

**THE APPROACH TO THE
SOCIAL QUESTION: AN
INTRODUCTION TO THE
STUDY OF SOCIAL ETHICS**

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The approach to the social question: an introduction to the study of social ethics by Francis Greenwood Peabody

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF
SOCIAL ETHICS

BY

FRANCIS GREENWOOD PEABODY

FLUMMER PROFESSOR OF CHRISTIAN MORALS IN
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

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TO A. T. W.

WHOM DOES THE MASTER CHOOSE TO BE HIS FRIEND?
WHOM DOES HE TRUST HIS WANDERING FLOCK TO TEND?
NOT HIM WHOSE CREED IS LONGEST, OR WHOSE PRAISE
ECHOES THE CERTITUDES OF OTHER DAYS ;
BUT THE TRAINED LEADER IN THE WORLD'S FIERCE STRIFE,
WHOSE FAITH IS SERVICE AND WHOSE WORSHIP LIFE ;
WHOSE LAVISH HEART SERVES WITH FAR-SEEING EYES,
WHOSE TRUTH IS MERCY, AND WHOSE PITY WISE ;
TO WHOM POSSESSIONS MAKE AN OPEN DOOR
TO SAVE THE CITY AND TO SERVE THE POOR ;
WHOSE MONUMENTS OF UNRECORDED GOOD
ESCAPE THE PRAISES OF THE MULTITUDE.
THE DWELLERS IN THE CITY'S WILDERNESS
FEEL THE STRONG TOUCH OF HIS FIRM GENTLENESS,
AND THEIR HEARTS OPEN TO THE MASTER-KEY
OF HIS ALL-COMPREHENDING CHARITY.
ACROSS THE AGES SPEAKS THE SON OF MAN :
"FOR SUCH GOD'S KINGDOM WAITS SINCE TIME BEGAN ;
THIS, WHICH YE DO SO SELF-EFFACINGLY
UNTO THESE LEAST, YE DO IT UNTO ME."

THE SUBSTANCE OF THIS VOLUME
WAS GIVEN AS THE
EARLE LECTURES
AT THE
PACIFIC THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
IN
1907

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THE APPROACH TO THE SOCIAL QUESTION

I

PHILOSOPHY AND THE SOCIAL QUESTION

AT the end of his brilliant book on the philosophy of society¹ Professor Stein remarks that as the fifteenth century had for its task the renaissance of art, and the sixteenth century the reformation of religion, and the seventeenth century the development of science, and the eighteenth century the promotion of democracy, so the task of the twentieth century is to be the reformation and reconstruction of the social world. "A new renaissance," he says, "must break upon the modern world, a deliverance from the gloom of pessimism which is the symptom of an overworked and weary period; a transformation of the instincts of social evolution into rational laws; a quickening of the glad and confident service of the social world, as it is and as it is to be." Such a prophecy may well appear too restricted to cover the infinitely varied

¹ Stein, "Die soziale Frage im Lichte der Philosophie," 1897, s. 773. The abbreviated ed., 1903, omits the passage.