

They Have Failed

"The truth is that the so-called social sciences are not sciences at all."

So declared Dr. Harold W. Dodds, president of Princeton University, at a recent gathering of educators. Undoubtedly the doctor referred to the methods pursued in our accredited schools of learning. From this viewpoint there can be no quarrel with his statement. Neither can there be any doubt, therefore, that these institutions offer no hope for a solution of our social problems. For, to assume that social phenomena are traceable to no immutable principles or laws, such as prevail and are recognized to prevail in the physical sciences, is merely to admit that in this field our tradition-blinded professors have refused to learn anything.

"Scientific research," he went on, "has returned no clear objective answer to such problems as the stupendous puzzle of business depression"—and he names some other problems which are political in nature but manifestly arise from economic maladjustment. Scientific research! By which the learned one evidently means figures and charts and graphs and other such records of facts and trends resulting from accepted premises, and which therefore can never reveal causes. He is disheartened because his laboratory records do not disclose fundamental principles, when his experiment started with the assumption that there can be no fundamental principles. How naive!

In none of the physical sciences do our professors reject in advance the possibility of immutable principle, or natural laws. In none of these sciences do they refuse to agree upon basic terminology. In none of them do they block their minds with accepted prejudices. In studying social problems they do all these things. Therefore, while they make progress in the physical sciences, in the social sciences they quickly sink into the quagmire they choose for their footing.

It is for that very reason that,

as Dr. Dodds deplures, faith in a science of society has not penetrated to the man in the street. Indeed, how could anyone have faith in the maze of meaningless and contradictory terms with which our social science text books abound? Even the professors who write them have no faith in them; each one writes a different book for his course. And the students who study under these professors reject what they have been taught as soon as they come in contact with reality.

The man in the street, untrammelled by prejudice, seeking truth and willing to follow it wherever it leads, will develop a science of society. Although he knows not why, he has wisely rejected the professor's "science." They have failed.