligation side of the ledger page we discover that with this ownership there has accrued a burden of responsibility for administrative labor, and that many persons have a moral lien upon the discharge of that responsibility. No mere owner of a part of the business, not even the legal owner of the whole stock, can obtain such discharge from this responsibility that he is ethically justified in ignoring it, or in making the disposition of it a matter of his own arbitrary decision. The other parties interested have an immanent claim to assurance that, when the managerial function is transferred, it shall go to managerial ability, so that the material and intellectual and moral assets of the business may not be dissipated. In a word, the managerial element in capitalistic enterprise is in its very nature fiduciary, vicarious, responsible, *i.e.*, proprietary at most.

In this prolonged illustration I have incidentally presented my own beliefs, but not because they are the chief concern in the argument. I cite them merely to illustrate what I mean when I claim that all scholarship within the field of the social sciences ought to be made to converge at last upon criticism of capital positions in our social order. I have no sympathy with nor confidence in any conception of sociology which is satisfied with abstractions, or which does not keep well in mind the relation of all research to the living interests of living men. Scholars, and especially sociological scholars, are either wrong or wronged when they are said to endorse and support the presumption that whatever *is* in society is *right*, or if not right at least unavoidable. I plead for that creditable and worthy agitation by scholars, which is not hysterical fuss and pother with symptoms and specifics, but rather calm and patient exploration of conditions and causes and principles.

Referring to the second class of opportunities inviting the sociological scholar, I content myself with saying that scholars might exalt both their scholarship and their citizenship by claiming an active share in the work of perfecting and applying plans and devices for social improvement and amelioration. It is not only betrayal of his social trust, it is surrender of the best elements of his professional opportunity, for the sociological scholar to withdraw from affairs, and attempt to grow wise by rearranging the contents of his personal consciousness. The most impressive lesson which I have learned in the vast sociological laboratory which the city of Chicago constitutes is that action, not speculation, is the supreme teacher. If men will be the most productive scholars in any department of the social sciences, let them gain time and material by cooperating in the social work of their community. I would have every sociological scholar share constantly in some concrete work of two specific kinds: first, work which

the thoughtful and careful prosecute for the benefit of the thoughtless and the careless; second, work which the enterprising and efficient organize for the better security of their own social interests. The line of argument with which I would justify this ideal may be inferred from reference to the career of a certain reputable society of which many teachers of the social sciences are members. The declared object of the association is commendable, viz., the improvement of city governments in the United States. The programme into which the society has gravitated is discussed rather than action. Its accomplishments up to date very naturally amount to ocular proof of the futility of talk. A scientific label for this respectable body would read: *A National Association for the Propagation and Enjoyment of Melancholy over the Misdoings of Municipalities.*

There is better work for scholars than criticism of men and measures from a distance. It is timely to proclaim a different ideal for American scholars from that which has dominated the learned world for the last fifty years. May American scholarship never so narrow itself to the interests of scholars that it shall forfeit its primacy among the interests of men!