

Methodological Studies in Religious Sociology.

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In the strict sense of the words, "Special sociology" in the branch of "Sociology as a special social science" or "Einzelwissenschaftlich Soziologie" has as its central subject the elucidation of how social action, relationship and group in a certain specific field of society are modified and transformed by those characteristics with which that specific field is specialized; accordingly, it should concentrate itself on the elucidation of how are the special action, relationship and group—i.e., the fundamental sociological categories—of that specific field of society.

Religious sociology as a special sociology, therefore, should be in its essence the analysis and clarification of the religious social action, relationship and group in the field of religion in its widest sense.

On this standpoint, the present article has probed those theories of so-called "religious sociology" advocated by three chief exponents, É. Durkheim, M. Weber, and J. Wach, placing special emphasis on the investigation of their several method of researches.

The result of my investigation in a nutshell is as follows:

1. Durkheim's "Sociologie religieuse" is no more than the science of religion to which the sociological method is applied.

2. Weber's "Religionssoziologie" is the elucidation of the interrelations of religion and economy.

3. Wach, on the other hand, begins with Weber's standpoint and ends in somewhere approaching to that of Durkheim; his "Sociology of Religion" is the clarification of the social function of religion.

The achievements by these three great religious sociologists are certain to have their own merits in their own way as the labours

of scientific research on religion or economics, and the fact duly entitles them to respect; yet it should be observed and remembered that, though they have brought the extension and richness of religious sociology and even of sociology in general, this is effected only at the expense of the proper scientific status of religious sociology as special sociology in its pure meaning and even, we may say, at the sacrifice of the logical organization or systematic structure of sociology in general.

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