SOCIALISM
IN CHURCH HISTORY

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BY

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The question which ought to hold a pre-eminent place in the interests of Churchmen is, how we are to return to a condition of things nearer to the intention of Christ—if it may be, without violence or revolution; but if not, then anyhow to return."—Dr. GORE, Bishop of Birmingham, Barrow-in-Furness Church Congress Sermon, 1906

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TO

MY WIFE

THE ARGUMENT

MANY members of the Church of England are socialists, and would establish a commonwealth whose people should own the land and the industrial capital and administer them co-operatively for the good of all. Such public ownership they regard as urgent, and as a necessary deduction from the teachings of the Church. They are not communists but socialists. Far from seeking the abolition of private property or the curtailment of personal freedom, they desire such an industrial rearrangement of society as shall not only increase the national output but shall secure to the majority the wealth they produce and the liberty they have hitherto been denied.

The Christian Faith cannot be summed up in the word socialism, nor should it be finally identified with any political or economic system. For all this, Churchmen are convinced that the principles which underlie socialism are, so far as they go, the principles of the Christian religion as applied to political, commercial, and industrial problems.

Orthodox Church folk recognise the statement that the Church should have nothing to do with politics or with material life as a deadly and soul-destroying

heresy, contradicting the Christian doctrines of creation, incarnation, and of the resurrection of the body.

The kingdom of heaven, a kingdom not "of" this world, but "in" this world, is thrust like leaven into the ages, until every avenue of human activity is leavened. The Church, established by God, as the mouthpiece of the kingdom, must seize every opportunity of interfering with the world, until it has transformed its evil, warring, factious kingdoms into the international commonwealth of God and of His Christ.

To this end it must neither neglect nor confine itself to the political sphere. It must be as ready to make temporary alliances with political parties as it is determined to entangle itself inextricably with no political party soever.

The object of the present work is to justify the foregoing position by an appeal to Christian history, and to suggest that economic socialism provides the practical and scientific form for our own day and in one important human sphere for the realisation of those very objects which the Church has always had at heart.

It is not my purpose to identify Jewish legislation, primitive Christian practice, Church law, with the proposals of economic socialism, but rather to point out that the eternal purposes of Holy Church, expressed from age to age in various more or less ineffectual efforts, must now be expressed in the eminently effectual system of socialism.

Socialism is no fixed and final scheme of perfection, but we claim it as the solution for our day of a

multitude of evils. In the centuries to come socialism will give place to some other system more applicable to the needs of a now undreamt-of future.

Churchmen sometimes argue that, although economic socialism does not necessarily involve "rationalist" positions, so many of its supporters are unorthodox that they consider it dangerous to identify themselves with the movement. But it is precisely because the Church of to-day has so largely failed us, that the construction of a socialist philosophy has fallen into the hands of persons alienated from the traditions of Christendom. All the more necessary is it for that handful of Churchmen who value not the dead letter but the living spirit of tradition to come forward and make their own intellectual contribution to the building of the international commonwealth.

Previous writers have dealt with parts of the subject. Amongst the authors to whom I am chiefly indebted are Messrs Ashley, Rauschenbusch, A. J. Carlyle, R. W. Carlyle, Stewart D. Headlam, Thomas Hancock, and Charles Marson. So far as I know, no existing work covers the whole ground, and I am conscious how imperfectly what is a very large subject is dealt with here. My hope in writing will be realised if someone more competent than myself should be tempted to deal with the subject at greater length, and if meanwhile the present work directs attention to a vital aspect of Church thought too often neglected.

CONRAD NOEL.

Advent, 1909.

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I

SOCIALISM

"We see that it is not any form of ability, either in design or in organisation (which is but design) or in manual effort, which secures the largest rewards in industry. It is capital, as capital, which takes the lion's share of the product of the mental and manual labour exercised upon the small area of land which serves for the basis of our industries. The landlord's share, although great, is relatively small."—L. G. CHIOZZA MONEY, M.P.[1]

"Socialism is the principle according to which the community shall own the land and industrial capital collectively and use them co-operatively for the good of all."—*Church Socialist League.*

SOCIALISTS of every varying shade of opinion accept the above definition of socialism. Jevonian socialists, Marxian socialists, Church socialists, anti-Church socialists, free-trade socialists, fair-trade socialists, feminist socialists, anti-feminist socialists, free-will socialists, determinist socialists, puritan socialists, anti-puritan socialists, in a word *all* socialists, however much they may differ on other points, are in absolute agreement on one point, and that point is their socialism. They are socialists, not because

[1] *Riches and Poverty*, chap. viii., "Those who Work and those who Wait," p. 97 (1s. net; Methuen). Mr Money's book should be used as companion volume with my own. Mr J. A. Hobson's *The Industrial Revolution: An Inquiry into Earned and Unearned Income* (7s. 6d. net; Longmans, 1909) should also be carefully studied.

they are Theosophists or Jews, temperance men or teetotalers, pro-peace or pro-war, but solely because they accept the principle according to which the land and industrial capital should be publicly owned and publicly administered: wise or otherwise, just or unjust, practicable or impracticable, socialism is one and simple, and a man of ordinary intelligence could grasp its main proposition in ten minutes. There are many kinds of human beings, and therefore many kinds of socialists, but there is only one kind of socialism.

These economic proposals for the transference of land and industrial capital from private to public hands are the expression of a certain conviction about life. This conviction has been thus described by Bishop Westcott of Durham, who, contrasting socialism with individualism, writes:—

> It is by contrast with individualism that the true character of socialism can best be discerned. Individualism and socialism correspond with opposite views of humanity. Individualism regards humanity as made up of disconnected or warring atoms; socialism regards it as an organic whole, a vital unity formed by the combination of contributory members mutually interdependent. It follows that socialism differs from individualism both in method and in aim. The method of socialism is co-operation; the method of individualism is competition. The one regards man as working with man for a common end; the other regards man as working against man for private gain.

People of all classes are beginning to realise that much poverty is preventible. The socialist movement is, and will always be, largely artisan, but it draws from all classes. The more thoughtful and generous rich are beginning to regard it as intolerable that they should, through rents and interest, be living idly

upon the bounty of the poor. They are beginning to understand that the overwork and underfeeding of the worker are the direct consequence of the underwork and overfeeding of the gentleman. They are beginning to ask—Cannot this system be slowly or swiftly transmuted into some juster, more orderly, more efficient, and more human type of civilisation?

Present-day industrialism is rooted in the monopoly of land and capital, as essential both of them to human life as air, sunshine, or water. The monopolist, rich by possession of these essentials, exacts a yearly tribute from the masses in the shape of rent upon land, paid out of wages and salaries, and rent upon capital, stopped out of wages and salaries. For if, as is universally agreed, all (economic) wealth is the result of mental and manual labour productively employed upon land, and the majority of the monopolists labour neither with their minds nor with their hands, whence comes their income? Not, assuredly, down like manna from on high, but up from those classes who, landless and capitalless, have only hands and brains to sell, and are forced to sell them to the possessors on terms involving the overwork and underfeeding of the many (their underpay and overwork being further secured by the existence of a convenient margin of the unemployed poor, hungry to beat down the wages of the overemployed) and the underwork and overfeeding of the few, supported from the privations of the producers. Wealth does not come down from heaven, but up from those man-made hells to which we condemn our slave population.

We only smile when the barrel-organs of plutocracy grind out the maxim that capital must have its share, for capital is inert machinery, railroads, factories, and power over labour, every scrap of it being itself the product of past labour. How can a railway have its fair share? We cannot do without capital; we are rapidly learning to do without the private capitalist.

Inanimate things have no rights, and the rights of the private holders of certain inanimate essentials are the very points in dispute. Most people now admit that land, created by none and necessary to all, should be the common property of all. In the past it has been divided up, and the dividers have thriven on the spoil. Socialism is a scheme by which the dividing up of the people's land should finally cease.

But railways, mines, post-offices, factories, high-roads, canals, and other forces of industrial capital created by no single man but by the whole closely woven industrial community should also be the property of all.

For if in any community whatsoever there be permitted the monopoly by private individuals of sea, land, air, industries, sunlight, rivers, or mines there will in that community be land lords, sea lords, air lords, and share lords enforcing tribute for the use of these essentials, and living unproductively upon the fruits of this compulsion.

Landlordism and capitalism in their present form are but a thing of yesterday. The theory of absolute individual ownership developed rapidly with the rapid growth of Christo-capitalism. With the decadence of this particular form of religion we are

witnessing the decadence of the accompanying economic heresy.

The upholders of the absolute ownership theory appeal in vain to pre-Reformation times, for even feudalism allowed what was but a strictly limited right of private ownership, absolute ownership belonging only to the Crown, and the Crown, at least in theory, representing the whole nation. Even throughout the dark ages of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the nation's right, though obscured, was in law acknowledged, for landlords were compelled to sell at the national bidding; while under feudalism lands were granted conditionally on public services annually rendered. If the landlord were forgetful of the conditions, the land could be promptly confiscated. Until the reign of Henry the Eighth, the power to bequeath land was largely restricted.

If the nation had the right to confiscate *without compensation* the millions of acres of monastic estates, belonging for the most part to worthy resident landlords, and give the third part of the kingdom of England to landlords, often unworthy and non-resident; by what conceivable theory of justice can the inheritors of this wholesale confiscation deny the right of the nation to resume its ownership *with compensation*?

Certain great families reigned supreme before the days of the franchise, and used their public office for private ends in such a manner as would have brought them to the gallows in healthier times. From the socially disastrous period of the Reformation onwards, encroachment after encroachment was made

upon the people's land, until we come to the period of 120 years from 1760 to 1880, when a further ten million acres were annexed, often without compensation. But the defenders of these old loot-bills of the landlords use the following arguments: (1) The land, in some cases, has changed hands by purchase; therefore the restoration of the land would be unfair. But (*a*) some people formerly invested their honest earnings in the legal purchase of slaves. Did this warrant the indefinite postponement of slave-liberation? Why then should we indefinitely postpone land liberation? (*b*) This argument would seem tacitly to assume the nation's right to resume ownership of all lands not so purchased. (2) Land is nowadays practically worthless. Rents barely cover the upkeep of estates. The landlord often gives more than he takes.

We fully realise the inefficiencies of private enterprise, and grant that in some cases this argument holds good; but if any landlord chooses to plead as above, we warn him that he is playing into the hands of those who would confiscate his land *without a farthing of compensation.* As a fact, all honourable claimants will be duly compensated.

In reality this type of landlord is not landlord by profession but an amateur. He is a capitalist who acquires a country estate as a hobby, indulged in by means of the proceeds derived from the serious business of his life—banking, the factory, the mine, the railway. There are still thousands of squires living solely from rent. And if we consider the problem of the town, we find that a certain family

bought the site of a northern town for a song, and squeezes from the people of that town a yearly rental of a hundred thousand. Nor do we forget that the soil of London, worth an annual hundred thousand agriculturally, now yields to the landlords an annual twenty million.

Now, I will assume that you condemn the private ownership of land. You have come to the conclusion that, as land is necessary to all, to deprive men of land is to deprive them of life. To deprive men of land except on the landlord's terms, is to deprive them of life except on the landlord's terms. But there are many who will condemn private ownership of land, air,[1] sea, and sunshine, who will defend private ownership of factories, railways, and the like. They condemn rent, while they defend interest or usury. What harm is there in A, the saver of a sum of money, obliging B with the loan of it, in return for a small annual interest in respect of risks run?

In the first place, it is questionable if A has really justly saved the money. Money represents and is the symbol of society's debt to the individual for service rendered. Now the vast majority of present-day sums invested represent no such debt. Is society really and justly in the debt of A, the saver? Does his "pile" represent what society owes him for his services? Has he inherited his money? If so, the original debt (where there was one) has often been

[1] Landlords are claiming ownership of the air above as well as of the mineral wealth below the surface of their estates. A landlord can sue the owner of an aeroplane for trespass. Rights in the sea are claimed by the Duke of Northumberland and other landlords with coast-bound estates, who seek to impose a tax on fishermen on every catch they make within so many hundred yards of the shore.

repaid over and over again. Is he a "self-made" man? If so, he is either (*a*) a speculator, or transferrer of other people's money to his own pocket, or (*b*) a mere exploiter of productive labourers, or (*c*) part genuine mental or manual producer and part exploiter. In the first two cases society owes him nothing but a prison. In the third case his "savings" only in part represent a real claim upon society, for he has almost invariably been grossly overpaid for the part he has played in production. There remain an *infinitesimal number* of cases where a man's savings may represent an honest claim upon the wealth of the world for work rendered.

Let us then ask, in the case of these few exceptions, *which do not account for one-hundredth of the investing public,* Have they a right to do what they like with their money? Suppose our friend A belongs to this class: has he a right to invest it where he has a mind?

Every sane person admits he has no such absolute right of investment. Everybody admits he has no right to invest his "savings" in buying babies for purposes of vivisection. No one will allow him the right of investment in the Angola slave trade. Not even in law is any such absolute right admitted. If investment in certain lands or in certain industries can be proved to be equivalent to investment in slaves, or to be obviously disastrous to the community, the public conscience will inevitably come to regard such investment as immoral. We have admitted that, in strict justice, A should not be allowed to invest in land. There is no immediate moral condemnation upon land investors to-day, but the public

conscience which legalises such investments is coming to be acknowledged as unhealthy and immoral. We have come to this conclusion because we discovered that if A, instead of consuming his claim upon society, is permitted to exchange that claim for a plot of land to be possessed, not for purposes of work, but for extraction of rent, he has actually been permitted to exchange his claim for shares in the white slave market, and his family will thereby be enabled to live idly, not for a few years by consumption of his claim, and afterwards go back to work, but in all perpetuity by laying a perpetual and compulsory private tax (rent) upon the annual product of the workers. If all the workers were in one way or another possessors of land or capital, they would only make use of this land and pay rent for it by choice and not by compulsion. Land is limited in extent and essential to all. Therefore landless folk are not free to bargain.

Well, then, if A may not invest in land, may he not invest in capital? may he exchange his "savings," or "claim on society," for capital, *i.e.* shares in a mine, factory, or railroad? May not A forego his just claim and lend it to B to start or carry on a business; B to pay A an annuity in respect of risks run?

But this case of A and B as equal bargainers does not exist in fact. If A and B had started life equally equipped, and A were the virtuous saver and B the profligate spender, *i.e.* if B were, *solely through his own fault*, without money that could be converted into capital, the non-Christian man of the world might say: Why should not A, the virtuous, take

advantage of B, the formerly vicious? Why should not the elder brother start the converted prodigal in business, and charge him considerable and perpetual interest on the loan? The Christian religion, of course, emphatically negatives this transaction; but the man of the world would certainly consider it just.

But in the vast majority of cases A and B are not by any means equal bargainers; for *A, the individual, lends to B, the group exploiter.* B does not set to work alone and unaided, purchasing plant and supporting himself by means of A's loan, and paying him a small return plus the original sum out of profits. B promises usury[1] or interest to the absentee shareholder, because B represents a group of workers, landless and capitalless, and therefore not free to bargain.[2] He knows that these workers will be forced to assent to his terms or starve, and that from the profits of their joint labour is to come that interest on shares, or compulsory annuity, on which our widows and orphans—all shareholders are supposed by critics of socialism to come under one or other of these definitions—thrive so satisfactorily.

The attack of the socialist is not upon brain *versus* hand work; it is not aimed at the productive mental labourers. All such workers would, under a socialist reconstruction of industry, be adequately rewarded for work rendered. Nor does the socialist attack all forms of inheritance or of private property. It is indeed because he believes in the *rights of private*

[1] Usury until very lately meant interest in any shape or form. This is its meaning in the English translation of the Bible.

[2] *Cf.* Report of Bishops, etc., forming a Committee of Convocation of Canterbury on Economic Questions (2d.; S.P.C.K.).

property that he is a socialist, for he finds these rights are violated by capitalism. He desires solely to build up a system under which those forms of property which are essentially common to all because necessary to all shall in point of fact be owned by all. He desires this, in order that those forms of property which are essentially private and peculiar should be secured to the mental and manual labouring members of the community, *i.e.* to all members of the re-organised community, for by socialism we establish a commonwealth in which all able-bodied and able-brained persons are workers; the children, the aged, and the sick alone being entitled to support without rendering productive service in return.

Now, although many people have come to believe usury-bearing investments in land and industries to be in the long run immoral and unjustifiable, it is obvious that these investments perform an indispensable function in the immoral and unjustifiable anarchy we are pleased to call the society of the present. It would be as difficult as it would be futile to condemn the individual landlord or capitalist under existing conditions. If one were to ask him to abandon his land or his shares, he would point to his wife and children, and remark that after all one must live. Do we want him to join the ranks of the millions competing fiercely one against another for work?

In spite, therefore, of the ultimate unwisdom and injustice of such investments, they will not cease until for the present industrial anarchy is substituted such an ordered society as shall (*a*) make it possible for one-time investors, if able-bodied and able-brained,

to become productive labourers, in the general interest, or, if disabled, to find some source of support other than investments; and (*b*) create such collective wealth as shall supplant private capital or the necessity of financial appeal to private capitalists. It is such a social readjustment that socialism proposes.

Reference has been made to collective wealth supplanting private capital. The following instances are to the point. The city of Leeds manages its tramways. Under private enterprise the mileage of lines was twenty-two. Under the first few years of public enterprise the mileage has increased to one hundred. Fares are lower, wages higher, hours shorter. The service is comfortable and efficient. Municipalities can borrow at cheaper rates than private individuals. The interest on borrowed capital is therefore low. Far from coming on the rates, an annual £62,000 is paid out of profits in relief of rates. Due amount is allowed for depreciation, and a sinking fund is established for the paying up of capital invested. In twenty years' time the whole of the capital subscribed will be paid off, and the tramway system will belong to the city, with no claims on the part of shareholders to be met.

Prussia manages its railways. They were acquired by issuing Government bonds in lieu of the former share certificates. Although a low and uniform rate of freightage has been adopted, which has given an intense impetus to industry, such immense profits are made that the railways alone contribute annually millions of pounds towards the extinction of the national debt. Capital is being paid off annually as

well as interest duly met. In fifty years the railway system will belong to the nation absolutely. No more interest will need to be paid. Borrowed capital will have been entirely repaid.

Is it not evident, therefore, that with every extension of the field of public enterprise, and with every increase in the public capital, there will be a narrowing of the field for private investors? In a few years they can no longer invest in Prussian railways, or municipal stock. As the area of public enterprise widens, the area of private enterprise must shrink. People who formerly held stock in municipal and national undertakings have not only been paid their interest but have been paid back their capital out of social profits. They have only to reinvest? But every day, with the increase of public effort and the upbuilding of a public wealth, it is less and less necessary to rely upon the private investor. Meanwhile nationalities and municipalities will be reorganising labour, shortening hours, increasing wages, offering more and more berths to competent men and women. The private investor will give his sons and daughters a business education. The second generation, or at least the third, will no longer be able to rely on usury or rent for a living. They will begin to be educated in order that they may learn and labour truly to get their *own* living in that divine commonwealth to which it shall please God to call them.

If Prussia is successful in organising transit, why should she not organise agriculture? If Leeds can manage its tramcars, why not its mills? If New

Zealand can run a sawmill, why not Manchester a cotton-factory?

Granted, then, that socialism is just, there seems evidence in favour of its practicability. Anti-socialists point in vain to Athens, Sparta, Rome, to Peru and other countries, for evidence against the system they hate; for in none of these places did the people own the land and the industrial capital, and in none of them, therefore, was socialism even attempted.

Neither would the success or failure of groups of communist cranks existing in the midst of the hostile environment of the present industrialism prove anything either for or against the practicability of the socialist proposal.

There are not wanting indications, however, that socialism would prove an efficient solution of our present difficulties. The Spencerian theory that a multitude of small competitors are more efficient than companies, trusts, municipalities, or nations working by means of salaried managers has been shattered by a fusillade of facts. Collective production is driving competition out of the field. Not only does the growth of the Trust illustrate the point, but the success of public trading still further emphasises it. Every effort is being made in the plutocratic press, and in the writings of such authors as Mr St Loe Strachey and Lord Avebury, to minimise the significance of these successes; but those who will pursue the subject will find their contentions contradicted by the official year-books of our colonies, the Board of Trade returns, and by recent books on Prussian and Belgian railway management. Mr St

Loe Strachey and Lord Avebury are answered very completely in (1) *The Economics of Direct Employment*; (2) *Municipal Trading*; (3) *Machinery* (all three penny pamphlets of the Fabian Society, 3 Clement's Inn, Strand, W.C.); (4) Emil Davies, *Railway Nationalisation,* price one shilling; (5) *The Common Sense of Municipal Trading*, by G. Bernard Shaw, price sixpence; (6) *Mind Your Own Business*, by R. B. Suthers (on municipal capital), price sixpence; (7) *Behind German Dreadnoughts* (on German public experiments), price one penny (these two latter published by the Clarion Press, 44 Worship Street, E.C.).[1]

Behind the economic proposals of socialism, the anti-private rent and interest programme and the collectivist theory of industry, there lies a fundamental conception of society. The philosophy of socialism is fellowship, justice among men, the value of the *whole* of life, material, mental, spiritual. In the following pages we shall compare the Christian with the socialist conception of life, noting the singular likeness between the two, and trace the various attempts to put these fundamental conceptions into practice. Our inquiry leads to the conviction that this modern experiment of socialism and those older experiments have the same root. Their origin may be found in that fundamental attitude towards life which is both Catholic and Socialist.

[1] Readers would do well to make themselves familiar with Mr George Bernard Shaw's reply to Mr W. H. Mallock's argument concerning ability. It will be found in *Socialism and Brains* (Fabian Society, 3 Clement's Inn, Strand, W.C. 1d.).

II

THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES

Religion and socialism — The universal Spirit — The roots of our tradition — Jewish and socialist philosophy in some respects identical—Jewish origins—Moses as revolutionary—The conquest of Canaan—The Judges—The demand for a king—Solomon as Oriental despot—The rebellion—No divorce between spiritual, mental, and material — The test of spiritual reality — Modern critical theories irrelevant to our subject—The Book of the Covenant — Naboth's vineyard — The reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. compared with the early Victorian era—The prophet-politicians—The national poetry—Josiah the reformer—God's jealousy and its economic implications — More social legislation—Social message of Nehemiah and Ezekiel—Condemnation of interest—Ezra and reform—The last layer of the Law—Land legislation—The Old Testament attitude summed up in the earlier chapters of Isaiah.

II

THE JEWISH SCRIPTURES

"Confine religion to the personal, it grows rancid, morbid. Wed it to patriotism, it lives in the open air, and its blood is pure."—GEORGE ADAM SMITH, *Expositor's Bible: Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. i. p. 25, 1886.

WHAT has the Christian religion to do with socialism? We, whose spiritual ancestors claimed Plato as a Christian, worship the God from whom all good things do come, who giveth to all life and breath and all good things, and hath made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us, for in Him we live and move and have our being. Our theologians have incorporated Greek and Arabian philosophy into the structure of the Christian faith. Our thought and ceremonial are to some extent assimilated from non-Christian sources. Our religion, stifled and deflected in Palestine, expanded and flourished in the wide room of the Græco-Roman world. Of all this we boast, for we have not

borrowed from alien sources, but from the Holy Spirit whose reign is universal and whose inspiration world-wide. But although trees are nourished not only from the root, but from their hundred thousand leaves, the root is after all of vast importance, and the root of the Christian faith is to be found in the Jewish religion. By a true instinct the Christians adopted and adapted the Jewish scriptures to their requirements, when they had no accredited scripture of their own. Our literature and our traditions are saturated with Hebraic conceptions. To the Old Testament we must go, if we are to understand the New; to the national Kingdom and Church of God as understood by the Jew, if we would understand the international Kingdom and Church of God as proclaimed by the Christians.

What, then, has the Jewish religion to say to that economic socialism whose philosophy is fellowship, justice between man and man, the value of the *whole* life, material as well as spiritual, and whose programme is the common ownership of the means of national life? What, if anything, can the Jewish religion tell us about private rent and interest, which we believe are the destruction of fellowship, an outrage on justice, and a hindrance to the life of man, body, mind, and spirit? When we turn to the Jewish sacred literature, we are struck with its variety—songs, myths, history, parables, legal codes, and drama: yet these varying notes are grouped more or less into chords, and even the discords are finally resolved into harmony; for through all the wide range of their literature there runs the binding con-

ception of God and His kingdom here on earth, the sense of fellowship and of justice, the sense also of the value of the whole life, material as well as spiritual. As Israel grows towards unity, these fundamental conceptions of ancient Hebrew and modern socialist translate themselves into a social and political system whose laws against rent and interest are examples of their strenuous attempt to set up a commonwealth founded in Divine justice between man and man.

The Hebrews, a Semitic people, originally dwelt in the Arabian highlands, a country of bracing climate, rich soil, and abundant corn crops, coffee, vineyards, vegetable gardens, and orchards.

As the population increased, the Hebrews, more adventurous than their kinsmen the Syrians, Edomites, and Moabites, wandered forth with their flocks and herds, semi-communistic groups of alert and hardy people; and after many vicissitudes we find them settled in Egypt under the Hyksos dynasty, at first in favour with the kings, but afterwards sorely oppressed. Scourged and bullied by their masters, their cry came up to God by reason of their bonds. In the very palace of the Pharaohs the Hebrew Moses was being trained in all the learning of Egypt. The cry of his people might easily have been stifled by the allurements of the court, but the brilliance of a political future counted as nothing with him when the Spirit of God had fired him with indignation against the bondage of his people. The difficulties were stupendous—all the force of Egypt and the suspicions of his own kinsmen. Cursed by those

whom he would have delivered, the immediate result of interference was a more terrible bondage. It was as difficult to put heart into these spiritless creatures numbed by oppression, as it is for the revolutionaries of our day to fire the slums with the spirit of revolt. "They hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage." He drew back discouraged, but again was driven forward by the energy of God until the work was accomplished and his people had escaped into the deserts beyond the Red Sea.

Coming from a land where the rights of sepulture were regarded as all-important, and the preservation of the body after death was the passion of life; among a people who were even then carrying the remains of their great ancestor Joseph to rest with his fathers, he yet conquered the last natural yearning and withdrew from the sight and sympathy of men to die alone and unattended, lest the idolatrous feeling, always ready to break forth, should in death accord him the superstitious reverence he had refused in life. No man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. But while the despoiled tombs of the Pharaohs mock the vanity that reared them, the name of the Hebrew who, revolting from their tyranny, strove for the elevation of his fellow-men is yet a beacon light to the world.[1]

The day of their deliverance was to be annually observed, and when their children should ask them the meaning of this festival, they should say: "It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when He smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." God would give them great and goodly cities which they builded not, and houses full of all

[1] *Moses*, by Henry George.

good things which they filled not, cisterns hewn out which they had not hewn, vineyards and oliveyards and fields of plenty, and they should eat and be full. So there came to them the idea of conquest and the lust for that goodly land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springing forth in valleys and hills; a land of wheat and barley, of oil and olives and honey, of vines and pomegranates, a land wherein they should eat bread without scarceness.

Moab said unto the elders of Midian, "Now shall this multitude lick up that is round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field." Baalam, bribed to foretell their downfall, is compelled to prophesy their success:—

> How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, thy tabernacles, O Israel! As valleys are they spread forth, as gardens by the river side, as aloes which the Lord hath planted. Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be in many waters, and his king shall be higher than Agag, and his kingdom shall be exalted. God bringeth him forth out of Egypt; he hath as it were the strength of the wild-ox; he shall eat up the nations, and shall break their bones in pieces.

The conquest of Canaan was slow, and the difficulty great; certain tribes were not loyal, preferring to mix with the enemy and adopt their customs; many considered too swift and complete a victory would not be wise: they must not annex more land than they could till. To this transitional period belong those natural leaders of the people whom we know as the Judges. They arose in time of need; they came from the people and were acceptable to them. These leaders were sometimes women. At

this time there were few social inequalities and no abject poverty; these evils belonged to the later period of commerce and despotism. For the present, the Jews were cut off from the sea-board and the great trade routes by the presence of still unconquered tribes. The ruthless nature of their warfare is illustrated in the case of the Daneite tribe who descend upon Laish, a people inoffensive and secure, seizing their fertile lands and showing no quarter. The whole of Canaan had been marked out among the tribes for conquest, and on its annexation was divided portion by portion by each tribe according to the number of its families. The basis of their land system would seem to have been not an absolute but a relative peasant-proprietorship, with ultimate ownership vested in the tribe.

It was only very gradually that the tribes were welded together into a nation; the people were beginning to feel that they could never complete their conquest under these spasmodic leaderships; they wanted a more permanent leader who should be their general in war time and their law-giver in times of peace. Their demand is resisted by the prophet Samuel, who warns them of the dangers of kingship.

And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them. According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them up out of Egypt even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods, so do they also unto thee. Now therefore hearken unto their voice: howbeit yet protest solemnly unto them, and shew them the manner of the

king that shall reign over them. And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto the people that asked of him a king. And he said, This will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you: He will take your sons, and appoint them for himself, for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; and some shall run before his chariots. And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties; and will set them to ear his ground, and to reap his harvest, and to make his instruments of war, and instruments of his chariots. And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries, and to be cooks, and to be bakers. And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards, even the best of them, and give them to his servants. And he will take the tenth of your seed, and of your vineyards, and give to his officers, and to his servants. And he will take your menservants, and your maidservants, and your goodliest young men, and your asses, and put them to his work. He will take the tenth of your sheep: and ye shall be his servants. And ye shall cry out in that day because of your king which ye shall have chosen you: and the Lord will not hear you in that day. Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel: and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles. And Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king. And Samuel said unto the men of Israel, Go ye every man unto his city.

We find some reflection of this warning in an early written law, wherein the king is forbidden to possess much silver or gold, or to multiply to himself horses or wives. And indeed their first king remained a simple farmer to the day of his death. David marks the transition from simplicity to wealth. This great warrior-politician, who did so much towards the unification of Israel, had begun his life as a shepherd

But with Solomon, Samuel's forebodings are fully justified and the old law disregarded. Solomon is a good example of the Oriental despot. He made slaves of the conquered peoples, and although he did not actually enslave his fellow-countrymen, he gathered together chariots and horsemen, made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones, and cedars made he to be as the sycamore tree in the lowlands for abundance; his harem was immense, and the demands of these luxurious foreign women, who had turned away his heart from the simple customs of his ancestors, must have constituted a colossal drain upon the resources of the country. The fact that he was able to stave off a popular revolt is a tribute to the wisdom of his statesmanship; the *entente* that he was able to make with Egypt was of great value to Israel, and the poor would, no doubt, be fascinated by the glitter and lavishness of the court and the army, and, heavy as was the taxation, would for the time acquiesce in a huge expenditure made possible by foreign levies.

With the mention of this despotism and its large revenues comes a significant mention of excessive poverty, for at the king's death the people, led by Jeroboam, come to Solomon's legitimate successor and issue their ultimatum: "Thy father made our yoke grievous; now therefore make the grievous service of thy father, and the heavy yoke that he put upon us, lighter, and we will serve thee."

At first he is inclined to yield, but ultimately he refuses the democratic counsel of the more conservative advisers and replies: "As my father did lade you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke: my

father chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions."

But he had forgotten the power of the revolutionary prophet. Ahijah drives Jeroboam to conspiracy; the revolution is ablaze, and the answer comes swiftly: "What portion have we in David? what inheritance have we in the son of Jesse? to your tents, O Israel." So the orthodox succession loses ten out of the twelve tribes, and civil war is only averted through the instrumentality of another prophet.

The Hebrews are now practically in possession of the whole of Palestine, but are split up into two sections under rival kings, each accepting the same law, and each professing to be the kingdom of God on earth.

It will now be fairly evident that the Old Testament conception of religion recognised no divorce between things spiritual and things material. Hebrew spirituality was concerned with the bodies, minds, and spirits of men, and translated itself immediately, as all healthy spirituality at all times must, into political action. Their kingdom was not of this world—that is, was not to be modelled on the worldly customs of the surrounding imperialism; it was to be the commonwealth of God, founded in justice between man and man. The reign of Solomon had been a departure from the simple ideal of justice. The earth is the Lord's, together with its products. Their prophets and law-givers believed that the earth had been given for the use of a peasant nation of workers, and not for the profit of a rent-extracting minority.

Capital, such as there was, must not enslave men by means of interest; the needs of the poor must not be made the opportunity of the powerful. Landlordism and capitalism are of this world; now is God's earthly kingdom not from hence. But as these spiritual beliefs were real beliefs, and not modern Sunday platitudes, they were immediately translated into national action in the shape of laws.

It used to be the custom to group the Old Testament laws together and claim for all of them Mosaic authorship. Modern critics challenge this claim, and are inclined to regard the bulk of so-called Mosaic legislation as being the outcome of the prophetic period. There is, however, no reason why we should doubt that Moses had some vision of a theocracy founded on justice, in which there should be plenty and to spare for all, of a people uncontaminated with the customs of their neighbours, of a people planted and rooted evenly and wisely in the land. Moses would have seen the evils of landlordism, capitalism, and usury in Egypt; they would be vividly contrasted in his mind with the democratic and communistic traditions of his own people. It may well be that the Jewish law is essentially Mosaic, although its actual committal to writing may have been but gradual, and legislation would develop along the lines of national experience. While not committing oneself entirely to the theories of modern critics, it will be interesting provisionally to accept certain of their conclusions and to trace the economic history of Israel along the chronological lines that they have suggested.

In accordance with this plan, we must here consider the Book of the Covenant, which is supposed to embody the earliest form of the written law. The code shows us that slavery still exists among the Jews, but in a comparatively harmless form. Every seventh year the Jewish slave goes free, unless he prefers servitude. If a father sells his daughter into slavery, he must not sell her to foreigners. Such a slave could even marry into the family she served, and must in that case be treated as one of the family, and could claim food and raiment and her marriage rights if her husband took another wife. If the claim was refused she could go home. Man-stealing and taking interest are punishable with death. If a person's clothing was taken as security for a loan, it was to be returned to him the same night. The existence of poor people was contemplated, but they were to be relieved in various ways, every seventh year, for instance, being a fallow year, when fields, vineyards, and oliveyards were to be common to all.

An early form of the Decalogue seems to have been included in this code. The Sabbath rest was based on humanitarian considerations. The people's ownership of the land is taken for granted in the fifth commandment; the removing of one's neighbour's land-mark would be the most glaring instance of the breaking of the sixth, while the tenth would secure the peasantry their ancient economic rights. Health and strength would be the result of national obedience to these laws; national disaster and individual disease would be the penalty of disobedience.

The story of Naboth's vineyard is an example of the clash between the lusts of an Orientalised despotism and the rights of the Jewish democracy.

Ahab knew the tenacity with which the Israelite clung to his freehold, and the sanctity which attached to the ancestral inheritance, and hence, when Naboth refused to sell, the king could only fume helplessly at the failure of his petty plans for a private park. His wife was from Tyre, where royal power was older and accustomed to move rough-shod over the fancied rights of the common herd. She sneered at his feeble grip and gave him a lesson in handling the judiciary. But the judicial murder of Naboth brought Elijah out to face the king, a grim incarnation of justice and of the divine rights of the people. Ahab had collided with the primitive land-system of Israel and the prophetic sense of justice, and it cost his dynasty the throne and Jezebel her life.[1]

The most significant period from our point of view, as regards both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms, corresponds with the reigns of Uzziah and Jeroboam II. It was a period of unparalleled prosperity; wealth was increasing by leaps and bounds. It may not unfittingly be compared with the beginnings of the nineteenth century in England, for, in spite of this prolific increase, the poor were becoming poorer in inverse ratio to the growth in the fortunes of the rich. We read of idle lives given up entirely to pleasure, of inlaid ivory houses, of town and country residences, of costly wines and scent, of the ever-growing claims of capitalism and landlordism. Poverty increased, for the people were no longer masters of the situation. "Capital controlled the food-supply, and the landed estates displaced the

[1] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis.*

peasantry." A sudden war, a famine, an illness, would push the poor man over the border-line into slavery. The people, robbed of their lands, were obliged to borrow at enormous rates of interest to pay the taxes, and often sold their children to slavery to meet their obligations. The revival of husbandry was eclipsed by the growth of trade and of the city. For the poor man there was no redress, for the law and the official religion had alike passed into the hands of the classes. Up to this period the land has been covered by a sturdy warrior peasantry; now there is no place for the poor man, and with the growth of civilisation we note the inevitable appearance of the landless proletariat. Internally, there was misery and dissension: externally, the empire of Assyria was rising on the eastern horizon "like a cyclone cloud." "It moved down on the cluster of little kingdoms in Syria and Palestine with irresistible force," for it was "destined to grind up the tribal nationality of the ancient Orient, and to begin the work which Chaldea and the Greeks continued and the Romans completed."[1]

The dark ages of Israel called forth the Prophets. George Adam Smith has said that no prophet ever worked on the basis of principles only. He came always in alliance with facts. As Maurice and Kingsley are to some extent the creation of the nineteenth century, so Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Isaiah are created by the needs of their time. It is remarkable that men who suffer from some intimate and individual trouble will find themselves turning to the pages of

[1] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis.*

these most spiritual of religious leaders; yet these leaders whose spirituality has endured were essentially politicians, and would have stared in blank amazement at the silly question, "Has religion anything to do with politics?" They were revolutionaries whose audacity would have staggered Messrs Hyndman and Blatchford. There is again illustrated in their lives the nature of Jewish religion, its recognition of justice and the needs of men's bodies, its denial that there can be any spirituality apart from fellowship. The Spirit is not given to the separate believer, but to the nation. The very Psalms are, for the most part, national songs. The "I" of the Psalmist is Israel in its totality. Modern critics suggest that even the fifty-first Psalm, so long supposed to be a Davidic poem of personal repentance, is the wail of the nation in captivity, with the walls of its city razed to the ground. Where individuals are gathered together in national fellowship, there is God in the midst of them. Hence the tent or the temple becomes the trysting-place, the symbol of unity and therefore of salvation. Jerusalem is the Holy City, for it is at unity in itself, and thither the tribes go up to worship the national God.

Nathan and Gad had been David's political advisers, Ahijah had stirred Jeroboam to revolt, Elijah had resisted Ahab, Elisha had fanned the rebellion of Jehu, Amos thunders against the misrule of the king of Israel, Isaiah denounces the landlords and the usurers, Micah charges them with blood-guiltiness; Jeremiah and the later prophets, though they strike a more intimate note of personal repentance, strike it

as the prelude to that national restoration for which they hunger as exiles.

The first chapters of Isaiah are typical of the Old Testament point of view. Just as the prophets of the nineteenth century thundered against the "Christian" employers of Lancashire, and told them their houses were cemented with the blood of little children,[1] so Isaiah cries against his generation: Your governing classes companion with thieves; behold, you build up Sion with blood. Their ceremonial and their Sabbath-keeping are an abomination to God. "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you. Your hands are full of blood." The poor man is robbed. The rich exact usury. "Woe unto you that lay house to house and field to field, that you may dwell alone in the midst of the land." "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil: learn to do well, seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow. Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins be blood-coloured, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword."

And now the ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom have been carried into captivity. The Southern kingdom is nearing its end. In this kingdom the reign of Josiah, a genuine reformer, is marked by the

[1] See Chapter IX. of the present book for condition of factory workers and increase of wealth under Christo-capitalism.

discovery of the Book of the Law. Jeremiah and Ezekiel are the prophets of this period. The code of Josiah incorporates the earlier Book of the Covenant and possibly some custom law, and applies the older legislation to the needs of the time in the spirit of the prophetic period that has intervened. The promise of health and prosperity is reiterated. The laws are to be taught to the children as part of their religious education. All sickness shall vanish from the nation, if men will remember God and the requirements of His justice. The strict legislation against interest in any shape or form is repeated. Its transgression is to be punished by death.

It is the fashion to sneer at law-givers and prophets on account of their religious bigotry and exclusiveness. Why should they be so concerned to keep Israel from contact with the gods and ideals of other nations? It does not matter what a man believes so long as his actions are in the right. The prophets would have answered promptly, the economic action of the nation is in the wrong, because the nation has lusted after other gods. And, in point of fact, history is on the side of the prophets. For we have seen that when Solomon worshipped other divinities the nation groaned under an economic burden too grievous to be borne. The period of landlordism and capitalism was the period of faithlessness to the jealous God of Israel. Just as Palestinian theology has its expression in something not unlike modern socialism, so Assyrian and Babylonian theology has its expression in something not unlike modern commercialism. When the Book of the Covenant is insisting on loyalty to the

national God, and nothing per cent., and the rights of the people to their land, imperialism, landlordism, and usury flourish in the countries all around them. The rate of legal interest throughout the Babylonish empire is twenty per cent., the laws of Menu permit twenty-four per cent., and Egyptian legislation only interferes to forbid more than a hundred per cent.

The fresh notes in the newly discovered legislation are the land-mark law, which sternly forbids encroachment upon peasant rights; consideration for the foreigner; additional sanitary and food laws; tithe regulations on behalf of widows, orphans, foreigners, etc.; that those who have no economic independence should eat and be satisfied; that loans should be given cheerfully, not only without any interest, but even at the risk of losing the principal. To withhold a loan because the year of release is at hand, in which the principal is no longer recoverable, is described as a grave sin. When you are compelled to free your slaves, you must give them sufficient capital to embark upon some industry which shall prevent their falling back into slavery. A number of holidays are insisted upon. There must be no more crushing of the poor out of existence, for God cares for those people who have been driven to poverty, and they shall never cease out of the land. Howbeit there shall be no poor with you, for the Lord will bless you, if you will obey these laws.

We do not know how far the nation responded to these social ideals, but the year 606 B.C. marks the overthrow of the Southern Kingdom, and a few years later the destruction of the Temple. In

586 B.C. the peasant population is deported, and a proletariat is left. In 536 B.C. a few return, but this remnant becomes enslaved to the Persian king. Usury and rapacity are everywhere rampant. Drought and crop failures increase the misery. The richer Jews, instead of learning compassion, prey upon the miseries of the poor. In Malachi and Ezekiel we read of fields mortgaged, usurious loans, and child-slavery.

Nehemiah seems to have been the instrument of national repentance.

Many had mortgaged their lands and vineyards to pay exorbitant taxes to the king. They had even sold their children to meet their debts. Nehemiah angrily rebukes the rich oppressors, and commands them to restore the land to the people, and to give them back a hundredth part of the money, corn, wine, and oil that they exact of them. Nehemiah's demands are listened to, and restoration is made.[1]

For examples of the outspokenness of the prophets, the book of Amos should be studied, as also the words of Ezekiel and of the later Isaiah. Ezekiel takes his stand against pessimism and fatalism (chaps. xviii. and xix.). Each generation is responsible for its own deeds. However evil the father's life, the son may turn and act justly. He will not be punished for his father's transgressions. He that

> hath not oppressed any, but hath restored to the debtor his pledge, hath spoiled none by violence, hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment; he that hath not given forth upon usury,

[1] Neh. v. 4–13.

neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God.

With this should be compared a passage in chapter xxii.:—

Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls, to get dishonest gain. And her prophets have daubed them with untempered mortar, seeing vanity, and divining lies unto them, saying, Thus saith the Lord God, when the Lord hath not spoken. The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none. Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads, saith the Lord God.

It is to be noted that just as the sentence in Isaiah about our sins being as scarlet, so dear to the hearts of revivalists, is wrenched from its moorings, which are social and revolutionary, so also the Prayer Book sentence, "when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness," is taken from this social passage, in which the wickedness is defined as taking increase, and in other ways oppressing the poor.

The second Isaiah (chap. lviii.), in the passage commencing, "Cry aloud and spare not," lifts up his voice like a trumpet against the rich man's injustice, thieving, and hypocrisy:—

Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush,

and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? And if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon day: and the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a walled garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in.

The result of this revival was that the people promised to observe the seventh year of release and to forego the exaction of all debts. This leads on to the reforming legislation of the time of Ezra, which is now considered to be the third and last layer of the Law, and corresponds to much of our book of Leviticus.

One notes particularly in this legislation that the corners of the field are to be left for the poor, as also the gleaning of harvests; the poor have a right to pick up the fallen fruits in the orchards; oppression and robbery, especially of land, are strictly prohibited; workmen are to be paid by the day at sundown; men are not to be worked on the holidays; the fallow year is to be observed for the sake of the hired servants; actual slavery has now disappeared; there is to be no favouritism nor unjust judgment,

nor nourishing of secret enmities against one's neighbour, for you are to remember to "love your neighbour as yourself." Every fiftieth year is the year of liberty. In that year all Hebrew servants and their families are to be unconditionally freed, and to return to their peasant holdings. For the freehold of agricultural land and cottages is never to be sold. Only leasehold sales are permissible, and the price of these is to be determined by the average value of the crops till the next year of release. House property in the towns can, under certain conditions, be sold outright. This code marks the total abolition of Hebrew slavery.

There would seem to have been a genuine attempt on the part of the nation to observe this legislation, but with the development of commerce and of credit operations, the strain of obedience to laws whose observance would have been more possible in simpler and more primitive times is greatly increased. No doubt this economic development would lead to all kinds of evasions, with which we may compare the evasions permitted in Christ's time by even such rigorists as Hillel.[1] We have no evidence of the material conditions of the people under the later Persian and Greek dominions. Josephus, who is the authority for the Greek period, was unfortunately a snob, and showed no interest in social matters. Wealth was increasing with the increase of the population; perhaps we may infer that, along with commercial development and contact with other civilisations, poverty was also on the increase.

[1] And also the modifications of the later canon law; *cf.* Chapter VI.

The Maccabean period sees a temporary improvement. There is a recovery of national independence under the loose suzerainty of Rome. The Jews acquire a valuable sea-board and a consequent over-sea commerce.

Then did they till their ground in peace, and the earth gave her increase, and the trees of the field their fruit. The ancient men sat all in the streets, communing together of good things, and the young men put on glorious and warlike apparel. He provided victuals for the cities, and set in them all manner of munition, so that his honourable name was renowned unto the end of the world. He made peace in the land, and Israel rejoiced with great joy, for every man sat under his vine and his fig-tree, and there was none to fray them.[1]

[1] 1 Mac. xiv. 8–14.

III

THE GOSPELS

Goodness as preparation for the Kingdom—National expectancy—Various views of the Kingdom—John the Baptizer—His revolutionary message—St John and our Lord contrasted—The Gospel of the Kingdom—A Kingdom of body, mind, and spirit—Christ's followers—His popularity—The children of the Kingdom to be cast out—His reception at Nazareth—An "unpatriotic" sermon—The Peter Gospel emphasising His unconventionality — Luke's account of the kernel of His teaching—Blessed are ye poor—The poor understand the Sermon on the Mount—The Sermon explained—Inward conversion and outward change—Not to destroy but to complete the old material-spiritual conception—The things that are Cæsar's—General principles and their varying application—Can the present system claim to be in any sense an application?—The question of compulsion and Count Tolstoy's interpretation—The use of the parable — From nationalist to internationalist Kingdom—Parables of the Kingdom—Was the Kingdom to be cataclysmic? — The evolutionary theory—The seed growing secretly—The sower, the net, and the tree—The pearl beyond price—The unjust judge—Eagerness, persistency, and alertness essential—Parable of the talents and of the steward of injustice—Attitude of the Pharisees—Dives and Lazarus—The rich young landlord and Zaccheus—Judge or divider—Parable of the labourers in the vineyard—The alabaster box—The poor always with you—The last judgment—God's Utopia and overmastering life—The rich young man again—A general and not particular application—A domesticated Christ.

III

THE GOSPELS

"Whatever aspect (of the Kingdom of God) any man emphasized, it was still a national and collective idea. It involved the restoration of Israel as a nation to outward independence, security, and power, such as it had under the Davidic kings. It involved that social justice, prosperity, and happiness for which the Law and the Prophets called, and for which the common people always longed. It involved that religious purity and holiness of which the nation had always fallen short. And all this was to come in an ideal degree, such as God alone by direct intervention could bestow. When Jesus used the phrase 'the Kingdom of God,' it inevitably evoked that whole sphere of thought in the minds of His hearers. If He did not mean by it the substance of what they meant by it, it was a mistake to use the term. If He did not mean the consummation of the theocratic hope, but merely an internal blessedness for individuals with the hope of getting to Heaven, why did He use the words around which all the collective hopes clustered? In that case it was not only misleading, but a dangerous phrase. It unfettered the political hopes of the crowd: it drew down upon Him the suspicion of the government: it actually led to His death."—RAUSCHENBUSCH, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, pp. 57, 58.

SINCE the days of the Jewish Captivity, religion had become more intimate and introspective. Opportunity was lacking for political expression, and its absence drove the people in upon themselves, and the aspect of the individual soul and its God was developed. During the period of the Maccabees the

normal expression was regained, but even then the nation was not free of the suzerainty of Rome. But goodness, though individualised, was always treated as a preparation for the national restoration. No man by individual righteousness could live the life God had intended for him; that life could alone be lived in the Golden Age of deliverance and of corporate national independence. Such a restoration of God's Kingdom was expected on all sides. The kingdom of the Maccabees had broken in pieces through force of external opposition and internal discord. So far as human foresight went, it looked as though no recovery of the nation would ever again be possible. And yet the general expectancy grew stronger every day. Now and again crude revolutionary leaders arose who, after futile resistance to the Roman power, were executed along with their followers. Some thought the Kingdom would be restored by means of one of these mad Mullahs or Messiahs. Others, despairing of a general restoration, were ready to retire into country places and set up ascetic communities withdrawn from commerce and from sensuous enjoyment. Meanwhile the Sadducees and Herodians, the Erastians of that day, shrugged their shoulders and scoffed at the turbulent enthusiasm of the crowds. The Roman dominion suited them well enough. The scribes and Pharisees looked forward, but with none of the enthusiasm of the revolutionaries, to the coming of the Kingdom. Meanwhile the law must be rigorously observed—not indeed the whole law, but the law as expurgated by the rigid Puritan mind. Self-

exalted, complacent, despising others, they were a party of fussy, trivial literalists regarding the common people, who knew not the law, as accursed.

Above the clamour of these contending parties is raised the voice of one crying in the wilderness. John the Baptizer begins his mission in the wild country of South Jordan, not far from the Dead Sea. His religion is not so much a gospel as a call to repentance in preparation for a gospel. Do good works, and show your change of heart and mind by the usual method of immersion in the Jordan. He was here as a herald to clear away the jungle undergrowth and make straight the Messiah's path. A total abstainer, he lived the simple life, clothing himself in coarse stuff and eating just what came to hand in the wilderness. The Kingdom was close upon them; it was essential that they should return to the old paths to walk in them. This repentance, this internal change of front, though essential, was not the Kingdom of God any more than a little girl's frock is the party to which she is going. Repentance will involve the levelling doctrine of the ancient Law and Prophets.

> Every valley shall be filled,
> Every mountain and hill brought low;
> And the crooked shall be made straight,
> And the rough ways made smooth;
> And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

His preaching causes a great sensation; everybody makes the excursion into the wilderness to hear him. When the religious leaders come to his baptism, he cries: O generation of snakes, who hath warned you

to flee from the coming wrath? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Don't cheat yourselves into a false security by thinking that you have Abraham to your father. Man is not redeemed by the blood of his ancestors, but by his own works. God is able of these very stones to raise up children to Abraham. The axe is even now laid to the root of the tree; every fruitless tree shall be destroyed. All worthless things are to be burnt with unquenchable fire. And the people themselves ask him what they are to do, and he answers, they must equalise their property; the man with two coats must share with the man who has none; so likewise with money. The soldiers ask what are they to do, and he tells them not to add to their wages by robbing the peasantry, on whom they are quartered. The tax-gatherers are not to cheat, and not to squeeze the last farthing of profit out of the people. As to the nature of the Kingdom itself he has no clear vision, but he knows that such social works as these are essential if they are to enjoy it, if its coming is not to grind them as powder. The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom is imminent; there is One coming immediately who will not baptize with water, but with fire. The terrible Messiah is even now at the doors.

John and Jesus are worlds asunder, yet a fulgent sincerity rafts them together in the midst of the slush and drift of that turbulent age. The last of the prophets rebukes the upstart king for immorality, and the rebuke costs him his life.

"Now after that John was delivered up, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying,

The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye, and believe in the gospel." His coming is described as the scattering of the proud, the dethroning of princes, the raising of the humble, the filling of the hungry, and the rich sent empty away. Before His mission, in the loneliness of the country, He is besieged with temptations. Was He after all the Messiah chosen to redeem His country? What was to be the nature of His mission? Had He the power to carry it through? But He proved Himself the conqueror of these doubts, and came again into Galilee with the good news of the impending Kingdom. The time is ripe, the Kingdom near; turn and believe the glorious news. John in his prison heard and wondered. Was this really the Deliverer? The reply was swift and decisive. Disease was being defeated, ignorance dispersed, evil crushed. Body, mind, and spirit were being redeemed. Such were the signs of the Kingdom of God. At once Christ begins to gather round Him a society of men and women, alert and true, who have eyes to see and ears to hear, and begins to train them into an adequate conception of the Kingdom and the King. It is a band, for the most part, of fishermen and peasants. A tax-gatherer and a harlot, both belonging to classes ostracised from organised religion and society for disreputability, are members of that band.

He goes about the commercial centres and villages of Galilee, and the people are amazed at His cures and His preaching. Everywhere He rebukes disease, restores men's minds, strengthens their bodies, and preaches the Golden Age. He cannot escape the

crowds. They throng Him, not only from Galilee, but from the remotest parts of Palestine. Among those healed is the slave of a foreign soldier, who is a half convert to Judaism and popular with the religious leaders. The soldier's faith leads Christ to exclaim, to the astonishment of the people, Many shall come from the East and West, and shall be on an equality with Abraham and the Jewish heroes in God's Kingdom, and the children of the Kingdom shall be expelled. He gives no elaborate definition of the Kingdom of Heaven, but only insists that this Kingdom which was familiar to them, about which they could read in their law and their prophets, was to burst asunder the Jewish barriers and let all men in. Hints there had been of such an universalism in the Old Covenant, but for the most part that Covenant had been nationalist, and the Jews of Christ's day were narrowly exclusive. The people of Galilee believe in Him, although it is doubtful how far they understand His message. His native village is an exception. He has become something of a celebrity, and comes to Nazareth, and is allowed to expound the Scriptures in the local meeting-house. He reads the passage about the year of liberty, when the land returns to the people and the oppressed are set free:—

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Therefore he has anointed me to preach glad tidings to the poor;
> He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives,
> And recovery of sight to the blind,
> To set the oppressed at liberty,
> To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

He hands the Scripture to an attendant and sits

down; the eyes of all are fixed on Him and He begins to say to them, "To-day has this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." They are puzzled, and ask each other, "Is not this Joseph's son?" He had made an astounding claim, but He does not back it up with the cures and other mighty works which have made His reputation in other places. He answers their doubt with the words, "No prophet is acceptable in his own country." In truth, Elijah was not sent to the widows of his own people, but to a foreigner in the land of Sidon. There were many lepers in Israel in Elijah's time, but only the foreigner Naaman was healed. This unpatriotic teaching infuriates them, and they hustle Him up the brow of the hill, and would have hurled Him down.

These early days of His brief ministry were often retold to the multitudes by St Peter after Christ's death, and the Apostle would dwell upon His unconventionality and His audacity. St Peter grouped together in his teaching five instances[1] of this, and each one of the five was a separate offence against accepted religious standards. Sometimes He kept the letter of the Scriptures; more often He broke it. But whether breaking or keeping it, Christ would always bring His hearers down below the letter to the spirit and motive which had inspired it. The old morality had been made for man, not man for morality. Human needs were above the letter of the law.

Another account of His teaching summarises it

[1] In the Gospel according to St Mark, the scribe of the Peter teaching.

as follows:—"Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and separate you from their company, and revile you: rejoice and be glad, your reward is great in heaven; for in the same manner did their fathers unto the prophets. Woe unto you that are rich, for you have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full now, for ye shall hunger. Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that sneer at you. Offer the cheek to the smiter. Withhold not your coat from him that takes your cloak. Give to everyone that asks; and of him that takes away your goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them. . . . And if you lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? Even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much. But love your enemies and do them good, and lend hoping for nothing again." These passages are generally interpreted as an appendage to normal everyday commercial life; but without doubt our Lord meant them as the basis of all life.

Nowhere did He bless poverty; but to those poor men of Galilee, who had ears to hear and eyes to see, He says, Blessed are ye poor men, for yours is the Kingdom of Heaven. You understand it; you have made it your own; you believe in it. They may persecute you and revile you, but they cannot take the Kingdom out of your heart, or shake your determination that it shall be established on the earth. It was these people who could most becomingly pray, "Thy

Kingdom come on earth as in heaven; give us day by day bread sufficient for the day." It was these men who would best understand that the heavy labour they had to undergo was the result of the system of rent and usury and oppressive taxation which was ruining their country, a system which was the outcome of the ethics of the kingdoms of this world. They would understand that in the establishment of the commonwealth of God based on Divine justice they would find a lighter yoke and an easier burden. His teaching is again summarised in another account as follows:—Store not up individual private fortunes. You cannot serve God and greed. Don't be over anxious for your life, for food or drink or clothing. The birds do not sow or reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: are you not of much more value than they? The lilies of the field toil not, neither do they spin, and yet they are beautifully clad. If God clothes them, shall He not much more clothe you? He is your Father. He knows you need these necessities. Seek ye first His kingdom and His justice, and all these things shall be added to you.

If one compares this summary with the teaching of the Old Testament on the subject of the Kingdom—namely, that a commonwealth based on Divine justice must exclude all non-producers, that is, all possibility of living upon others by means of rent or interest, that the earth and its product is to be the property of all the subjects of the Kingdom, that God has provided bountifully for the needs of all, that they have only to obey these just laws of anti-rent

and anti-interest to discover that God's earth and its product is sufficient for their needs—it is easy to see with certainty and without shadow of doubt that our Lord is referring to no mere inward change of soul on the part of separate individuals, but to an inward conversion of the said individuals regarding themselves as a united people, a change in view-point, which will immediately express itself in collective action. People who do not think, but clothe themselves in second-hand thoughts, object to modern socialist legislation because of its outwardness. When they begin to think, they will understand that no revolutionary legislation is ever carried through Parliament without first a tremendous agitation throughout the country, with its appeal to the heart and mind of the nation, and that in social reform a change of heart does actually precede a change of law. Lord Shaftesbury's Factory Acts were preceded by the conversion of thousands to a more human view of life. The legislation for the feeding of school-children is the immediate effect of a socialist agitation of some twenty years, which has at last converted the people of England to a sense of pity, and that sense of pity has been embodied in a law; the result of that law is to heal the bodies of little children and to bring hope to their souls. If our Lord had meant to contradict the Old Testament idea of the Kingdom, the idea of a people embodying its inward belief in justice and mercy in outward and material laws, He would have been very careful to say so, but He deliberately denies this, saying: "Think not that I came to destroy the law, or the prophets: I came

not to destroy, but to complete. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law till all things be accomplished. Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. . . . Except your justice shall exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." And yet He Himself broke the letter of the law, and defended His followers when they broke it. Taking His teaching as a whole, we come to the conclusion that the outward law meant always for Him the expression or the safeguarding of some human need, that He wanted to bring His people back to the living principles of law and prophet. The principle underlying the tribal peasant-proprietorship and anti-usury law of the Old Testament was that in a kingdom of righteousness no one should be heavy-burdened in order that others should escape the burden of work altogether. This principle is reasserted in early Christian times in the Church's economic motto: "If any man will not work, neither shall he eat." We are told that Christ came to lay down general principles: this is one of the principles which He laid down. He laid it down that it might be carried into effect by a collective people who had become convinced of its truth. He did not say to them, You shall carry it into effect by means of peasant-proprietorship, or by means of feudal ownership, or by means of economic socialism. He did say, *You shall carry it into effect*, and promised the spirit of wisdom and of life to the Christian

fellowship throughout the ages, which should guide them so long as they were loyal to the ideals of the Kingdom in the economic application of those ideals best suited to the actual day and generation. The letter of a law divorced from its spirit and intention killeth; the spirit or intention of law gives it life; the intention of the old law was that none should idle, that all should be producers, that none should live by means of tribute levied on the production of others. We should be glad if our critics would tell us in what sense the economic system of the present day is an expression of the living spirit and intention of the law of the Jews, which was not abrogated, but extended and universally applied, by Jesus Christ. It is not necessary here to discuss the further question of whether Christ was an anarchist or a socialist—that is, as to whether He was uncompromisingly against every kind of enforcement of law by aristocracies, plutocracies, monarchies, or democracies,—for our modern Christian critics are cheating themselves or us, and merely playing the hypocrite, when they object to social legislation on this particular ground. They have no intention of taking the bars and bolts from their front doors, or abolishing the police or any of those legal and compulsory safeguards which secure to them their ill-gotten gains; they are merely joking with us, and their joke is in very bad taste. The only serious and consistent opponent of socialism on the ground that it involves compulsion, and that compulsion is intrinsically antichristian, is the passive anarchist Count Tolstoy, who, although he opposes legal socialism, more strenuously opposes

the compulsory commercial individualism (which comfortable middle-class Christians complacently support) as being the most unutterably unchristian thing the world has ever seen.

Now, Tolstoy's contention is that any physical expression of an inward idea is unchristian, or rather, such physical expression as should curtail the liberty of others; all government, therefore, prisons, police, armies, physical resistance or compulsion on the part of individuals or communities, is antichrist. The bomb-thrower and the government that hangs him, the thief and his gaoler, the aristocracy who have stolen the land by compulsion and the democracy who would regain the land by compulsion, are equally condemned. Now, Tolstoy's criticisms are suspect for two reasons. First, he black-brushes out every incident in the Gospels which does not square with his preconceived notion of what a Saviour ought to be; he singles out a couple of texts and asserts that these are the essentials of the Gospel. Other passages contradict his interpretation of that couple of texts; they are therefore interpolations of a later date. Secondly, his particular interpretation in this matter contradicts the unanimous interpretation of the undivided Church. This does not trouble him, but it troubles us, for the Christian Bible was not written by Christ, but by members of His Church, and it was the Church that finally selected certain writings of its members and rejected others, and bound its selections together under one cover which we call the New Testament. If the unanimous interpretation of its members be rejected with contempt as being the

outcome of a corrupt and incapable body, why should not the action of members of this same corrupt and incapable body be suspect, when it chose certain writings and rejected the rest? Why should not Tolstoy, and, indeed, all those modern interpreters who profess to love the book while they despise its authors and selectors, go to the rejected gospels as their standard of what Christ really said, assured in their minds that whatever this degraded and apostate Church selects must be false, and whatever it rejects must be true? We cannot, therefore, regard with any great degree of seriousness a critic who fixes an absolute gulf between the human tradition labelled "Gospels" and the human tradition labelled "Epistles and Early Writings," and who is quite capricious and irresponsible in his use of the sacred text.

He isolates a single sentence from the Sermon on the Mount: "Resist not him that is evil," and interprets it as meaning that no physical resistance, force, or compulsion is permissible to Christian governments or individuals. He can find no passage which in the least modifies this conclusion, and he points in triumph to a passage which confirms it: "He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword." Jesus was the meek and gentle persuader of the souls of men. His Kingdom would indeed have its outward expression; it would involve a change in material conditions; the rich would get off the backs of the poor; there would be a universal but voluntary communism, after the pattern of the communism of the first days in Jerusalem. Probably the Kingdom would be established very gradually by a slow evolution-

ary process; but if the government should imprison a man, or even fine him, for appropriating a piece of the common land, it would be equally guilty with the individual who prevents monstrous cruelty to a child by knocking down its tormentor. Tolstoy here has fallen into the trap that is laid for all literalists; he has ceased to be literal. For if we are to isolate this particular text and interpret it literally, it is equally hostile to passive and argumentative resistance as to active and corporal resistance. It does not say, "Resist the evil man with your brain, but do not resist him with your arm"; it says, "Do not resist him at all." The fact is, we must take Christ's teaching as a whole, and from it discover the intention that underlies the whole. He found men much too eager to revenge private wrongs. People refused to regard themselves as a holy family, but were always standing on their mean and miserable little individual rights or fancied rights. He says in effect, "Be more generous, be in charity one with the other, do not be suspicious one of the other; be large-hearted enough to turn the other cheek; life is short and the battle is long, the battle against mammon and his allies, the battle for the Kingdom of God." Now, such an interpretation has not only the advantage of being in accord with common sense and universal tradition, but does not contradict the rest of Christ's teaching, for the Prince of Peace was no peace-at-any-price prince. On one occasion He uses physical violence, upsetting the tables of the money-changers, and driving them, together with the oxen, out of His Father's courts. His language is not mild and con-

ciliatory like that of Tolstoy, but fierce and terrible. He calls His king a fox, His disciple Satan, the religious leaders vipers, hypocrites, and whited sepulchres. His Kingdom is for the violent; men of violence are storming it. He comes to cast fire upon the earth, and wishes it were already ablaze. He brings not peace, but a sword; He divides families, the father from the son, the daughter from the mother. John baptized with water, but He with fire. His Kingdom will grind the unbeliever to powder, will burn the tares with unquenchable fire. It shall be more tolerable for Sodom in the day of judgment than for the villages that refuse hospitality to His followers. Now, whatever may be the interpretation of these passages, they are simply irreconcilable with the picture of the passive Tolstoyan Messiah, and they suggest an answer to both the consistent and inconsistent moderns who claim Christ as a non-resister. Tolstoy says Christ was never angry; St Mark says Christ looked about Him with anger. The fact is, the "Resist not evil" passage has absolutely nothing to do with the question of compulsion. I should be opposing Christ's teaching in that particular passage, if I wrote a venomous attack on a personal enemy in a newspaper as if I ran him through with a sword. If Christ had said, "Do not physically resist an evil man," we should have quite as much right to urge another isolated text: "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one," but of course such playing with texts is altogether useless.

Christ illustrated the nature of the Kingdom of God by a series of stories drawn from the life and

customs of His day. These stories served the double purpose of attracting and enticing those who were on the alert for truth, and repelling the hard-hearted and wooden-minded; the prejudiced could make nothing of them. The parables not only brought the people up to the high-water mark of prophetic tradition, but increased and developed the meaning of the Kingdom. The best that had been done in the past had been to conceive of a kingdom of the Jews expanding into a just empire which should rule in righteousness over all the earth. The old conception, whether of a little Palestine or an imperial Palestine, had always remained nationalist; now the nationalist must give way before an internationalist conception. Again, many thought the Kingdom would instantly appear. Now, although I cannot find any justification of the theory of a very slow and gradual evolution of the Kingdom through centuries after centuries, and although both parables and apocalypses and scattered sayings all seem to point to a sudden and cataclysmic appearance of the Kingdom, yet such a consummation might not be immediate, might be so long delayed as to discourage shallow and impatient natures. Such a coming of the Kingdom there would indeed be before that generation had passed, but, though abrupt and terrible and apparent to every eye, it would only be the sudden consummation and fulfilment of the old familiar commonwealth of the prophets, the coming of a Kingdom not utterly strange and foreign, but of one that had been from the very beginning within their midst. They must not be disappointed by the

apparent rejection of the Gospel by the world. The growth of a seed once sown is secret. It comes up unexpectedly, one knows not how. Once planted, one must leave it to nature's secret workings. When the end comes it will be as vivid and universal as the lightning: be alert, lest it come suddenly as a thief at night and take you unawares;—How can I explain all this to you? What illustration can I use? The Son of Man is like a sower. He sows His followers up and down the field of this age, but the Evil One sows also evil men. Don't be too anxious to root up the weeds, when weeds and wheat are both young. You may mistake the one for the other. The age is drawing to a close; the harvest is its end, and the Son of Man and His angels will come as reapers, rooting up from the Kingdom all things and all people that are an offence, and casting them into the furnace of fire. Then shall just men shine forth like the sun in the Golden Age. The Gospel of the Kingdom will fall on all kinds of soil, on deaf ears sometimes, on shallow natures quick to accept and quick to reject, upon people who are inclined to receive its ideals, but who are finally choked with worldliness and over much property, upon people who cannot stand persecution; but some will understand—their minds are bright, their hearts alert—and these will be prolifically fruitful. Its social gospel will attract all kinds of people, the good and the bad; it is a net gathering every kind of fish. It is sown in this little corner of the world; it breaks national boundaries and becomes a tree whose branches overspread the earth. It works secretly

and in various ways in men's hearts, but it is very thorough and wide-spread, like leaven hidden in the meal till all is leavened. It is worth everything else in the world; there is nothing like it; it is the pearl beyond all price; it is the buried unexpected treasure for which one sells all beside. Seize upon the idea of the commonwealth, or let yourself be seized and fired by it, and your dull existence will blaze up into overmastering life. The past will be lit up by the flames of the Kingdom, the future will be secure.

It is only those who hunger and thirst after justice who can be filled, only those who keep their lamps trimmed that will be ready for its coming. The pity of it is that the sons of this age, the children of this evil, competitive, suspicious world, are in their generation wiser than the disciples of the Kingdom. The Golden Age must be carried by storm. If the people of this age, by sheer persistency in their requests, draw from an unjust and ungenerous judge their particular demands, how much more shall the supporters of the Golden Era win from the generous Father of mankind that consummation of their hopes which is in accordance with His own deepest longings! But the sons of mammon are more alert and wholehearted in their pursuit of private wealth, than are the sons of the Kingdom in their pursuit of common wealth. Yet it is only those who are eager to hear who shall hear, only those who have learnt to be hungry who can be filled. To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he seemeth to have. That is the law even in the affairs of this world. The

Deliverer seems a long time coming, the Golden Age seems so very far removed. Meanwhile, you must zealously increase your powers of service and forward the interest of that commonwealth. The slaves of the absent merchant prince understand that. To one he has given ten talents. By making the best use of them according to the code that exists in trading circles he doubles them; to another he has given five talents, with a like result; a third is slack and indolent, and does nothing with the one talent entrusted to him. Suddenly the merchant returns, and the indolent slave excuses himself on the ground that his master is a harsh and unscrupulous man who is quite ready to reap where he has not sown, that is, to cheat and rob. But, replies the merchant, if I am an unscrupulous rascal, you as my slave were bound to behave as the loyal servant of an unscrupulous rascal; in other words, you should have taken my money to the bank, so that I should have received mine own along with that interest which rascals do not scruple to take. If we are as indolent in our use of the powers God gives us for the advancement of the commonwealth as the slave was indolent in serving the merchant of mammon, his fate will be ours.

A manager is accused of wastefulness. His master resolves to dismiss him; he is compelled to render his account, as the steward of injustice or of the unjust mammon, that is, of private property. Sharing property, or making it common, is called by Jesus justice: "Do not your justice before men." This manager finds himself in a fix; he is without friends, he has offended his master; he has probably

offended the merchants who do business with his master by adding to the amount of their accounts an additional sum as commission for himself; he determines to put the matter straight with them, so that when he is dismissed, all doors shall not be shut against him; he does the smart, business-like thing, for which his master commends him. Should we not be at least as alert—we, the children of light—on behalf of the commonwealth, as are the children of this dark commercial age on behalf of mammon? Should we not be as whole-heartedly communistic as the commercial fools (*cf.* Luke xii. 20) are whole-heartedly individualistic. Make to yourselves friends by means of the property you unjustly possess; sell that ye have and give alms, so that, when the system of mammon shall be at an end, the poor to whom you have given may receive you into the eternal tabernacles of the international Kingdom. What is appropriate to you is the common property, in which you will have your share in the Golden Age. Excessive private property is not your own, but belongs to the poor from whom it has been robbed. If you have not been faithful by distributing to those others that which is theirs, how can you expect in the Kingdom to come to receive that which is your own? You cannot serve God and greed. It is intensely significant that there immediately follows this comment: "The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, scoffed at him." As a further comment there is here inserted the story of Dives and Lazarus, the story of the rich man who refused justice to the poor man at his door; and very soon after is related

the incident of the enormously rich young man, who refused to disburse his property, and the generous rich man who did the best he could under the system, giving half his income to the poor, and restoring fourfold when he exacted more than his due. As to laws of private property and squabbles about inheritance, Christ will have nothing to do with them. He will be no party to settling private disputes among capitalists: "Who made me a judge or divider among you?" Such people must beware of avarice, the desire of private gain in contradiction to public service. They must remember the fate of the successful farmer, who thinks that life consists in an abundance of private property, and who hoards his gains in warehouses. To the man of the world he may appear a clever fellow: God calls him a fool. So is he that builds a private fortune, instead of sharing with the poor.

To those Jewish converts, who will be inclined to draw back when they see what is involved in the international ideal, and who will complain that they have borne the burden and heat of the day, Christ replies that the foreigners were eager and alert to work for the same ideal, but had no opportunity, and that therefore it was right and just that their reward should be the same as that of the Jews; for in God's Kingdom men are to be paid, not by results, but according to their needs.

His Kingdom is not of this world; it does not belong to the pushing, bullying, grasping spirit of this epoch; if it did, it might be established by pushing and grasping and fighting. It will be established

on earth as in heaven by the conversion of the people to the ideal of common wealth. The life of the Kingdom is to be no mean, niggardly, ungenerous existence. It is compatible with prodigal generosity.

The Christ who thundered against plutocracy (Mt. vi. 24), who urged the re-establishment of God's just commonwealth, now no longer on a national but on an international basis, who absolutely forbade private fortune-building (Mt. vi. 19), having driven the money-grubbers out of His Father's Temple, is in immediate peril of arrest and of death. He foresees that His opposition to the plutocracy-loving Pharisees and His teaching of the inner laws of the Kingdom means the end. His disciples are afraid, but they cannot understand that He will be defeated and destroyed. He dines in the house of Simon the Leper. No one seems to realise the immediate danger, that in a few short hours He will be snatched from them, and that the Cause will be, as they would think, for ever lost. No one realised the situation, excepting a woman. There came a woman having a very costly cruse of ointment, and she brake the cruse and poured it over His head (Mk. xiv. 3; so also Mt. xxvi.). The ointment may have been worth a price which would have kept an artisan's family in comfort for a whole year. The act was lavish, spontaneous, immense; the prodigal expression of a breaking heart that understood that this was the end (Mt. xxvi. 12); those who stood by, and among them disciples, were honestly indignant. Their thrifty peasant minds were staggered at such abandoned generosity. The thing was as silly and

as thoughtless as the folly of the widow who cast her mite into the treasury, abandoning all that she had. The creed of the Charity Organisation Society had its adherents then as now; but Jesus perceives their obtuseness, and understands.

To their murmurings against the woman, "To what purpose is this waste of ointment, for it might have been sold and given to the poor," He replies: Let her alone; why annoy her? she hath wrought a good work on Me. You talk about the poor, but the poor are always with you, and if you really so chose you could at any time do them good; but for Me the end is very near. She hath done what she could; she hath anointed My body aforehand for the burying, and verily I say unto you, that wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, that also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. In a later account of the incident, Judas, the treasurer of the party, is the grumbler, and cants about the poor, not because he has any intention of distributing the money among them, but because he is a thief and wants the money for himself.

In our Lord's picture of the final judgment of men it is not individuals as individuals, but individuals as nations who are arraigned. There are many "religious" peoples who will call Him "Lord, Lord," and whom He will repudiate as strangers. The last shall be first, and the first last. Coming in contact with Him will constitute no claim on His Kingdom; the fact that one is related to Him by kinship or nationality is nothing. The fact that He preached

in their streets will increase their damnation. There are many who will claim to have prophesied in His name, to have been virtuous and orthodox, to whom He will reply, "I was naked and you did not clothe Me, hungry and you did not feed Me, in gaol and you did not visit Me." These respectable claimants will be shocked beyond measure: they have been worshipping a gentlemanly God on a jasper throne, and forgetting the demands of the poor and the outcast and the prisoners, in the throne of whose heart God dwells. To these He says, "Depart from Me, ye accursed, into the overwhelming fire prepared for the Devil and his angels." There will be others, who perhaps have been driven away from religion by the hypocrisy of the unctuous, or who have never heard His name, but who have been hungering for a kingdom of justice, and who have been the champions of the desolate and the oppressed, to whom He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father; possess the Kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world"; so persistently does He urge His preference for those who say, "I go not," but go, over those who say, "I go, sir," but go not.

The Kingdom prepared from the beginning of all things is the dream Kingdom of God's will and mind —the Heavenly Utopia, which has existed always as God's dream for the world, as the pattern after which He wanted men to live, as the ideal for which He brought them into being, the heavenly city of friends which they are to grasp and appropriate and drag down out of the skies, planting it firmly on this earth, fulfilling it in their commerce,

their politics, in all their activities and in every human institution.

In such a fellowship alone could they attain to fulness of life, to that overmastering or overwhelming life which Christ promises to men when they shall have established the Golden Age. Even in this age they will experience something of that life. To be filled with the socialistic ideal, though it mean the breaking of old bonds, the division of families, and the uprooting of old friendships, means also closer comradeships, more living relationships with persecution, and in the good time coming overmastering life.

Already a new vigour had come into the lives of His peasant followers, a new purpose into their minds, a new gladness into their eyes. When at last their leader had understood that Jesus was indeed the Deliverer, whose mission was the bringing of the Golden Age, Christ begins the march upon Jerusalem, the city of His final adventure and His death. When they are getting near to that city which has slain the prophets and rejected God's messengers, a rich young man comes running to them along the road. He was probably a landed proprietor of Judæa. Christ is going before; His disciples, a little afraid, follow after. The rich man has heard of the vigour of their mission and the wonderful life that has come to them, and he asks Jesus on what terms he too may possess this life. It is significant that our Lord replies by reminding him of the social precepts of his own religion. He answers airily enough, "All these have I kept from

my youth up: what lack I yet?" According to one of the early MSS., Jesus replies that he has not kept them, for the poor are hungry at his doors. But in any case, our Lord says, "if thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, give to the poor; follow Me, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven." And he went away sorrowful, because he was enormously rich. Our Lord realised that the march upon Jerusalem was somehow necessary for the establishment of His commonwealth, and yet that it would involve His death, and that through His death would come the ultimate triumph. This adventure therefore involved the burning of their boats, the complete detachment of the soldier engaged in a desperate campaign. Just as there are many who are compelled by the fierce requirements of the battle to refrain from marriage and the cares of a family, so there are many to whom property is a deadly encumbrance. Many agnostics, as also Christian commentators, miss the point of the incident. Agnostics often say, "Selling your property and sharing out with the poor is no solution of the social question." Christ never said it was. He was not solving the social question; He was solving the question of the rich man's soul. He saw that this man was being kept back from the life-giving adventure of establishing God's Kingdom by the entanglement of great possessions. His business, then, was to get rid of them, to give them to the poor. Thus only would he be free to follow Christ and to be a soldier of the commonwealth. And Christ's comment on all rich men was, "How

hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"; just as we might say, "It is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a proud man to enter into a child's game of marbles." Some commentators have, I believe, enlarged the needle's eye to the size of a darning needle; others, in their anxiety to get the rich man through, assert that our Lord meant a certain porch of the Temple that went under the name of the Needle's Eye. But apparently the baggage camels of the East could squeeze through that porch on one condition only, namely, if they unloaded.

Modern criticism seems conclusively to have proved that the claim to Messiahship was not at that time considered to involve any theological claim to Divinity. The idea, therefore, that the Jews combined with the Romans to execute Christ because He asserted that He was identical with God is not established. If one has suffered much of modern preachers, one gets the impression that they regard Christ as merely a preacher of the domestic virtues. But supposing our Lord's mission was merely domestic, supposing He had asserted with vehemence merely the duty of being kind to one's grandmother or considerate to one's aunt, what Pharisee or scribe was there who would not have hailed Him as a heaven-born leader? The conclusion is forced upon one that the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, scoffed at His communistic ideals, which is exactly what St Luke tells us, and that the Sadducees opposed His political claims, and that

everybody came to consider Him as a much more dangerous and revolutionary claimant to power than any of the cruder and merely nationalist rebels against the Roman dominion. He asserted at the Last Supper among His followers, that He would drink no more of the fruit of the vine until He drank it in that feast of triumph which should so soon celebrate the ushering in of His Kingdom. The accusation at His trial before Herod and before Pilate was the political accusation that He claimed to be a King, who was to establish a Kingdom not of this world, but in this world: this accusation He did not deny. Hence the superscription in various languages over the Cross, "This is the King of the Jews."

Finally, a more serious objection is sometimes brought in connection with the question put to Christ about the tribute-money. It is an objection not against socialism, but against Christian people taking part or interest in *any* sort of secular government. In their eagerness to prove the socialistic clergy wrong, our opponents land themselves in the position of anarchists, *i.e.* that we have nothing to do with politics, and that things secular and sacred are *absolutely divorced.* They really prove too much, for such a position not only condemns the whole work of the C.S.U., but the work of the Quakeress, Elizabeth Fry, of the Evangelical Shaftesburys and Wilberforces, of all statesmen who have believed that the Christian Faith ought in some way or other to influence public affairs. Of course, by the way, it would be an absolute and final condemnation of an *Established Church.*

Now the objection may be valid, but it is certainly rather stupendous and revolutionary, and for their sakes as well as ours a careful examination is of supreme importance.

In so far as the people accepted the Messiah, they did so because they thought He would overturn the Roman power and set up an immediate nationalist kingdom. The Pharisees did not trouble to understand exactly what He did stand for—but they were money-lovers and scoffed at Him, for they perceived that He did not want to overthrow Rome but mammon, and to establish a commonwealth which would include the people they despised—the foreigner and the outcasts. Very well, they would set a trap for Him, by which He would either lose favour with the democracy by announcing the rightness of the Roman dominion, or would betray Himself into the hands of the authorities by denying the Roman right to levy taxes. They were not earnest inquirers on a point that really troubled them (Luke xi. 54). He invariably took infinite trouble with such questioners. But the fool He answered according to his folly: the crafty according to his craftiness. As we say now, He proved a match for them all. He escaped the trap and pushed them into it. To Him God's rights and the ideals of the Kingdom were not besmirched by paying taxes to the Romans. They were violated by Jews or Romans who were dominated by the commercial-individualistic spirit of mammon.

As to the right or wrong of this subordinate question of Roman dominion that dominated their thought, into that He would not enter. *They* had

really settled that themselves *by using the Roman coinage.* There was a saying among the Jews that a people had not accepted its position as the conquered until they accepted the coinage of the conquerors. He slips out of the net by leaving them to settle whether or no in fact they did acknowledge the Roman dominion. What coinage do you in fact use? Let Me see. Bring Me a denarius. But it has Cæsar's stamp on it. So you've already settled the question. You wanted to prove Me an anti-patriot before these people; but yourselves according to your own story are anti-patriots. Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which you by your usage acknowledge to be Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.

What then are these things of God? What is His Property? According to our Lord, as interpreted by His Church, His is "the Kingdom, the power, and the glory." And therefore, if we would render to God the things that are God's, we must devote ourselves to bringing His Kingdom into men's hearts, so that they may express it in their laws and lives.

IV

THE EARLY CHURCH

The Church and the Book—The Church and the Resurrection—Expectancy and Pentecost—The first preaching—The "communistic" experiment—Ananias and Sapphira—The Apocalypse of St John—Kingdom and city—Where is the heavenly city?—The meaning of "in heaven"—The Kingdom coming with power—The criticism of apostates—The appeal to the Fathers—New Testament interpretation—Economics and theology cannot be divorced—Dogma and its political implications—St Chrysostom on communism—Justin Martyr, The Didache, St Barnabas, Cyprian, The Shepherd, St Clement, St Austin, St Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, Lactantius, St Basil, St Zeno, Clement of Alexandria, St Gregory, Tertullian—The right to live—The Church and the manual labourer—Rich and poor in the Epistle of St James—Democratic election—Labour bishops and labour conferences.

IV

THE EARLY CHURCH

"They found themselves in these cities of the Roman Empire as bands of brothers, and they hit upon maxims which are now the basis of the hopes of social reformers—such maxims as that you must find a man work, and that you must find him wages, and you must find him resource and support when he can no longer work. The three short maxims which come out of an early Christian book are precisely the maxims that we want to-day to revolutionise our society: 'For him who can work, work; for him who will not work, nothing; for him who can no longer work, support.' Those are very simple maxims, and they came into their minds and practice because they believed that God was their Father; and so it was they created their social revolution for their time. And, if we will believe with the same simplicity of faith to-day, we shall create a like revolution."—BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM (Dr GORE), Manchester Cathedral, 4th October 1908.

JESUS Christ did not bind writings together into a book, but men together into a fellowship. He did not say, "Upon this rock I will build My library," but, "Upon this rock I will build My Church." One watches with some curiosity the struggles of those critics who would depreciate the Church at the expense of its literature, the Bible, to prove this particular passage unauthentic; but it is at least as integral a part of the sacred text as the passage in which they profess to find the kernel of the Christian religion, namely, "The Kingdom of God is within you." It is now generally

admitted that this particular saying should be more accurately translated, "The Kingdom of God is among you." But even if these critics were able to rid themselves of the saying they consider objectionable, it would still remain unquestionably true that Jesus Christ gathered round Him a band of followers and trained them in the principles of the Kingdom of God, so that they might become the mouthpiece of that Kingdom throughout the civilised world.

In the time of His defeat and crucifixion as a malefactor, we find them broken, defeated, and scattered. All His promises had failed. The Kingdom is at an end. In an incredibly short time these same men and women are together in Jerusalem, filled with quiet yet exultant expectancy, welded together in the certainty that the Messiah had risen, had broken the bonds of death, had been among them and spoken to them, and had at last ascended into God's presence and power, that He might more effectually fill all things with His presence, and inspire the disciples of the Kingdom with a life and enthusiasm which, in their terrific force, could not be compared with water, but with storm and fire.

They elect a disciple in the place of Judas to be one of the twelve leaders of the democratic band. For the rest, they continue in prayer and alert expectancy. Suddenly they are filled with a spirit like the rushing of a mighty wind, or like tongues of flame, which drives them to speak to the multitudes. There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews of the dispersion from every nation under heaven, who were amazed because every one of them understood that

which was spoken as if it had been given in the language of his own country. Some were greatly impressed; others, laughing, charged them with drunkenness; but Peter—that same Peter who had denied Christ, the once narrow nationalist peasant, the now internationalist apostle by the power of the revolutionary Spirit—implored them to give ear unto their words, saying, "This is that which hath been spoken by the prophet Joel."

> And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: and on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: and I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: and it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Jesus of Nazareth, whom they, by the hand of lawless men, did crucify and slay, God hath raised up, having loosed the pangs of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. Let all the House of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made Him both Lord and Messiah of the Kingdom, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

They were pricked to the heart, and demanded what they should do. They were to turn and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins, so that they might receive this wonderful spirit which animated the sons of the Kingdom. For to you is the promise, and to your

children, and to all that are afar off. They were exhorted to save themselves from this crooked generation. About three thousand were convinced, and these continued steadfastly in this teaching and in fellowship, and in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers. The method of their salvation from that crooked, commercial, unbrotherly age, is now given in detail :—

Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

At the end of Acts iv. occurs another description of their life :—

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas (which is, being interpreted, The son of

consolation), a Levite, and of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it at the apostles' feet.

This communistic expression of their faith in the Kingdom was voluntary and spontaneous. A man and his wife sold a certain property and kept back part of the price, bringing only a certain part and laying it at the Apostles' feet. These people had pretended to be whole-hearted disciples of the Kingdom and the fellowship. They wished to have the credit of that assumption; but this half-hearted service, this niggardly keeping back part of the price, was considered by Peter to be a Satanic cheating of the spirit of brotherhood. No compulsion had been brought to bear. They could have sold the land for their own purposes. They need never have joined the fellowship, nor pretended to care about the Kingdom. They had lied, not unto men, but unto God. It is said that their death followed so immediately on this rebuke that it was regarded as a judgment on this niggardly deceit.

In an early writing, known as the Revelation of St John, and so highly esteemed by the Church as to find a place in the sacred Canon, the author sees God's dream of fellowship taking flesh and being realised upon the earth. This swift triumph of God's commonwealth, superseding the kingdoms of this world, and especially the Empire of Rome, which he attacks with bitterness, is his great hope in the midst of a corrupt age.

The symbol for this commonwealth changes from family and kingdom to one of citizenship, for soon we

find ourselves on Greek soil and among Greek ideals. To Ephesian citizens St Paul writes, "Fellow citizens with the saints," and again, "I have lived the life of a citizen"; and again to the Philippians, "Behave as citizens"; and from his prison in Rome, "Our citizenship is in Heaven, from whence also we expect a Deliverer." This passage, of course, can no more be interpreted, "Our citizenship lies in a land beyond the grave," than can the passages concerning the Kingdom be referred to such a land. The City in Heaven, or the Kingdom in Heaven, will be actualised when God's will is done on earth as in Heaven.

To say a polity is "in Heaven" is to assert its inviolability, its eternity, its assured victory on the outward stage of practical affairs, because it is no arbitrary, irresponsible, artificial commonwealth, but the inner spiritual, unconquerable citizenship of the heavens. So St Paul, the prisoner, could afford to wait, for "our citizenship is celestial" and therefore assured. Rooted in eternal realities, in the innermost constitution of the world, it must some day blossom in the visible cities of the earth. In Babylon we are truly "captives and pilgrims, led astray by sin and concupiscence." We are "to shake off this yoke, to find in Jerusalem and in the city of our God true liberty and a house of sanctuary not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."[1] But when men have entered into this city with foundations whose Builder is God, it comes down from Heaven and is builded upon the earth.

It is when we realise this burning enthusiasm for

[1] Bossuet, *Sermons*.

fellowship, for what St Jude calls "the common salvation," expressing itself in such communistic experiments as these, that we begin to understand the Christ's assurance: "Verily there be some of you standing here which shall not taste of death until they see the Kingdom of God come with power." The writer of the Revelation had seen his fellow-disciples stretch up their hands to the heavenly Utopia and grasp it firmly, and bring it down with power into human institutions.

Modern commentators have exercised every ingenuity in attempting to prove that this experiment at Jerusalem was not only an absolute failure, but a quite exceptional and isolated adventure, having no integral connection whatever with the Christian religion. These men hate all such practical expressions of the Kingdom. A sound rule of criticism is to inquire, in the case of the moderns, where and how they live, what club they belong to, and what are their everyday political ideals. Apostates do not make particularly sound critics of the religion of Jesus Christ. Men of great learning, who stand outside the Church of Christ and who have no ecclesiastical axe to grind, are in no doubt about the communistic tendency of Christendom. For instance, the late Henry Sidgwick, himself an agnostic and an anti-socialist, was convinced that the Church has all along preached a gospel which is most becomingly translated into communism; and it is difficult to see the point of those early attacks on Christ's religion by Lucian, and other pagan opponents, on the ground that His followers were

for the most part artisans, who lived together in common, and the jeers of these same critics against the Christian doctrine of equality, if there had been no such doctrine, and no such tendency to communism.

Our curiosity becomes amazement when the modern anti-socialist critic turns out to be a High Churchman, who is continually appealing to tradition on questions of scents and vestments, and on every kind of doctrinal issue. He has appealed to the Fathers—to the Fathers he shall go. As an Anglican he is bound to make this appeal, for the Church of England lays down not the Bible and the Bible only as our guide, but the Bible as interpreted by universal consent of the Church. And surely this position is incontrovertibly right, for the New Testament is so truly the offspring of the Church that we may say, "No Church, no Bible." The "Bible only" was certainly not the religion of the Christians of the first two hundred years, for the New Testament, as we now have it, was not in existence. The good news about the Kingdom and its King had, from the first, been given verbally by members of the fellowship which the Messiah had founded. It was only as an after-thought that certain members began to make jottings of the more salient points in the teaching of the Apostles. These notes and jottings, which came to be known as gospels, were very numerous. They were not written to convert anybody; they were written to refresh the memories of men and women already converted by the oral teaching of the Church. Composed by members of

the Fellowship from the teaching of other members of the Fellowship, and finally revised and selected by the Fellowship itself, they, together with a few letters and one or two other writings, at last become the Christian Bible. Meanwhile, the Church had been using the Jewish Bible, along with its verbal teaching, to explain to its hearers the nature of the Kingdom it proclaimed. The significance of this fact will be appreciated by those who have studied my second chapter.

Now, if the Church is the author of the Christian Bible, it is surely reasonable to appeal to the Church for interpretation of doubtful passages. It is hardly necessary to remind my readers that I do not mean by the Church this or that individual clergyman or layman, but the universally acknowledged leaders and saints and doctors of theology and morality. A list of these authorities is given us in the English Calendar of Saints at the beginning of the Prayer Book. We are not bound to accept the fanciful interpretation of this or that early Father, where it is individual and out of harmony with the rest; but where we have a practically universal consent among those whom the Church delights to honour as wise and heroic men, and especially in that period when Christendom was undivided and Christians had not broken up into enfeebled and warring schisms, more busily engaged in fighting each other than in destroying the kingdom of mammon, there probably is to be found the truth.

It is sometimes objected that it is ridiculous to appeal to the saints and doctors of the Church on ethical or economic matters. In that case it is

difficult to see why they should be considered such final authorities on the shape of ecclesiastical clothes. But in fact this argument arises from that heretical type of mind that divorces doctrine from practice, theology from ethics, in a way which would have staggered the orthodox Fathers. The Creed-makers were no mere theorists. They valued dogma as a talisman of life; doctrines were immediately translatable into individual and political action. For instance, the heretics who asserted the divinity of Christ denied His humanity, for they held man to be essentially vile, and without dignity or divinity. But the Church pronounced man, in spite of original sin, to be essentially good; human nature, though marred and distorted, was at heart sound: so argued the great St Athanasius and St Hilary, and their reasoning was endorsed by the Church and elevated into a dogma. In consequence of this dogma, common men were heartened to claim their privileges as a divine democracy. If the bodily appetites of man were not the vile things that Oriental Buddhists, Tertullianists, and other heretics asserted them to be; if they were so capable of purification as to be the perpetual channels for man's expression—for this is what the dogma of the resurrection of the body means,—then it followed that justice, in apportioning material necessities in accordance with even the meanest of man's bodily requirements, was an essential element in the new religion. While brilliant philosophers of the Church were contending for the doctrine of the Trinity, because they saw in it the highest unity the human mind is able to perceive—not the Arian meagre,

isolated unit of the single note, but the rich, collected unity of the chord,—the people at the forge, in the factory, and in the market-place were contending violently for the same doctrine, with more material weapons. For somehow or other they perceived that the Arian dogma of God as solitary, unsympathetic tyrant in a far-off Heaven, who could not or would not bridge the gulf between God and man, worked out quite immediately and quite practically in the political dogma of a solitary and unsympathetic tyrant here on earth, known to that period as the Emperor of Rome, who would ruthlessly crush a common man and his social-democratic aspirations. But if we children of men were the offspring and expression of a power in the heavens, Whose being was best expressed by collective unity, that particular theological belief expressed itself quite immediately and quite practically in social-democratic ideas of government among the Catholic artisans of that time. The Arians were imperialists; the orthodox Christians were the democratic party.

To argue, therefore, that early Church opinion is of weight in matters of theology, and worthless in matters of economics, is to misunderstand entirely the orthodox Christian religion, and to put asunder what God hath joined together. Such argument, tracked down to its source, involves a denial of God's incarnation. An essayist who speaks of this early period says:—

> Where the Catholic faith is merely latent, there the socialism is also less explicit. When the writer is unsound in his orthodoxy, then he is almost sure to favour some form

of individualist law or possession. When the writer is sound and saintly, then he is always entirely and unhesitatingly in favour of the common holding of goods, of equality of opportunity, of social freedom; and even when he is not quite sound, he is always fiercely opposed to the covetousness which calls itself enterprise, smartness, natural incentive to exertion, thrift, and the like.[1]

It is essential that the Church of to-day should rediscover the sacramental faith in life, namely, that inward and outward are alike necessary, that the true Catholic is neither a mere materialist nor a mere spiritualist, but is frankly spiritualist and frankly materialist; that true spiritual conceptions will express themselves immediately in political and economic conditions; that political and economic conditions are the reflection of spiritual and mental conceptions. If political theories are to be true and political life clean, these must be the outcome of true and living dogmas held in the minds and hearts of the people, for "the people who have made the great revolution in human life are the people who have taken their purchase for reforming human life from some high region outside it. If all you have to do is to establish a business, it may be that you can establish that business by thinking about nothing else. But, if what you have to do is to reform human life, then you must take your purchase for so big a thing out of the consideration of nothing else than the character of God who made it."[2]

What, then, is the state of the evidence as regards

[1] Charles Marson, Essay in *The Voice of the People*, p. 204 (Innes, 1894).

[2] Dr Gore, Bishop of Birmingham; Sermon, Manchester Cathedral, October 1908.

the Church's belief that the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth will necessarily express itself in common ownership of the essential means of life. The attempt at Jerusalem was not accidental but essential. "The communism attempted in the apostolic age was cherished in the traditions of the early and mediæval Church as the ideal form of Christian society."[1] The Patristic writers do not consider it a failure; for instance, in his eleventh sermon on the Acts, St Chrysostom points out that private bounty tends to vainglory, but the early Christians gave in their corporate capacity, communising everything, and it was for this reason that they had great grace. He thunders against social inequalities. He points out how all could be made rich by renunciation of private property. He sketches the effects of the apostolic communism applied to his own city; urges that if it were possible when the leaders were few, much more is it possible now. Lucian the satirist describes the Christians as a people whose first law-giver had persuaded them that they should all be brothers of one another, and hold such property as they have got in common.[2]

Justin Martyr says that Christians brought what they possessed into a common stock and shared with everyone in need.

> Thou shalt not turn away from him that hath need, but shalt share all things with thy brother, and shalt not say that they are thine own.[3]

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[1] Sidgwick, *History of Ethics.*
[2] *Cf.* Marson's articles in *Vox Clamantium* and *The New Party.*
[3] *Teaching of the Twelve*, iv. 8; *cf. Ep. of Barnabas.*

Such conduct is that of the true sons and imitators of God; God's gifts are given to all mankind, the day enlightens all, the sun shines upon all, the rain falls and the wind blows upon all. To all men comes sleep, the splendour of the stars and the moon are common to all. Man is truly imitator of God when he follows the common beneficence of God by imparting to all the brotherhood the good things which he possesses.[1]

The second-century Shepherd of Hermas compares the rich to round pebbles which cannot be fitted into the building of God's Temple, until they are brought to a more convenient shape by paring them of their superfluous possessions.

The use of all that is in the world ought to be common to all men. But by injustice one man has called this his own, another that, and thus has come division among mortals.[2]

What injustice is there in my diligently preserving my own, so long as I do not invade the property of another? Shameless saying! My own, sayest thou? What is it, and from what secret places hast thou brought it into the world? When thou enteredst into the light, when thou camest from thy mother's womb, what wealth didst thou bring with thee? . . . That which is taken by thee, beyond what would suffice to thee, is taken by violence. Is it that God is unjust in not distributing to us the means of life equally, so that thou shouldst have abundance while others are in want? Or is it not rather that He wished to confer upon thee marks of His kindness, while He crowned thy fellow with the virtue of patience. Thou, then, who hast received the gift of God, thinkest thou committest no injustice by keeping to thyself alone what would be the means of life to many? . . . It is the bread of the hungry thou keepest, it

[1] Cyprian, in the third century, commenting on the communism of the Acts.

[2] St Clement, quoted in Ashley's *Economic History*, bk. i., *cf.* pp. 1–8. Probably the epistle is spurious and belongs to the ninth century, but it voices the usual view of mediævalists.

is the clothing of the naked thou lockest up; the money thou buriest is the redemption of the wretched.[1]

St Augustine insists that property is only a creation of man-made laws: "Take away the laws of the Emperor, and who can dare say, This is my villa, or This is my slave, or This is my house?"[2] He admits certain rights of private property, but argues that property is either an institution of the Divine or the human law. If the first, then all is in God's hands, and cannot belong to people who use it unjustly; for, he says, the earth is the Lord's and its fulness, and all things belong to the just; but if it is created by merely government law,

> What human law has given,
> Human law can take away.

"God gives all things in common to all men," says Ambrosiaster. He therefore argues that almsgiving is the merest justice.

Lactantius, who is constantly quoted as an authority in our English Church homilies, traces minutely the rise of human society from the early simplicity of semi-communism, which he contrasts with a frenzied avarice which snaps up everything as its own. Justice is ousted by rapacity; community of life is lost, and the tie of human society is unbound. Not only folk gave no share to others of their own abundance, but robbed others, making private plunder of everything. What at one time had been for the use of all men, was now consigned to the houses of the few. To enslave others, they made a point of mastering and

[1] St Ambrose; Ashley's *Economic History*, bk. i. pp. 126 and 127.
[2] St Austin, Sixth Tract, John i.

collecting the necessaries of life, keeping them thoroughly in their clutches. Under the name of justice they sanctioned the most unjust of laws, to protect their own greed against the violence of the many. They got the upper hand by authority, by wealth, by stealth. Honours were now invented, and state uniforms and high positions to frighten people with swords and halters, and to give some show of lordly right to an obedience exacted from the stricken and the terrorised. But this golden age of simplicity had come back to us as a sacrament and earnest in Christ.

St Basil answers the question about what is one's own in the same way as St Ambrose, adding:—

> If some person were to take possession of one of the seats in the State Theatre, and thenceforth turn out all who went into it, deciding that what has been provided for the common use of the public was his private property, that would be exactly like that which the rich people do. They claim prior possession of the common property, and make it private by anticipation.[1]

> While we try to amass wealth, make piles of money, get hold of the land as our real property, overtop one another in riches, we have palpably cast off justice, and lost *beneficiam communem*, social righteousness. I should like to know how any man can be just, who is deliberately aiming to get out of someone else what he wants for himself.[2]

St Zeno of Verona, late in the fourth century, is communistic in the extreme in commenting on the experiment in Acts.

These are merely examples of the universal theory of the first centuries, summed up in the seventh

[1 and 2] Translated by Charles Marson, *ibid.*

century by St Isidore of Seville, when he says, "By natural law all things are common."

"Thou shalt have all things in common with thy neighbour, and not call them thy private property, for if ye hold the imperishable things in common, how much more the perishable?"[1]

St Ambrose, commenting on the Sermon on the Mount, speaks thus of the birds:—

They are a great example truly, and one worthy of our faithful imitation, for if God's Providence never fails to supply the fowls of Heaven, albeit they use no husbandry, and trouble nothing about the prospects of the harvest, the true cause of our want would seem to be avarice. It is for this reason that they have an abundance of suitable food, because they have not learnt to claim as their private and peculiar property the fruits of the earth which have been given to them in common for their food. We have lost common property by the claims of private property.[2]

How far will your mad lusts take you, ye rich people, till you dwell alone upon the earth? Why do you at once turn nature out of doors, and claim the possession of her for your own selves? The land was made for all: why do you rich men claim it as your private property? Nature knows nothing of rich men; she bore us all poor.[3]

Nature lavished all things for all in common, so likewise God made all things to be produced, that all should have common pasture, and the land should be a kind of property common to all men.

Nature then produced common property.

Robbery (*usurpatio*) made private property.[4]

St Gregory the Great, the chief instrument in the conversion of England, in his *Pastoralis Cura*, a text-book for the guidance of bishops, teaches them to instruct the faithful that it is not sufficient to for-

[1] St Barnabas, Epistle. [2, 3, and 4] Marson.

bear coveting other men's goods, if one does not bestow one's own in alms. The parable of the barren fig-tree is the story of owners who idly keep what could benefit so many: "A barren fig-tree holds the land when a fool overcasts with the shadow of his inactivity a place which another could use with the sunshine of good work." Those who are niggardly in almsgiving must be clearly made to understand that—

> The land which yields them income is the common property of all men, and for this reason the fruits of it, which are brought forth, are for the common welfare. It is therefore absurd for people to think they do no harm when they claim God's common gift of food as their private property, or that they are not robbers, when they do not pass on what they have received to their neighbours. Absurd! because almost as many folk die daily as they have rations locked up for at home. Really, when we administer any necessities to the poor, we give them their own; we do not bestow our goods upon them. We do not fulfil the works of mercy; we discharge the debt of justice. Hence it was that Very Truth, when He told us to be careful to show mercy, said, 'See that ye do not your justice before men.' In harmony with this the Psalmist too said, 'He hath dispersed, He hath given to the poor, His justice remaineth for ever.' For when he reviewed a lavish generosity to the poor, he chose to call it justice rather than mercy, because what is given us by a common God is only justly used when those who have received it use it in common.

St Chrysostom, in his sermons on the rich man and Lazarus, compares owners of property with robbers, who go out into the highways and despoil the passers-by; they convert their chambers into caverns in which they bury the goods of others. He speaks of inheritance as generally the fruit of theft and crime. St

Basil refers to rich men as thieves. St Clement holds that private property is the result of iniquity. St Basil again says, "Who gives to a poor man gives to God." St Jerome asserts that wealth is the result of one's own theft, or that of one's ancestors. Tertullian tells us that all property is common among Christians, excepting wives.

Tertullian, in spite of his communism, was never canonised, because he held the anti-Christian position, "that every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." Clement of Alexandria fails to receive canonisation, perhaps because, although he is sound on the subject of human nature, he is suspected of pandering to the rich on the subject of private property. He would, of course, have been horrified at the individualist sentiments nowadays expressed by opponents of the Church Socialist League in the pages of the *Guardian* and the *Church Times*. Every early and mediæval orthodox writer would have considered the opinions of modern individualist Churchmen as the frankest heresy; Clement, nevertheless, is inclined to temporise, and allegorises such stories as that of the rich young man and the needle's eye.

Recent researches of Dr Harnack and Dr Gore have established the fact that what is now called the "right to live" was a foremost principle of the Early Church.

The early Christian Church was, in its temper and characteristics, just what we should expect from all this teaching. In the everlasting opposition of rich and poor, beyond all possibility of question, it ranked among and spoke for the poor. It did not so much exalt the dignity of labour as make the obligation of labour positive and absolute on

all its members. . . . Each man is to labour with his own hands, and so eat his own bread. There is to be support for those who cannot work, but not for those who will not. The Christian is to be content with the bare necessities of actual life—having food and covering. What he earns over and above that, he should not accumulate for his own enjoyment, but give to him that needeth. The Lord's warnings are reiterated upon those who seek to become rich men. They can hardly escape perdition (1 Tim. vi. 6).[1]

It will now be interesting to consider what manner of men those early Christians were who propounded these theological and political doctrines. The French theologian Bossuet speaks in one of his sermons of the Church, which was founded for the poor alone, for they are the true citizens of that happy city which is called the City of God. We may compare this with a paragraph from Dr Gore: "He chose his instruments . . . from the class accustomed to live hardly and depend for sustenance upon daily labour. To this class he gave the prerogative position in his Church. It is people of this kind who can pray most naturally the prayer to God the Father, 'Give us to-day bread for the coming day.'"[2] The Christian Church carried on the Jewish tradition as to the necessity of labour.

Our Lord's immediate followers were, for the most part, poor men. They were not drawn from the ranks of unskilled labour, nor from the abject poverty of the slums. They were skilled artisans, precisely the type of men who are now found voting for socialism in the Colne Valley and the manufacturing cities of the North and Midlands, hand-workers, in

[1] Bishop Gore, Manchester, 1908.
[2] Bishop Gore, Barrow-in-Furnace, 1906.

contact with the hard realities of life, and yet possessing a comparative leisure and those bare necessities of living, the denial of which drives the slum-dwellers, not to revolution, but to the inertia of despair. The men who had ears to hear the Gospel of a Divine commonwealth were mostly master-boatmen and skilled peasants; in addition to these we read of a few disciples from outcast but not abjectly poor classes, Mary of Magdala and Matthew, who has often been described as a rich man, but who was more probably a mere telonarius, existing on a small daily salary. He was able to give a supper party to his friends; but small shopkeepers and artisans are no less able to entertain. Modern Christians are fond of allegorising and explaining away the simple facts of the Gospel. They will hardly understand the significance of Christ's "Come unto Me, all ye that labour," and of His Mother's "He hath filled the hungry with good things," until they bring themselves to realise that in the early days not many high officials, not many aristocrats, not many plutocrats were pressing into the Church; "but God chose the foolish things of this world that He might put to shame them that are wise, and God chose the weak things of the world that He might put to shame the things that are strong, and the base things of the world and the things that are despised did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that He might bring to nought the things that are." There was a tendency in early times to snobbery. St James had to reprove some who were too fussy in their attentions to plutocratic converts with their gold rings and fine clothing. How the

English Church, or indeed any other, can permit the pew-rent system in face of St James's utterances, is one of those mysteries which will never be solved until we can understand the intricacies of the modern Christian mind.

To those who say that the Christian religion has only to do with men's souls and not their bodies, St James answers in anticipation: "If a brother or sister be naked and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled, and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body, what doth it profit?" The motto of this Epistle is: "Let the brother of low degree glory in his high estate, and the rich in that he hath been made low; because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away. For the sun ariseth with a scorching wind, and withereth the grass; and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his goings."

Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth. Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter. Ye have condemned and killed the just; he doth not resist you.

There can be little doubt that St James voices the current Christian belief that the world is on the eve

of a revolution, for the King will come in His Kingdom, the mighty will be put down from their seats, the rich sent empty away; the poor, whom in the thought and language of the day, he calls the just ones, for they alone have obeyed God's law of labour, will be avenged of their adversaries.

St Paul, the manual labourer, asserts the universal duty of work: if anyone will not work neither shall he eat. He does, indeed, include intellectual and moral ministry as labour, but for himself he prefers to labour with his own hands and so earn his own living. This duty of work was not treated by the Church as the temporary advice of St Paul, but as an essential note of New Testament teaching. It is over and over again referred to by the Fathers and in Church law, as the basic economic principle of the Christian religion. The bishops and creed-builders of the Church did not belong to the comfortable classes. They were stone-cutters and masons, bricklayers and carpenters, chosen by the whole Christian democracy; none were too poor, too unlettered, or too ordinary to be enfranchised; baptism involved the franchise for men and women alike, and, some say, even for children. Athanasius was elected by the vote of the whole people. Ambrose likewise owed his archbishopric to the democratic vote. St Cyprian and Origen, St Gregory Nazianzen, St Jerome, St Leo, and a host of others bear witness to the electoral rights of the christened democracy. Our modern bishops are gentlemen[1] and are chosen

[1] Many modern bishops have come from the artisan class, but on becoming clergymen they now cease to be artisans.

by capitalist governments. Bishop Alexander, in the third century, was a charcoal-burner chosen by the people. The Council of Constantinople, in the fourth century, was composed of bishops who were ploughmen, weavers, tanners, blacksmiths, and the like.[1] From the socialist point of view, it is not necessary to insist on this labour aspect of the Catholic Church, for the socialist who understands his business will prefer a social-democratic duke to a plutocracy-loving dustman, welcoming help from whatever class it comes, and knowing nothing of class distinction. The socialist movement does not merely aim at securing this or that material advantage for the skilled artisan. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that the coming of socialism will be greatly accelerated by the conversion of the artisan class, and that social democracy is unattainable without the aid of the skilled workman; and therefore it is significant not only that the doctrine of the Church is essentially socialist, but that the councils which built up that doctrine might, with little exaggeration, be called labour conferences.

[1] *Cf.* Charles Marson's pamphlet on *The Church and Democracy.*

V

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ST PAUL

"The Powers that be"—The critics criticised—Jewish hostility to the Empire—The crime of unsuccessful rebellion—Unhealthy anti-imperialism—Early Christian self-satisfaction—St Paul reasserting the universality of the Good Spirit—Saves the Church from exclusiveness—The successor of Alexander—Wide-minded Jews of the dispersion—"Slaves, obey your masters"—A revolutionary counsel of obedience—St Paul on fairness and charity—Did St Paul believe in a cataclysmic Kingdom?—Onesimus—The eternal and the temporal in Pauline teaching—The Church and manumission — The reign of Nature — The Golden Age—The Church and the philosophers on its implications—St Augustine exceptional and eccentric—St Gregory on slavery—The stagnant *versus* the living ages — The theory of Divine right — Divided opinions on nature of civil authority — The socialism of the Fathers questioned—The theory of stewardship—Almsgiving as justice, not charity — Ashley's conclusion — Eternal ideas and temporal forms.

V

THE SOCIOLOGY OF ST PAUL

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men, as the world counts wisdom, not many influential, not many men of noble birth, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."—1 COR. i. 26–29.

"If any man would not work, neither should he eat."—2 THESS. iii. 10.

"For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. . . . Much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary; and those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; . . . God having tempered the body together, having given abundant honour to that part which lacked: that there should be no division in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and its several members."—1 COR. xii.

"But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may make good their want, that their abundance may make good your want, that there may be equality. As it is written, He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack."—2 COR. viii. 14, 15.

THE Church socialist position is often assailed by people who quote certain passages from the various

Epistles which form so integral a part of the canon of Holy Scripture. They argue that the socialist position is ridiculous in the face of such Scriptural injunctions as, "Slaves, obey your masters," and, "Honour the king."[1] If this chapter is chiefly devoted to a consideration of their contentions, it is because St Paul's teaching on the democratic and socialist nature of the Church's constitution has frequently and fully been dealt with. It will be alluded to in the sacramental section (Chapter VI.), and I have prefaced the present chapter with quotations from his social teaching. Should my readers accept the conclusions here suggested in the matter of the Pauline attitude towards government and slavery, they will be able themselves to resolve the whole of his teaching into a harmony.

Before we proceed to a more minute examination of St Paul's ideas, let us consider what is implied in our critics' objections, and how far that implication will lead us.

The authority whom Paul bade us obey was the Roman Emperor, and the reason he gives in support of his counsel is, that the Imperial Government is, in his time, the supreme civil power, and the powers that be are ordained of God. The limited monarchy of modern England, the unlimited czardom of Russia, the republicanism of France are as unlike each other as anything could well be, but each, for its own country and time, represents the powers that be. We must ask our critics, do they consider that St Paul's counsel

[1] *Cf.* with St Paul's teaching this Petrine passage, 1 Peter ii. 17 and 18. The Petrine and Pauline Epistles are remarkably alike in their view of the nature of authority. The question of the authorship of St Peter's letters need not concern us here.

limits us to honouring the head of a given State only in the event of his possessing the exact status of a Roman Emperor? Supposing his counsel to be of eternal obligation, does it, or does it not, bind us to honour and obey the president of a republic, if we are Frenchmen; or if we are Englishmen, the powers that be in England, namely, Parliament together with a limited monarchy? Is the Church of France orthodox or unorthodox when it sings in the public liturgy, "O Lord, save the Republic," seeing that the French Republic is a different type of "power that is" from Roman Emperorship? Is the Church of England right or wrong in singing, "O Lord, save the King," seeing that the modern English monarchy is almost as different a "power that is" from the Roman Emperorship as is the French Republic? The most orthodox of theologians throughout the centuries have generally held that this Pauline counsel, which has in some sense been endorsed by the Church, has in fact been so endorsed as meaning that Christians owe honour and obedience to the civil government, whatever may be the particular form of government obtaining in their country in their own particular period. The theologians are generally as careful to add that there are exceptions to the rule, and to admit on certain rare occasions an ultimate right of rebellion. So careful and conservative a Catholic encyclopædist as St Thomas Aquinas leaves us in no doubt on this point. If, therefore, our critics insist on this line of argument drawn from St Paul, I fear it must inevitably land them in implicit obedience to a socialist government should such a

form of government ever become the power that is. They will then no doubt be glad to remember the tradition as to a right of rebellion, all allusions to which they are now so careful to suppress. Taking it quite literally, therefore, as these critics urge us to take this Pauline counsel, it would only seem to commit us to a general respect and obedience to an autocratic, or a social-democratic, or any other prevailing form of administration. In the natural course of events—or, shall we say, in the Divine ordering of the world?—a people more or less gets the government it deserves. And a counsel of obedience to the civil government accords with the socialist feeling for order and construction, in opposition to the anarchist-individualist contempt for all human administration.

Beyond all this, St Paul's teaching cannot in fact be literally observed in our own day, although the spirit of it may, by the modern Church, be applied to meet the entirely changed circumstances. Christian people were in his day a small band in the midst of a hostile world, without civil rights, altogether unable constitutionally to influence politics, or to take their part in creating the powers that be. Their natural tendency was therefore to ignore every regulation of the civil government, and this passive resistance easily became active resistance under such an administration as that of Nero. The enormous Jewish element in these early Christian communities would tend to perpetuate that crude hostility to the Empire which had been so strong a feature of the Palestinian Jew of the Gospel period. Resistance to the Roman power was very largely the

outcome of that narrow nationalist hatred of the foreigner for which our Lord had sought to substitute a wide internationalism. Rebellion against Roman administration was to be discouraged for at least two very good reasons. The minor reason was that all such rebellion at that particular moment, and under those particular circumstances, would have resulted only in massacre and defeat. There was not even that vestige of chance in the situation which there must be admitted to exist in Russia at the present day. The wise general will encourage a fight against enormous odds; but in circumstances where he knows that defeat is not only very possible, but is practically speaking inevitable, he will consider it a crime to sacrifice his troops. Obedience, therefore, for the time being, would have been the only possible policy, even if St Paul had been an absolute rebel against the Roman authority. There are many circumstances in which those who take the sword will perish by the sword. But the major reason was that the motive of this constant tendency to rebellion in the early Church was by no means free of a certain meanness and inhuman crudity. Not only was there the Jewish tendency to despise foreigners, but Christian communities themselves, whether composed of Jews or Gentiles, or both, were peculiarly subject to the temptation of pride and complacent exclusiveness. If one has to beware when all men speak well of one, one has almost equally to be wary when all men speak evil of one. The man who is over-appreciated, and the man who is altogether unappreciated, are alike in danger of

being driven in upon themselves and of a consequent Pharisaism. This is true not only of the individual, but of the community: too easy a success and too swift a popularity are perhaps its worst danger; but implacable hostility, universal misunderstanding and persecution constitute a very real danger also. Renan has a very illuminating passage, in which, while he admits the truth of the saying, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church," he points out that the ruthless persecution and hatred of minorities by tyrannous majorities does often create a lesion in the minds of the persecuted body, and drives it or deflects it from its proper channel into some unhealthy and neurotic by-path. Without committing oneself entirely to this statement, one cannot but acknowledge that something of this sort was occurring in the early Christian communities of the first century, and that they were saved from its worst consequences by the sanity and the genius of St Paul.

The tendency among these Christians of the first century, in consequence of the contempt and hatred in which they were held, was to drive them into a self-sufficiency and exclusiveness which led to their belief that all virtue resided in the Christian body, and to their claiming that monopoly in God which had been in former times the disastrous claim of the Jewish nation. The Kingdom had been taken away from that nation and given to a people bringing forth the fruits thereof. They rightly felt themselves to be that people, but, driven in upon themselves by persecution, they were likely to deny the universal Spirit from whom all good things would come, and

to regard the whole civilised world, Jewish as well as Gentile, as not only corrupt and very far gone from original righteousness, but as essentially evil and absolutely under the dominion of him from whom no good thing can come. It was such a spirit as this that led them to rebellion against the civil government of their day; it was this spirit which St Paul wished to exorcise. He saw in civil institutions, however imperfect their form, some attempt of the good human spirit of society towards adequate expression. He recognised no absolute divorce between the spirit of Seneca and Plutarch and the good spirit of the Christian community. The Christian revelation was the fulfilment of Greek and Roman as well as of Jewish hope and prophecy. The God whom the Athenians unknowingly worshipped, Him he declared unto them, for they were also His offspring; in Him all live and move and have their being, as their own prophets had said. Greeks and Romans, who had not known the Jewish law, had not been left without witness: "For when nations which have no law do by nature the things of the law, these having no law, are a law unto themselves, in that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness therewith, and their thoughts one with another accusing or else excusing them in the day when God judgeth the secrets of men according to my gospel by Jesus Christ."

There is perhaps nothing more amazing in the development of the Christian faith than the conversion of St Peter and St Paul, the one a narrow Palestinian peasant, the other a learned Jew of the

dispersion, but belonging to the straitest sect of the Pharisees, from the exclusive, contemptuous, nationalist view of goodness, to the universalism of Jesus Christ.

St Paul saw in the imperialism of Rome as essential a contribution to the international Kingdom of God as was to be found in quite another direction in the teachings of the prophets of Israel. As a Jew of the dispersion and a Roman citizen, Paul had inherited not only the thought of the Jewish but of the Græco-Roman world, the Hellenistic ideal which meant fusion of race, unity of language, union of cities, and religious toleration. He has been called the successor of Alexander the Great, of Julius Cæsar and Augustus. The ideal Roman Emperor had stood for a certain largeness of belief, according to which no citizen was to keep himself to himself, cribbed and confined within his own little city, but was to be a citizen of the world. The Emperor refused to act in one way to Greeks and in another to barbarians. He would not be a constitutional ruler to the one and a despot to the other. He regarded himself as heaven-sent peace-maker to the civilised world. Alexander's ideal was the conception of a spiritual Greece beyond the bond of Greek blood, with which we may well compare St Paul's conception of a spiritual Israel beyond the bond of Jewish blood. All brave men, according to him, were Greeks; all cowards, barbarians. Plutarch says of him that as in a loving-cup he mixed together customs, marriages, manner of life, and ordered all to think of the whole world as their native land, of the camp as the citadel

and garrison of that land, and to treat the good in all lands as their kinsmen, and only the evil as of alien race.

The Jews of the dispersion scattered up and down the civilised world would naturally be inclined to a broader view than their Palestinian fellow-countrymen. They did in fact lay stress upon the more universal aspect of the Messiah, whose work would transcend the limits of Israel and whose reign would establish a world-wide goodness and justice.[1] There were therefore in the world of that day Gentile and Jewish lines of thought converging towards the internationalism of Jesus. It would almost seem to be as if a narrow Pharisaism dominated Saul's nature, but that unconsciously he had absorbed what we may call the modernist ideal, which was working like a leaven beneath his surface ideas; the work was, though secret and gradual, thorough. On the road to Damascus, in a blinding flash, the truth came upon him that Jesus, whom he persecuted, was the internationalist Saviour, the very embodiment of that universal and liberating spirit which he had unconsciously harboured, but up till then consciously denied. We may seem to have travelled far from the original question as to the exact meaning in Paul's mind of "The powers that be are ordained of God," but in reality we have only sought to understand those deeper mental issues which led him to check a crude and narrow revolutionism with a certain vehemence.

If our critics insist on urging, as against the Church

[1] *Cf.* Isa. xi. 9–12, xlii. 1–6.

socialist interpretation of religion, the counsel of St Paul, "Slaves, obey your masters," we must again ask them how far we may take them seriously. Does this counsel, in their opinion, bind the Church to a perpetual defence of slavery, whether it be the corporal slavery of the Congo or the economic slavery of Europe? Does it, to their mind, involve the position that any effort whatsoever, whether by method of argument, of converting public opinion, of the ballot-box, or of the bayonet, is antichristian on the part of black or white slaves? Do they further hold that the Christian public generally may not, because of this one text in St Paul, vote for the modification or abolition of any form of slavery; or do they only hold that such an abolitionist movement is of the spirit of antichrist, if slaves or other down-trodden people themselves take any hand in it? We understand them to say that working men may not vote for a constitutional change in economic conditions, known as socialism, because St Paul said, "Slaves, obey your masters." Must working men, then, vote against it, or merely abstain from voting on that issue? Do they go further and urge that Christian people generally may not vote for a constitutional change of this sort, because it would involve an abolition of slavery, under which abolition it would be impossible for slaves to obey their masters? Or do these people hold anything at all; are they merely flinging a chance text at our heads, the force of the fling being in the bitterness of their prejudices?

If they reply, "But we absolutely deny that the present state of society involves slavery of any kind,"

we must politely remind them that in that case the counsel, "Slaves, obey your masters," cannot possibly apply. If they further assert, "It was the force of Christian opinion which abolished slavery in America," we must remind them that it did so in spite of their rendering of "Slaves, obey your masters," and would never have done so had it accepted their rendering. In point of fact, the intellectual ancestors of these reactionary Christians ridiculed Shaftesbury and Wilberforce, and raged against them as unscriptural revolutionaries. "Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres."[1]

Again we must remind ourselves of the actual constitution and the limitations of these early Christian communities. They were almost entirely composed of slaves, and they were without constitutional rights. Slaves had from time to time decided to disobey their masters and had revolted against them; the consequence had invariably been ruthless massacre. Once more, then, from the point of view of the wise general, how could St Paul at that time and under those circumstances, even had he been a fiercer revolutionist than he was, have counselled slaves to disobey their masters? I have known more than one foreign revolutionist, whose views were extreme enough to satisfy the fiercest of his followers, who has, under the particular circumstances of the moment, checked the impetuosity of those followers, and to all

[1] St Luke xi. 47, 48.

intents and purposes issued the order, "Slaves, obey your masters." I have seen almost hundreds of strikes averted by the counsel of labour leaders who would not be suspected of pro-slavery inclination. It is therefore not difficult to imagine that the leaders of the Church, who were described as men who had turned the world upside down—a sufficiently revolutionary description,—should counsel obedience under the particular circumstances.

But there was more than mere policy in such a counsel. Just as the motive to revolt against the civil government was not particularly worthy, so the motive to revolt against masters was by no means entirely free from suspicion. After all, conservatism and obedience on the one hand, or revolution and rebellion on the other, treated merely as abstract conceptions, are things indifferent. St Paul had preached to masters and slaves alike the Gospel of a Kingdom in which there was neither Jew nor Greek, barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free, and we can well imagine the difficult position of those few masters who had been generous-hearted enough to be converted to this revolutionary and democratic philosophy. They would find that this essential equality and fellowship was being seized hold upon by all kinds of worthless and idle persons, not because they believed in fellowship, but as an excuse for putting the hated master into an intolerable position. St Paul's counsel does rule out anarchy and misrule grounded in hatred, while it leaves untouched that constructive socialism which his own more essential philosophy has done so much to encourage.

There are several other passages in which St Paul treats of the slave question. There is his advice to men not to go wandering about, but to abide in their calling; even if they are slaves, to remember that both their masters and themselves are God's freedmen. A sentence in this connection about obtaining one's freedom is interpreted variously as advice not to strive for this freedom, or advice to gain one's freedom if that is possible. The sense cannot at present be conclusively determined. It is of course possible that St Paul believed in the cataclysmic coming of God's Kingdom in his own time, in a revolution not by blood but by miracle, and that the business of the Church was not to hasten it by violence, but to be on the watch, and merely to do the best they could under the present evil institutions. It is exceedingly difficult to arrive at any certainty on this point. If he really believed this, his teaching as to slavery would be adequately explained. In any case, I cannot agree with those critics who would have us believe that, although St Paul's teaching was essentially democratic, it made no actual or immediate difference in the status of the slave; for although he urged slaves to work heartily as unto God, he urges their masters with equal emphasis to give them justice and equality, and although he sends back a runaway slave to his master—both slave and master had become Christians—he orders his master, very courteously but authoritatively, to receive him into his household no longer as a slave, but as one of the family, a brother beloved. He implores Philemon to do this of his own free will and not of necessity, but

the twenty-first verse of the Epistle leaves us in no doubt that it was not mere consent but obedience which St Paul expected.

It must always be remembered that in every great prophet's teaching there are ideas of eternal validity and temporal application. Individual interpreters will rightly seek to distinguish the one from the other. Moreover, we are not bound by St Paul's ideas alone, nor by St James, nor by St John. It is the business of the Christian to correct the conceptions of one by reference to those of another, and, where the task is too heavy for the individual, to appeal to that consensus of individual human opinions which we call Church tradition.

Now if one reads Christian literature widely and carefully, one may here and there find passages from this or that authority which seem to rely on the counsels of St Paul for the support of autocracy or of slavery. But the overwhelming stream of Church tradition made in the direction of manumission and the abolition of slavery. The whole Church—there are no exceptions—opposed Aristotle's essential difference between slaves and freemen, holding with Seneca and Cicero that all men are by nature free and equal. By nature or natural law, the Church understood and taught a Golden Age in which God's will prevailed. Most Church writers put this age before the Fall; all of them believe that the object of the Christian religion is the establishment of this perfect epoch; all of them hold that the Golden Age not only involves the freedom and equality of men—the later pagan philosophers preached a like freedom and equality,—but

that such freedom involves common property in the essentials of life. St Augustine would seem to be the only original thinker who, in practice, at one time held a reactionary view about slaves. In one passage of his writings he seems to suggest that slavery comes upon the unfortunate, not because of their misfortunes, but because of their sins. It is hardly likely that modern opponents of Church socialism will assert that all South American slaves were in bondage because they were bad, while their masters were free because they were good; and it must be remembered that St Augustine's thought was abnormal and eccentric; and that in this very matter he speaks with no certain voice, for in another passage he contends that slavery is as unnatural as sin, and that no one may own a man as he would own a horse or money. Gregory the Great is fairly representative where he says: "We act in a wholesome fashion if by manumission we restore men, whom from the beginning nature brought forth free, and the law of nations subjected to the yoke of slavery, to that liberty in which they were born."[1]

It is very significant that the great Christian writers in constructive ages of Church thought, the men who are generally admitted to have contributed most to the upbuilding of Catholic philosophy, are glad to dwell upon what I have called the eternal democratic conception in the teaching of various Apostles; while less original writers, who belong to more stagnant ages and who contribute nothing to Catholic development, *e.g.* writers of the ninth century, are fond of seizing upon

[1] Gregory, *Letters*, bk. vi. f. 12.

the temporal advice of either Paul or Augustine, and of elevating it into a position of eternal validity.

In the matter of civil authority Christian tradition speaks with no very certain voice. In the early days, before Christians had any constitutional rights, sometimes the powers that be, *i.e.* the Roman Empire, are treated with contempt, at other times the Pauline view is upheld. When the Emperors began to support orthodoxy, the temptation towards a theory of Divine right naturally increased; but the Church in its totality cannot be said ever to have endorsed that theory. I have spoken of the stagnant ages as contrasted with living ages that contributed to the development of Christian thought. Roughly speaking, we may say that the first five centuries showed life and movement, and that the same life and movement are visible from the eleventh century to the end of the fourteenth; and in these latter centuries the great Churchmen held generally that kingship and civil government have their source in what may be called a Divine democracy. It seems universally to be held that the object of civil government is the establishment of justice; that therefore disobedience to the government of men is disobedience to the God of justice, for man is essentially a social creature. Men must therefore come together into a society, and human society involves some form of government; therefore Christians were inclined to think highly of the State. But where the State is manifestly evil the tradition becomes uncertain; some of the Fathers counsel obedience, others disobedience, for if the object of government be justice, apostasy from this

object absolves the people from their allegiance. St Ambrose, in the fourth century, had held that a priest must reprove an evil ruler, and all rulers are within and not over the Church. He put his theory into practice when he excommunicated the pious and orthodox Emperor, excluding him from the Eucharist because he had been guilty of a massacre.

A general survey of the teaching of the Fathers appears, then, to yield the result that they are practically unanimous in opposing private property in the essentials of life, that is, in land and in any form of capital used for the purpose of extracting interest. Ideally, such a state of things could not exist; in the Golden Age to which they all looked forward it would not exist. They are not so unanimous in their practical applications of the socialistic theory. Sometimes the immediate advice and action of certain of their number contradicts their unanimous conception of the nature of the Golden Age. On the further questions of government and slavery, tradition speaks with less certain voice, but on the whole tends to democracy and abolitionism.[1]

In bringing this section (Chapters IV. and V.) to a conclusion, it may be well to deal with the attempt of a writer in the *Economic Review* of April 1895 to defend the principles of modern commercialism from the traditions of the early Church. The writer quotes a passage from Irenæus aimed at that bitter and extreme communism of certain heretics which may

[1] Actual body-slavery died out of Europe from the sixth to the fourteenth centuries. It was revived by the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. Negro slavery was constantly defended by reference to St Paul in Christo-capitalist times.

be likened to the communism with which modern newspapers charge the socialist of the present day. The passage is of doubtful interpretation, for Irenæus holds[1] that we should refrain from demanding our own from such as may take it. The writer appears therefore to argue that, even if socialists could prove that much of the property of the rich rightfully belongs to the poor, the poor must not demand it of them; but his own contention is, that the property of the rich is really their own, and that the taxation of the rich, by means of socialistic legislation, is little short of theft. Now, if this is so, and if he still insists on the authority of Irenæus, he would seem to have proved too much, namely, that it is unchristian in the extreme on the part of his rich friends to demand their own back again by resisting such legislation.

He quotes Justin Martyr[2] to prove that, if the Christians contributed to a common store, they each put in only a little, and no compulsion was used. A man gives "only if he is able, for no man is obliged." But what does the writer want to prove? No one has said that compulsion was used. Does he insist that each gave as little as he decently could? But the passage seems to establish exactly the contrary. They were, for the most part, poverty-stricken slaves, so that each could only give a trifle, and they gave as much as they could. He deals with a passage from St Chrysostom with no better success. He discovers that the saint held that the rich man is a steward of the common property. He quotes Clement of Rome as saying, "Let the rich minister aid to the poor, and let

[1] Irenæus, *Adv. Hær.*, lib. ii. cap. 32. [2] Justin, *Apol.*, i. 67.

the poor give thanks to God, because He has given him one through whom his wants may be supplied," and he argues that here is a proof that, according to the Fathers, the rich man's property is his own. If further proof is wanted, can it not be had in St Augustine's sermon on the text, "The gold is Mine and the silver is Mine?" for Austin says, "Let him who is unwilling to share his goods with the poor, understand when he hears exhortation to show mercy that God does not order him to give of his own, but of that which is God's." The writer seems to argue that, because this author asserts that a man's property does not belong to him, he really considers that it does. The writer does not seem to know that the thought of property belonging to the common Father of all men, and the thought of that property as the common heritage of all His children, are ideas interchangeable in the traditions of the early Church.

No one denies the point that he is labouring to prove, namely, that God is the primal owner of all things, that the early Church considered that the rich were the managers through whose hands the common property was to pass. This was not an ideal state of things; the ideal state was the Golden Age which knew nothing of rich and poor; but the early Church was unable to see any other way out of the present difficulty than this liberal dispensing of God's property by God's managers. But when this writer goes on to say that the Fathers never breathe a hint of their latent belief that society was wrongly constituted, he is guilty of an audacity which must promptly be challenged. His further quotations are peculiarly

unfortunate. He boldly asserts that the Fathers would have denounced Proudhon's maxim, "La propriété c'est le vol." But we soon find him referring to St Ambrose as saying, "Nature has given all things to all men in common, for God has ordained that all things shall be so produced that food shall be common to all, and the earth as it were the common possession of all. Nature therefore is the mother of common right, appropriation[1] (*usurpatio*) of private right." He further quotes Ambrose's conclusion that we are therefore bound to help one another and "to put all our resources into one heap" (*in medio omnes utilitates ponere*), to help each other by kindliness, by service, by money, etc., that social feeling may grow and no one be called from his duty even by fear of danger, but that each may go on his way, whether of prosperity or of adversity. This critic of Church socialism considers this the most conclusive passage he can find in support of his case. He thinks that Ambrose here has supplied a strong basis for individualistic property. If he considers that urging one to place all one's resources into one heap because nature and God have given all things to all men in common supplies the best possible basis for individualistic property, I do not think the Christo-capitalists will thank him for having entered into this controversy. If his great proof that the Fathers would have repudiated Proudhon's "Property is theft" rests on a quotation from one of them which asserts that theft is the mother of private property, I fear that commercial individualism will have to seek some other line of

[1] "Appropriation" is a curiously mild interpretation of the term.

defence than the appeal to Christian history. The fact would seem to be that the writer has confused the ancient theory of alms-giving with the modern. Nothing can be more certain than that the giving of alms, in the early Christian tradition, was always considered "a debt of justice." It was of obligation; to refrain from it was to act as a thief; to give alms was to distribute among the poor what was theirs by right. Chrysostom, in his sermons on Dives and Lazarus, is quite explicit upon this point.[1] Stewardship had not come to mean the vague thing it means in the mouths of the modern pulpiteers; it meant stewardship. The rich man was steward of God's estate just as a land steward is administrator of a landlord's property, or a bank clerk administrator of the property of the bank owners. The clerk receives a salary which is supposed to supply him with the necessaries of life; the rich man might take a salary as wages of administration to supply him with necessities. If he took more, or refused to disburse the property, he was considered by unanimous Church tradition to be no better than a common thief. We may sum up the situation by a quotation from a studiously moderate non-socialist authority, Professor Ashley. Commenting on Clement's saying that it is only by injustice that private property arises, since God meant property to be common among men, he writes:—

This view as to the origin of property gave Christian moralists a philosophical basis for their teaching. To seek to enrich one's self was not simply, they could argue, to

[1] *Cf.* also quotations from Ambrose, Ambrosiaster, etc. in previous chapter.

incur spiritual risk to one's own soul; it was in itself unjust, since it aimed at appropriating an unfair share of what God had intended for the common use of men. If a man possessed more than he needed, he was bound to give his superfluity to the poor; for by natural law he had no personal right to it; he was only a steward for God. And with Christian teachers such injunctions were no longer mere philosophical deductions; they came with all the weight of practical precepts, pointing to duties to be observed and sins to be avoided on pain of punishment in another world. [1]

There is therefore no case to be made on behalf of modern plutocracy and commercialism by pressing the theory of stewardship, for, according to that theory, the plutocrat who retains a penny more than that which suffices to maintain him in the necessaries of life is a worse kind of thief than the poor clerk who robs the till; and this is hardly what the writer wanted to prove. Our modern critics are never tired of telling us that we are not bound by the letter, but only by the spirit, of Scripture and ancient tradition. There is no reasonable doubt that the spirit of both does commit us to a belief in God the common Father dispensing the earth and its products to all men alike. The theory of the stewardship of the rich is much more akin to the letter of socialism than it is to the letter of commercial plutocracy, but it is in itself just as much the temporary letter or form of the Church's eternal conception of common property as were, for instance, the Jewish land laws. We may therefore suggest that a new form is developing in our own day which more adequately safeguards and expresses the Church's essential idea of common ownership than did this letter of stewardship: that form is socialism.

[1] Ashley, *Economic History and Theory.*

VI

THE SACRAMENTS

The philosophy of socialism restated—Nature and universality of sacraments—The sacramentalism of Christ and the poets—Sacraments of nature and of grace—The sacraments of creation, incarnation, and the Church—Of baptismal regeneration and the sacrament of confirmation—The human priest and the functions of priesthood—Confession and absolution—Holy Orders and the Divine democracy—Confirmation and the Eucharist as an offering—Body and soul in the Eucharist—The sacrament of God's Body as the sacrament of fellowship—The holy communion in the early Church—Havelock Ellis on the sacrament of food—Unction and healing—Marriage as the mirror of the family of God—George Meredith and Robert Blatchford on the sacrament of marriage—Dante's Rose of Souls.

VI

THE SACRAMENTS

The sacraments of the Church are witness "that the unreal spirituality which exists in a barren and boastful disparagement of ritual observances or of outward acts, of earthly relationships or of secular life, of material feelings or of bodily health, clashes with Christian teaching as sharply as it does with nature and with common sense."—*Lux Mundi*, 13th edition, p. 310.

SOCIALISM derives its enthusiasm from a conception of justice which challenges our industrial chaos, and demands the abolition of slaves and drones and the reconstruction of an international commonwealth of workers. Behind its demands are discovered certain axioms, assumptions, doctrines about the nature and destiny of man, its two dominant doctrines being concerned with the body and the fellowship.

(1) Concerning the body: That outward, sensuous, material, physical things count. That to treat man's body as vile or of no account, is to injure man and to misread his nature; to ignore man's physical needs is sacrilege; to recognise the importance of material considerations is not to be a "mere materialist"; although man does not live by bread alone, he does live by bread; physical desires—the instinct for food and drink, the sex instinct, the instinct for warmth and shelter—are not evil but good.

(2) Concerning the fellowship: That the individual is not redeemed, saved, built up into rich and generous personality in isolation, but in fellowship. Every socialist at once understands the philosophic truth underlying the phrase, "Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus." The socialist dogmas are paralleled theologically by the dogmas of creation, incarnation, bodily resurrection, the dogmas of the Communion of Saints and of the Holy Catholic Church, and find their full expression in the sacraments of the Church.

The Holy Spirit, that "Light of every man coming into the world," has prompted the use of sacraments in many parts of the pre-Christian world and in varying religions, as testify the ancient cults of Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans, the later religion of Mithraism, and the present Brahmanic rituals. Sacrament was by the early Christians understood to mean "anything sensuous whereby something holy might be thought or enjoyed" (Harnack). It came to signify an outward visible sign of inward spiritual grace given or presence conveyed; but the sign or "matter" is called "effectual," because it does not arbitrarily remind us of the grace signified, but effectually expresses and conveys it. A cup symbolises drinking. A red flag symbolises danger; but facial expression is not only symbol but sacrament, in that it effectually expresses or conveys the personality behind it.

At first the number of sacraments was indeterminate. They are numbered sometimes as three, sometimes as eight, fifteen, or even thirty. Mystics have believed that Christ spoke sacramentally in saying, "I am the Bread, I am the Vine, I am the

Door," in that He is in very truth the Bread, the Vine, the Door, of which every visible and tangible loaf, vintage, archway is the more or less effectual expression. The poets speak of flowers as suggesting thoughts that often lie too deep for tears,[1] of the flower in the crannied wall as microcosm of God and man,[2] of God's holy sacrament of spring,[3] of the wayside sacraments of our hedgerows.[4] Poets and mystics understand that God is really present to bless men under forms of bread, wine, oil, salt, flowers, water, fruit; that the colour of the tulip, the scent of the rose, the sound of the sea, the grace and symmetry of the human body, are effectual signs of the presence of the God who prevents and follows and enfolds us, as the waters cover the sea.

All sacraments of nature and of grace take their rise in the sacrament of Creation, for these worlds are "the form whereby the beauty of God's mind manifests itself" (F. W. Robertson), but the sacrament of sun and moon, of sea and earth, of bird and beast is not complete without the sacrament of man made in the very image of God. And again, it is only perfect man who perfectly images God, for in us His image is blurred and distorted. The human race but imperfectly expresses God, until there springs from its loins the perfect being, the very man of very man, the very God of very God.

The second fundamental sacrament is therefore the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Other men are sacramental ordinances. This Man is the Sacrament of the Gospel. Others are incoherent, unrelated, inarticulate

[1] Wordsworth. [2] Tennyson. [3] Roden Noel. [4] Kingsley.

letters of God's alphabet, till they are pieced together, giving meaning and tongue in the Verbum Dei, the Eternal Word of God, the intelligible language of man, first-fruit of the human harvest, Crown and Consummation of this sumptuous world.

In Him is revealed the Kingdom or Commonwealth of God as object and ground of our creation, as the home of mankind, as the reality to which men must come. Until they enter into the conception of this Commonwealth, and seek to actualise it in their midst, they are dead; so long as they wage their dreary wars and nourish their infidel suspicions, they possess a death-in-life existence, but they have not begun to live. If they are to enter into the life which the Very Man has come to give them, and to give them more abundantly, they must renounce "this age," "this world," this satanic ideal of separation, schism, mistrust, strife, competition, and be translated into the Age of Reality, the life to come which even now is, into the Kingdom of God's dear Son. Stretching up their hands towards God's dream or Heaven, or ideal, they must seize upon it, and drag it down out of Heaven, and plant it firmly in the secular soil of this material world.

United we stand, divided we fall. No one, individually and in isolation, can fully accomplish God's purpose; therefore the Christian watchword is association, and the Christ proclaims, "I will build My Church." So we come to the third fundamental sacrament, with its outward and visible sign, the Church, and its inward spiritual significance, the Kingdom of God. "I will build My Church," that in

a visible society, pledged to exterminate the Devil and all his works, man may bring into outward act God's inward fact, the fact of the Commonwealth which underlies our existence, and so translate the cruel, competitive kingdom of "this age" into the Kingdom of God and His Christ.

The man who begins to understand the sacraments of Creation, Incarnation, and the Church can never again reject as "merely secular" the tangible, audible, visible expression of a people's soul in laws, houses, wharfs, ways, harbours, gesture, dress, drama, songs, or language. He perceives the bond between inward and outward, and rejecting the half-truth heresies of spiritualism and materialism, pleads, "What God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." The claims of the senses and the need of political regeneration are involved in the sacramental basis, for to starve men's bodies is to rob the Holy Ghost, whose temples they are.

There have been rare moments in the Church's history when Christ might have taken the visible fellowship or body into His holy and venerable hands, saying, "This is my Body"; such a moment there was when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul; neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. . . . Great grace was upon them all, neither was there any that lacked."[1]

Baptism in Christ's time was the act by which the Gentiles were regenerated by translation from pagan

[1] Acts iv. 32 ff.

customs and beliefs into the environment of the Jewish commonwealth. Sponsors further emphasised the social character of this re-birth into a new people and tradition.

Christian baptism is the gate into Christ's Church, and claims every human being brought to the font, irrespective of race or colour, although seemingly a child of nature, of an under-world "red in tooth and claw," enmeshed in the wrathful ape-and-tiger disorder, as child of God and property of the Holy Ghost. The baptized person is hereby brought into the society which is pledged by institution, traditions, creeds, gospels, sacraments to destroy the separate sub-human kingdoms of earth, and to establish the human kingdom of grace. Thrust by our first birth into the isolation of a disordered world, where "each for himself" is the watchword, we are hereby given a new birth, a new start, a new enthusiasm; being claimed as children of grace, and for the life of God's Commonwealth.

But, say the critics, of what use is this re-birth, when you are, as a fact, grafted into the inertia of Laodicea, into the deadly complacency of Slowcombe-on-the-Marsh, into a small coterie of self-conscious Britishers, shallow Italians, or superstitious Spaniards? Scarcely do modern parishes care about the establishment of God's Kingdom; what even do they care about the children re-born into their midst, as witness the post-Reformation scandal of solitary baptism, which bids fair to eclipse the pre-Reformation scandal of solitary masses? The baptismal rites always contemplate the presence of God's local family

to welcome the new member. Baptism in early times was the greatest of social functions. Our hole-and-corner celebrations of it throughout Europe are witness of our apostasy. If the tree be dead, what chance of life has the engrafted twig? If the immediate parish be apostate, avaricious, pharisaic, the immediate soil choked with stones and weeds, God's scheme of the "common salvation" through that interplay of gracious souls is altogether thwarted.

This is all appallingly true, but it is also true that the grafting in of each new member brings a possibility of renewed vigour to the local Church, and that, in spite of the worst periods and most lifeless localities, we are baptized into something beyond the immediate period and environment. True though it is that for some time the apostasy of a local Church may thwart God's scheme, it is also true that the fulness of the first century may supply the deficiencies of the twentieth, or the vigour of the twentieth the meagreness of some century past or future; the sanity of one may counteract the superstition of another; the wisdom of one may counteract the worldliness of another; the spirituality of one the pharisaism of another. We are not baptized into Paul or Apollos, into the head of this or that sect or Church, but into Jesus Christ and the whole company of Catholic men, the living and the dead, nourished by the rites, sacraments, gospels, traditions of the living Church, limbs of the new Adam, regenerate men, heirs of all the ages.

The character of Confirmation is essentially social. Fifth and twentieth century theologians alike explain

it as conveying to the confirmed his right in the royal and priestly body. In "orders" and "confirmation" anointing is often used. There is the laying on of the hands of the bishop in both cases; in both cases the grace of God's Spirit is the gift to be conveyed. The newly ordained priest celebrates; the newly confirmed priest assists by communicating, and by the assent of the "Amen" at the close of the consecration prayer.

Baptism declares the true childhood of all, and effectualises it by placing men within an effective society; confirmation declares the true priesthood of all, and effectualises it by admitting men to the priestly sacrament of God's Board.

For men are not only God's children but His priests, bound to sacrifice, bound to absolve; confess one to another; forgive one another; have charity, believing all things, enduring all things, hoping all things of one another. Mutual confidence must supplant division and distrust. A fund of energy is generated by God's belief in, and absolution of, men, and men's forgiveness one of another. Man, as Mr Stewart Headlam says, is "bound perpetually to be the priest in absolution."

The sacrament of Penance, a wise development of this earlier belief, in the universal obligation of mutual forgiveness, is an exceptional focussing of that natural confession and absolution which is obligatory on the whole human race. Until at least the year 250, cases of discipline were settled by all the people, and scandals confessed before the whole priestly company of the faithful; some authorities go further—possibly too far—in declaring the primitive custom to have

been a public confession of sins before each act of communion.

Undoubtedly the orthodox Christian view has always been that vice, however secret, is anti-social, frittering away the energy consecrated to the service of God's body, humanity. All sin is threefold—against God, society,[1] oneself. Forgiveness must also be threefold.

"Holy Orders" is the rite by which certain members of the priestly body are set aside by its chief officer as sacramental organs of the whole. The Ordinals do not say, "Become now a Priest," but, "Receive thou the Office of Priest." Conceive of the anarchy of a thousand people celebrating the sacrament, each at the altar of his own particular fancy; conceive the laxity of a community in which none were appointed as guardians of and witnesses to the obligation of absolution, and you will understand the value of discipline and delegation which we call "Holy Orders." For slipshod anarchy and unbrotherly schism are indeed an unholy disorder. Just as in the Jewish kingdom the sacerdotal functions of "a nation of priests" were focussed in the Holy Order of the Aaronic line, so the "difference between priests and laity is a difference in function, not in kind,[2] for the Holy Communion is an act of the whole body through its organ and mouthpiece, the ordained priest. "We break the bread," "We bless the cup," says St Paul; "We offer, we sacrifice," repeat the liturgies. "No priest says, I offer, but, We offer, in the person of the whole Church" (Peter

[1] Therefore, of course, confession to man is obligatory and essential.
[2] *Cf.* Gore, *Church and Ministry*, and his *Body of Christ*.

Lombard). "Sometimes there is no difference between priest and people, *e.g.* when we partake of the awful mysteries" (Chrysostom).

In old times theologians often declared that a layman cast on some desert island might consecrate blades of grass and so feed on God's presence in the Eucharist. Theologians insist on the validity but irregularity of lay baptism where necessity demands, or a baptism of blood in the case of martyrs, or a baptism of sand in the case of dying travellers, or even of an auto-baptism of desire where matter and minister are alike unprocurable. So also sacramental confession to laymen was sometimes urged. Cyprian, Origen, Lombard, Aquinas all defend it, in exceptional cases, and Catholic bishops have ordered it, in cases of plague or pestilence.[1]

The first duty of priesthood, then, is forgiveness; and the power to forgive resides in humanity and is focussed in ordained ministers. The second duty is sacrifice, for men must consecrate body, mind, and spirit to God in the service of the God-infused community. Therefore the confirmed, their priesthood being acknowledged, are admitted to the Blessed Sacrament, and there offer themselves, their souls and bodies as pledge of their determination to live the good life of the Commonwealth.

But in the Eucharist, it may be objected, we offer not ourselves but Christ. Yet in our own, the Roman, and primitive liturgies this offering of ourselves is made prominent. There is in reality

[1] *Cf.* a R.C. handbook to Rome, *Eccles.*, vol. ii. (Black), 1807; *cf.* Gore, *Body of Christ*, pp. 330–331; *cf. Pullan's Prayer Book*, Oxf. Lib. ed., p. 206.

no contradiction between the two offerings; for if "the Christ in me" be the hope of glory, the light that lights every man on his entrance into the world, the better self, the self unto which we come when we arise and go to the Father, the first-fruit of the human harvest, the pledge of the best that is in us, of all we may become, then to offer ourselves apart from the God in us would be to offer our sins and not ourselves—an offering of an unnatural, subhuman, ape-and-tiger "not-ourselves." So we present before the Father the very Man, the very ground of our being and the very assurance of our liberation, and in this presentation we offer Him our very selves, our very souls, our very bodies.

Our bodies, it will be noticed, are included in the offering (see also the words of administration and Prayer of Humble Access), and the sanctity of material things is an even more prominent note in the earlier Christian liturgies, in which "the Meal"[1] (as it is still called in Russia) is treated as in itself sacrificial. The sacrifice is seen in the offering to God of the simple fruits of the earth, represented by bread and wine—"a veritable consecration of old dead matter itself somehow redeemed at last."[2] Our own Church, in restoring this idea of a reasonable sacrifice and developing it, would seem to repudiate the fifteenth-century idea of sacrifice as tribute for sin offered by a priestly caste, not as mouthpiece of, but in substitution for, the whole people.

[1] It is possible that the term "Mass" had originally the meaning of meal.

[2] *Cf.* Pater's *Marius the Epicurean.*

It is significant, as bearing upon our two doctrines of the body and of fellowship, that Gospels and Church should promise some special manifestation of the everywhere-present God when "two or three are gathered together in My name," and an even more complete manifestation in this pre-eminently social feast with its material symbols and the fellowship of the common table. So dominant was the communal aspect of the Eucharist in the early ages, that the "This is My Body" is sometimes interpreted as meaning the people gathered together into a compact brotherhood, for Christ is to be found in the body of men, and fellowship is heaven and the lack of fellowship is hell (the mediæval motto). St Paul reproves the Corinthians for their individualistic selfishness, "their avarice which is idolatry," their separateness, turning the sacrament instituted as sign of fellowship to "their own damnation," "not discerning the Lord's Body"; for the bread, he reminds them, is the "fellowship of His Body, the cup the fellowship of His Blood." "For one loaf, one body, we the many are; for all of us partake of the one loaf."[1] Our Prayer Book insists on this aspect in demanding that in preparation for communion we must be in love and charity with our neighbours. Our homilies call the sacrament "the strait knot of charity," and urge that abstention from the common feast is unbrotherliness, and the partaking of the feast will only "increase our damnation," unless we are just as ready to procure our neighbour's health of soul, wealth, commodity, and pleasure as our own.

[1] St Paul.

"Examine therefore and try thy good will towards the children of God and towards that excellent creature, thine own soul." Holy communion bears witness to and has its root in the deep philosophic truth that in God "all things hold together" (St Paul), and "there is no object in the range of being which does not in some way partake in the ONE who embraced all things from the first in one single existence, . . . in the unity which permeates all things."[1] This thought dominates the traditions of the Church, and in its light is interpreted the Eucharist. "For as this bread was scattered upon the mountains, and having been gathered together became one, so also, O Lord, gather together Thy Holy Church from every race and country and city and village and household, and make it a living Catholic Church."[2] Even as late as 1550, the Anglican theologian Lever writes: "As of divers corns of wheat the liquor of water knoden into dough is made one loaf of bread, so divers men, by love and charity, which is the liquor of life, joined into one congregation, being made as divers members of one mystical body of Christ; whereby I say as one example in the stead of many, learn that the more gorgeous you yourselves be in silks and velvets, the more shame it is for you to see others poor and needy—being members of the same body."

At first the social character of the Eucharist was made plainer by its association with the love feasts,

[1] Dionysius, quoted by Westcott in *Religious Thought in the West.*
[2] *Liturgy of Sarapion*, Prayer of Oblation; *cf.* Cyp. *Ep.*, lxxiii. 13; *cf. The Didache* and the *Apostolic Constitutions.*

of which it was often the culmination. Consider how frequently Christ connects *meals* with *religion*, and thus warns against a false spirituality.

A great supper is used as a symbol of His Kingdom. Emphasis is laid on meals eaten with His followers. His ideal is that "ye may all eat and drink in My Kingdom." He is made known to friends "in the breaking of bread." Both early opponents and apologists testify to the ideal of communion as shown in the common meals of the early Christians, where master and slave met as equals. Chrysostom speaks of the common tables set up in the very churches; so from fellowship in eating and reverence of the place, "men learnt to live in charity one with the other." Clement speaks of the love feast and Eucharist as that "sacrament of neighbourly love," so that "he who eats of this meal shall acquire the Kingdom of God," for the God of fellowship is present in the social eating of the nourishing bread and drinking of the generous wine.

In early times each city would appear to have had but one altar and one communion, one single act of worship for the whole local body. Ignatius urges men to observe "one Eucharist." An interesting comment on this is the practice of the early Roman Church, for in Rome the bishop alone celebrated at the single altar of the central church; no other Eucharists were allowed, and when the Christian population grew too great for the one church, and daughter churches arose, Eucharists were not multiplied, but portions of the consecrated elements were conveyed by deacons from one altar to the various

congregations. So the Mass witnesses, as is pointed out by a great scientist, himself an agnostic, to the Divine mystery of food,[1] for in this meal we realise the present God as ground both of the most exalted and spiritual emotions and of the common materials of physical existence; the processes of bodily sustenance are Divine, for at the back of them is the Divine Spirit. The common, despised, simple material things went indeed to form, and actually became, Christ's Body, that Body transmuted and glorified by His Divine will, and He would teach us so to consecrate our physical life, the materials of our bodily sustenance, in the service of God and Commonwealth that even the bodies of our bondage may become like to His glorious Body, and our souls and bodies may be preserved unto fulness of life. May this not be the meaning of St Augustine's famous eucharistic utterance, "Be what you see, and receive what you are?"

There are two other rites commonly called sacraments in the historic Churches of Christendom. One of them, namely, Unction, has unfortunately fallen into disuse in the English Church, although the Lambeth Conference of 1908 makes some attempt to revive it.

But even in the present Roman rite there is a beautiful recognition of the body and its function, for the dying man is anointed on eyes, ears, nostrils, lips, hands, feet, on all the avenues of sense, while the priest pleads to the most tender and merciful God that the penitent may be forgiven sins of the lips and eyes and of other sensuous organs. Although

[1] Havelock Ellis, *The New Spirit.*

the hope of recovery finds a place in the accompanying prayers, it has been deposed from its dominant position in the earlier rites. For unction in reality was a sacrament of healing, administered not at the close but at the beginning of an illness, and was a witness to bodily health as the will of God for the human race, and outward sign of the sacredness of the body and for the hope of recovery. Could the Christians who composed this prayer have sneered at the material world? In the Gregorian Sacramentary we read: "Send forth, O Lord, from the heavens Thy Holy Paraclete into the fatness of the olive which Thou hast deigned to bring forth out of the green tree for the refreshment of the body, that it may become Thy holy benediction, to everyone who touches this ointment a means of protection for mind and body." Here again is suggested the possible transmutation of matter into the "glorified body," at the bidding of a will which is in harmony with the Supreme Will and in harmony with its neighbours. For health is harmony within the body, or wholeness. May not this lesser harmony be in the same way dependent on the harmony of men within the will and Commonwealth of God?

Marriage, more than any sacrament, excepting the two great sacraments of the Gospel, involves our two socialist dogmas concerning the body and the fellowship, and denies that any of the primal instincts are "common or unclean."

There have been Manichean currents of tremendous force that have swept through different periods of the Church's history, all but drowning the sane and

wholesome wedding of the material and spiritual. Her foes have been of her own household, but her liturgies and official teaching have been marvellously preserved from the prurient divorce of what God has joined together. The fact that so often in practice domestic union becomes vulgar and trivial, the Church attributes to man's failure to regard the consecrated union of lovers as "Magnum Sacramentum,"[1] as no mere gratification of the senses, no mere artifice of society, but as belonging, like every other great human institution "to a gracious economy," for "it embodies and presents a Divine mystery; beginning from Heaven, it can speak simply and bravely of that which belongs to earth. It discards the Manichean dogma once and altogether. It claims the whole region of human feelings and sympathies as a sanctified region."[2] One of the grievances of the Puritan enemies of the Anglican Church was the frankly sensuous, "With my body I thee worship," of the Liturgy. The bridal psalm tells of the bride as fruitful vine and of the fructifying earth. The collect illegally omitted by drawing-room decadents calls upon the Father, "by whose gracious gift mankind is increased, that these two persons may be fruitful in procreation of children." The ministers of marriage are not the official priests, but the lovers, who, however, must receive the recognition of society (Church and State), and who come into the body of the Church to signify their willingness to submit their private choice to public sanction. The most Catholic of modern novelists has attempted to restore the

[1] St Paul. [2] Maurice, *The Church a Family.*

robust purity of the matrimonial teaching of the Prayer Book and early liturgies:[1] "She gave him comprehension of the meaning of love, a word in many mouths, not often explained. With her, wound in his idea of her, he perceived it to signify a new start in existence, a finer shoot of the tree stoutly planted in good gross earth; the senses running their live sap and the mind companioning, and the spirits made one by the whole natural conjunction." "In sooth a happy prospect for the sons and daughters of earth, divinely indicating more than happiness, the speeding of us, compact of what we are, between the ascetic rocks and the sensuous whirlpools to the creation of certain nobler races, now very dimly imagined." The fellowship of marriage is emphasised by Chrysostom where he advises marriage with a poor rather than with a wealthy wife, for "private property divides lovers"; and continues, "not even the bodies of married people are private; how can their money be? One man, one living creature, is what you both are now, and do you still say mine? That word is accursed and unholy and brought in by the devil. Things far more needful than this God made wholly agreeable to us. . . . We cannot say — my light, my sun, my sea."[2] The true marriage is not only an internal community but broadens out into social teaching and the fulfilment of neighbourly duties. It is valuable as training-ground for the exercise of virtues which expand in widening circles

[1] Meredith, *Diana*, ch. xxxvii.
[2] Chrysostom, trans. by Charles Marson in *Optimist*, 1906.

to our neighbours, to our country, and to other nations.[1] For, says a modern socialist leader, "is there any community as united and effective as a family? . . . All the relations of family life are carried on in direct opposition to the principles of political economy and the survival of the fittest. A family is bound by ties of mutual love and helpfulness: the weakly child is not destroyed; it is cherished with extreme tenderness and care. The rule is vested in the parents, and not knocked down to the highest bidder. The brothers do not undersell each other; the women are better treated than the men, not worse, as in the factories, and each member receives an equal share of the commonwealth."[2]

It has been well said that the roots of universal love are found in the intimate physical union of lovers,[3] for the heart of the lover goes out to every creature that shares the loved one's delicious humanity. "A great mystery" truly, by which St Paul meant not a silly puzzle into which we must not inquire, but something so vital, primal, and inspiring that it transcends logic and escapes the nets of definition. If men are God's family they must model their public and political life on the basis of holy human families, the members of which fulfil not each one his own but every one the commonwealth. Monopolist narrowness, want of mutual belief and liberty, bullying, nagging, jealousy, the modern proprietary rights

[1] Knox Little, *Marriage*, p. 243.
[2] Blatchford, *Merrie England*, 1d. edition, p. 118.
[3] Ellis, *New Spirit*, p. 121; *cf.* several passages in the writings of Balzac.

of the male[1]—all these too often destroy the holy sacrament of marriage.

Finally, every sacrament bears witness that "there is really a free society . . . to which we all in our inmost selves . . . belong—the Rose of Souls that Dante beheld in Paradise, whose every petal is an individual only through its union with all the rest—the early Church's dream of an eternal fellowship in Heaven and on earth, prototype of all the brotherhoods and fellowships that exist on this or any other planet."[2]

[1] *Cf.* Chapter VII., pp. 173, 174.
[2] Quoted in Edward Carpenter's *Love's Coming of Age.*

VII

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

Poverty preventible—Material readjustments—Anti-socialist arguments met by the fact of the Middle Ages—Prosperity of the people from 1450—By their architecture ye shall know them—The meaning of hospitals—The property of the Church—A defence of the monasteries—Various monastic ideals—The life and power of the democratic parish—The anti-feudalism of the Church's parochial system—How far it was "the Golden Age" of the labourer—The Church as mediator between barbarians and Romans—The Aristotelian influence—Becket and Langton—For what did they fight—The materialist conception of history challenged—The Crown and the people—St Thomas Aquinas on property—The deadly sin of avarice: instances—Interest-taking and buying in the cheapest market—The socialistic influence of the confessional—Canon law on common property—On usury—Papal bull, 1176, on credit operations—The Church and mortgages—Innocent III. on lawfulness of moderate interest for invalids—Church law clashes with Roman law—Land and labour as sole sources of wealth—Mr Ashley's misunderstanding of socialism—The Church and compulsion—Newman quoted on compulsion—Anarchist archdeacons and bishops—The peasant revolt—Summary of the social aims of the Church—The old order changeth, giving place to new.

VII

THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

"It is not true that the Church of our ancestors was the organised fraud which it suits fanatics to represent it; it is not true that the monasteries, priories, and nunneries were mere receptacles for all uncleanness and lewdness; it is not true that the great revenues of the celibate clergy and of celibate recluses were squandered as a rule in riotous living. As a mere question of religion, Catholicism was as good as any creed which has ever found acceptance among men. Abuses doubtless there were, and most of them were bitterly attacked by members of the Church themselves; tyranny and persecution there were too, in many forms; but the Church, as all know, was the one body in which equality of conditions was the rule from the start. There, at least, the man of ability, who outside her pale was forced to bow down before some Norman baron whose ruffianly ancestor had formed part of William's gang of marauders, could rise to a position in which this rough, unlettered swashbuckler grovelled before him. Sixtus V. was picked up out of the gutter; our Englishman, Nicholas Breakspear, Adrian IV., was a poor labourer's son; and these are but two instances out of thousands of distinguished ecclesiastics of humble birth. However dangerous also the spiritual authority of the Church may appear to us, it was used, for the most part, notwithstanding all the hideous corruptions of the papal court in the days of the Borgias and others, for the people and against the dominant class; and its influence, as history shows, was almost unbounded. Kings and barons alike trembled before it. . . . So I might go on in refutation of the foolish idea that the greatest institution of the Middle Ages, the most complete and widespread organisation ever known on this planet, was a mere collection of idol-worshippers and incense-burners, and its ecclesiastical establishments nothing but dens of iniquity. My purpose, however, is not to champion the Catholic Church against the attacks of ignorant historians, but to show briefly the useful functions it fulfilled in the social economy of the time."—HYNDMAN, *Historical Basis of Socialism in England.*

WHEN we are facing the fact of our twelve million people on or below the hunger-line, of our hundreds of thousands of semi-starved school-children, of our three-farthings an hour rate for women and children, working often over sixteen hours a day in the sweated industries, of our large areas of unemployed and underfed, and of our thousands of homeless, one often hears it said that we are wrong in considering these things preventible. Poverty will always be with us. These conditions more or less exist in all times. Mere legislation or reconstruction of industries, or economic readjustments, have over and over again been proved entirely futile; you cannot help people by Act of Parliament; it is ridiculous to suppose that Lord Shaftesbury's Acts preventing the employment of five-year-old children in factories could have altered the condition of children in factories; children of five years are therefore still employed in factories, because our friends say you cannot alter evils by Act of Parliament. The fact that they are not so employed any longer does not, of course, trouble the anti-socialist Christian who argues in this way.

Now, the argument that poverty is not preventible, that no change in economic conditions could reduce it, that there has always been more or less this huge margin of unemployment, that there have always been more or less large classes working sixteen hours a day, that other large classes have always been without a roof to their heads, must be met with a direct denial. The appeal to history on this point is conclusive.

Let us consider the lives of the English people during a hundred years of what is generally known as the mediæval period, from early in the fifteenth century. There were, it must be admitted, two or three brief periods, covering from two to three years each, of extreme misery caused by plague and famine, but it is remarkable how swiftly and completely the people recovered from these periods. Moreover, the plagues were admittedly accidental. There is no controversy between the opponents of socialism and its adherents on this point. With their usual want of logic, people who assert that no mere outward changes can really better a nation, assert with equal cheerfulness that plagues are now stamped out wherever the mere outward change of proper sanitation, more sunshine, less crowding, greater cleanliness prevails. That particular form of mediæval misery, therefore, they admit need hardly recur; but for that particular form the hundred years I have chosen presents a startling contrast to the last hundred years in our history. The critics of socialism assert that unemployment is more or less inevitable: during that hundred years there was no unemployment. The critics of socialism assert that there will always be, and that there always have been, large numbers of people working fourteen, sixteen, and sometimes eighteen hours a day: during that hundred years hardly anyone worked above eight hours a day. The critics of socialism assert that a minimum wage is an impossibility: during that hundred years the minimum wage was in full operation. The critics of socialism assert that there have always been large numbers of home-

less people: during that hundred years no man or woman was homeless. The critics of socialism assert that women in industry must naturally work longer hours than men and be paid less: during that hundred years women worked the same number of hours as men, and were often paid as much.[1] We are told that a permanent class of wage-earners, at the beck and call of capital, is a necessary condition for the prosperity of a country: the England of that hundred years had no such permanent class.

Let us look more closely into the life of the period. There did not exist the great gulf between rich and poor which so many now regard as inevitable. Conditions were rougher for all; but a rough life is not altogether to the bad if one is secure in food, clothing, and shelter; the great majority of the people lived upon the land, and the artisan minority were particularly prosperous. Their unions were strong; blacklegging was forbidden, holidays were frequent, and almost every artisan became an independent master worker, having passed through a few years of apprenticeship. He owned his own tools and was not at the mercy of an employer. He was free in everything excepting the chance of becoming a capitalist in the modern sense, that is, of cornering essentials and thereby enslaving other men. The type of man whom we now delight to honour, the successful plutocrat, no doubt existed, but he was rigidly kept

[1] Mr Abram, *Social England in the Fifteenth Century* (1909), cites instances to the contrary, but in the worst cases wages of women never fell to anything approaching the starvation rates of pay for women in our own day.

under and regarded as a scoundrel by the whole community.

But only one-tenth of the population lived in the towns. Agriculture was carried on by tenants of the manor, who themselves often owned a small piece of land and were part-owners of the common land of the neighbourhood; their fuel cost them little or nothing, as they had the right of free fuel from the forests; they had also the right of snaring wild animals, which were very numerous. The poacher of to-day is but instinctively claiming an ancient privilege of the people. Serfdom had almost died out. The tenant had formerly been obliged to cultivate his lord's land on certain days of the week, in return for his lord's protection; this labour service had by now been to a great extent commuted into a small rent to the manor. It has been estimated that the peasant of that day would be able to earn his rent for the year by a few days' work. A day's earnings would keep a labourer for a whole week. Bread and ale, the staple food of the people, were under close municipal inspection, and there are several cases of towns owning their own bakery. The artisan as well as the peasant often owned a small piece of land. Towns and villages were solidly and beautifully built. The architecture of the day expresses the life of a joyous people. Ruskin and William Morris have pointed out how one may read the life and fortunes of a people in their art; and if art be the language of a nation, the language England spoke in those days reveals a merry England in fact and in deed.

The cathedrals and parish churches were built and adorned for the most part by local craftsmen. "We get fairly bewildered by the astonishing wealth of skill and artistic taste and æsthetic feeling which there must have been in this England of ours in times which, till lately, we have assumed to be barbaric."[1]

We often read of hospitals in the literature of the day; these institutions, kept up from revenues from land or other sources bequeathed by will, were not always, nor indeed chiefly, hospitals for the sick, but were houses for the old and disabled; they were in a real sense substitutes for old-age pensions. The Church held about a third of the total wealth of the country; most of this was in landed property. The monasteries were large landed proprietors; the monks were often themselves peasants who had escaped from the risks and hardship of secular life into the security of the monastery. They were fellow-workers alongside of their tenants, and "abbots and priors were the best landlords in England." The earliest improvements in agriculture were due to the clergy. The Church's internationalism led to the introduction of new articles of cultivation. Immense monastic revenues led to improved husbandry on a lavish scale. "This general employment which as landlords resident among the people they afforded, the improvements of the farms and of their own buildings which they carried out, the excellent work in road-making which they did (a task specially necessary in those times), in addition to their action as public

[1] Jessop, *Before the Great Pillage*, p. 25.

alms-givers, teachers, doctors, and nurses, shows what useful people many of these much-abused monks and nuns really were. . . . That the Church as a whole held its lands in great part as a trust for the people cannot be disputed, and as the children of the people in great part formed the hierarchy of the Church, Church property in land then meant something very different from Church property in land now."[1]

The monastic system is a curious instance of the associative, one might almost say communistic, tendency of the Christian religion. For the monk, in the first instance, was he who dwelt alone, a hermit, who had escaped from the dangers of a turbulent pagan society. In some senses the monk might almost be considered Protestant, individualist, impatient of the collective discipline of the Church and its democratically elected bishops. There is in St Jerome, the monk *par excellence*, a passage which contrasts strangely with the main stream of collective Church thought. Churchmen generally had held with Clement of Alexandria that God would be found among men dwelling together, and that terms of citizenship were most descriptive of the Christian life. But St Jerome speaks as a precursor almost of John Bunyan the individualist, who finds salvation in escape from the city. The founder of Christian monasticism counsels us to escape from towns and the haunts of men, that we may find God in the desert. But so strong is the socialist principle in the Church that these solitaries inevitably come together, and are soon discovered to have formed themselves

[1] Hyndman, *Historic Basis of Socialism in England.*

into bodies wherein fellowship is the rule and communism the practice. In the case of most of the later monastic leaders, it is because the world of their day is so anarchic and disunited, and because in fellowship alone they can discover God, that they found their communities. The Venerable Bede, for instance, turning away from the rudeness of Saxon England to the fellowship of the monastery, finds in that fellowship a heavenly citizenship. Heaven was to him the city, his monastery a room in the "urbs cœlestis."

The ideals of the religious orders were not always the same. The strictly monastic aim was the perfecting of the individual in withdrawal from the world, and the helping forward of the salvation of the world by the prayers of persons on the vantage-ground of seclusion. But the missionary orders—as, for instance, the Franciscans and the Cistercians—flung themselves out upon the world with all the force of a collective enthusiasm.

But it is not to the monastery alone or chiefly that we must look, if we would appreciate the value of the Church's contribution to mediæval life. Nor must we overestimate the influence of the central government. Municipal administration was of much more importance, and was very largely democratic. The ecclesiastical parish was completely interwoven with the life of the people. "Now the parish was the community of the township organised for Church purposes, and subject to Church discipline, with a constitution which recognised the rights of the whole body as an aggregate and the right of every adult member, whether man or

woman, to a voice in self-government, but at the same time kept the self-governing community under a system of inspection and restraint, by a central authority outside the parish boundaries."[1]

The rector of the parish was its chairman, but not its ruler. Finance was not under his control. The parish clerk, gravediggers, and others were paid servants, not of the rector, but of the parish. The parish owned considerable properties—houses, lands, flocks, herds, jewels, silver, gold, furniture, bells, tapestry, crosses, candlesticks, vestments, carpets, pictures, service-books, and a host of other things.

"All the tendency of the feudal system, working through the manorial courts, was to keep the people down. All the tendency of the parochial system, working through the parish council, holding its assemblies in the churches where the people met on equal terms as children and servants of the living God and members of one body in Christ Jesus, was to lift the people up."[2]

It must not be thought that this period was without its economic miseries; it is only in comparison with the dark ages, with the individualism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that it can be called "the Golden Age of the British labourer." It was a comparatively Golden Age, because the bulk of the working nation had some access to land and such embryo forms of capital as existed, because plutocracy was ruthlessly kept down, and restrictions of every sort were placed upon the owners of private property.

[1] Bishop Hobhouse, *Somerset Record Society*, vol. iv. p. ix.
[2] Jessopp, *Before the Great Pillage*, p. 22.

If it be asked how this result had been obtained, the causes of it will be found to be complex. The Gothic invasion had introduced democratic elements into a dying civilisation. Uprooted from their own soil and in the first flush of conquest, the conquerors may well have seemed passionate and brutal, fully deserving of the contemptuous nickname "barbarian" which the Romans had given them. The immediate result of this inpouring of new human forces seemed to be anarchy and confusion; the only element in the dying Empire which was able to withstand the shock of this disintegration was the Catholic philosophy and system. The democratically chosen bishops were really leaders of the people, and stood for order and fellowship in the midst of the prevailing chaos. They were friends of the barbarians, as well as of the Romans: the Church stood on no distinction; for her there was neither barbarian nor Scythian, Greek nor Roman, bond nor free, and just as Church philosophy had in earlier times been developed by fusion with certain living Græco-Roman ideas, so now it was developed by its incorporation of the most living tradition of the invaders. The conquerors found in the Christian bishops men who withstood them to the face in the matter of their passions and extravagances, but they also found in them men who could interpret what was finest in their own thought and customs, and the new Europe believed and was baptized. One sees in English life of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a Christian philosophy and economic system, strengthened by Teutonic thought and custom, warring against the more individualistic

elements of feudalism which had their origin in the individual private property theories of the earlier Roman lawyers. To some extent the popularity of Aristotle among the dominant Catholic philosophers of this period may have inclined them to a less communistic view of property than had obtained among the earlier Fathers of the Church; but this view was in some part counteracted by the ideals of a rival school of Catholic thought, a school well represented in the philosophy of Duns Scotus. But the Christian Aristotelians must be considered to have made their intellectual contribution to a Catholic philosophy by their appeal to Aristotle, for the Aristotelian note is no less necessary than the Platonic to the building of a Christian ethic. Socialists are not communists, and need have no quarrel with the catholicised Aristotle of Aquinas. We find Church law everywhere modifying the secular laws of nations which had come under the dominion of the Holy Roman Empire.

But during the eleventh and twelfth centuries in England the codified law of the Church and the uncodified laws of feudalism were in opposition. The English people felt dimly that Anselm was fighting for their liberties against despotism. For fifty years after his death the influence of feudalism increased, and the Crown tightened its hold upon the Church. The bishops tended to become mere officers of the Crown. Feudalism made much of offences against property, little of offences against persons. In the patriarchal or feudal idea of the family, the husband has absolute right over the wife,

the father over sons and daughters. Parents might give their children in marriage without their consent. Neither Scripture nor Church law gives support to this monogamic despotism. Church law again put strict limits to the feudal theory of obedience of slaves and servants. As the reader realises the singular justice, leniency, and humanity of the Church's law, and the brutality of the customs of the realm, death being the punishment for offences against property, he will begin to understand the tremendous issues involved in the struggle between Church and State. In order to escape the secular law, thousands of folk were taking Orders in the Church; gravediggers, bell-ringers, secretaries, lawyers, lawyers' clerks, sextons, scholars, and many others were in one or other of its seven Orders. Tyndale, true precursor of Christo-capitalism, voiced the ancient feudalism and the coming commercialism when he fastened the charge of bearing "the mark of the Beast" upon all who rebelled against the king, or against their overlords, or against the nigger-driving of the feudal family by taking Orders and so escaping into comparative freedom. According to him, the king could do no wrong, a parent was absolute master of his family, a lord absolute over his servants.

St Thomas of Canterbury (1117–1170), in his resistance to King Henry II., was therefore championing the liberties of the people. He was driven by the necessities of the situation to appeal to Rome, and so to strengthen a power, beneficent in chaotic days, but malevolent at a later period. He was claiming

for as large a portion of the English nation as possible exemption from the uncertainties of the "customs of the realm," and the more lenient and even treatment of international Christian law, a law which we shall recognise as embodying the underlying assumptions of socialism, and as not unlike it in some of its actual and practical judgments. St Thomas the martyr was canonised in the hearts of the English people. From that date onwards throughout Stephen's reign religion was a living reality, and the Cistercian revival became strong enough to wrest England from the confusion of feudalism and prepared the way for the Great Charter. The quarrel between John and the Pope (1207–1213) ended in the victory of Rome and the realisation of Hildebrand's dream. England had become a fief of the Papacy. Stephen Langton, at first the servant and ultimately the opponent of Rome, formulated a democratic policy for the people. "Rights and liberties were no longer to be vague and shadowy things half-veiled in sentiment, they were to be written down fair in black and white and embodied in a charter."[1]

On 15th June 1215, the signature of the Great Charter by John at Runnymede confirmed Langton's policy. But the Pope betrayed the archbishop, and supported the king against the people, annulled the Charter, excommunicated the barons who had signed it, and suspended Langton for refusing to publish the excommunication. The Charter was subsequently confirmed by Honorius III., and the Church of England was at peace.

[1] Wakeman's *Church History*, p. 130.

By the middle of the thirteenth century the religious revival had spent its force. The monasteries had become large landholders. The clergy were often non-resident and illiterate. The Black Friars and the Grey Friars restored the faith of the democracy. The monk had sought the salvation of his own soul. The friars saved the soul of the nation, and "Fellowship is heaven, and the lack of fellowship is hell," became a common motto. Their warm hearts and coarse wit won the masses. They invaded sleepy parishes, were offered on occasion the hospitality of the church, but more often preached without the parson's leave on the village green, and stirred up strife and life wherever they went. Their mission throughout England led to the recognition of representative government and the summoning of the first parliament.

The idea of representation was borrowed from the Church, who took her full share in the upbuilding of democratic England. But from the time of John's submission Pope and king are united in unholy alliance against the democracy, and the official clergy and courtiers are not often found on the popular side.

Critics who adopt what is called the materialist interpretation of history, an interpretation based on the assumption that ideas do not create conditions, but that those conditions create the idea, would, we suppose, ignore the part played by the Church in constructing a prosperous England. They would say that the people of that epoch were comparatively prosperous because they happened to

have some access to land and capital: that they had such access is undeniable, but that they happened to have it must be emphatically denied. Their prosperity was not due to chance happenings, but to deliberate beliefs and a deliberate exercise of the collective will, which embodied itself in this material access and socialistic legislation of various kinds. Individualist Protestantism, as we shall see in a later section, revives the old Roman theory of absolute ownership. Collective Catholicism denies that conception, and, in denying it, is able to apply a theory of land and of other forms of property which succeeded to a large extent in drawing the sting of feudalism. In this country, for instance, before the Reformation, land was considered not to belong absolutely but relatively to the lords of manors. In reality it belonged to the king, and was given to the baron or the Church community in return for certain services to be rendered annually to the nation. But the king himself was, at least in theory, and to a great extent in practice, no Oriental despot, but representative of the whole people. All land was ultimately Crown land, and the Crown meant ultimately the people. This interpretation of the land laws tallies with the law of the Church.

Every age has its popular encyclopædia. Harmsworth is the popular encyclopædist of the twentieth century. St Thomas Aquinas was the popular encyclopædist of the thirteenth. St Thomas does not hold the extremer communistic theories of some of the early Fathers. He would allow some kinds of private property. He holds that such property is not

indeed found in natural law, but that both property and government are legitimate within certain bounds, and are not the result of sin, nor in contradiction to that earlier law, but are super-added to it by the good human reason. While men may therefore hold certain forms of private property, they must administer it, after the necessities of their own position have been guaranteed, as being common to all. Their superfluity is common, is the right and property of the poor. In certain cases of necessity "all things become common."

"Where there is such evident and urgent necessity that it is manifest that help must be given from whatever is at hand, as, for instance, if a person is in danger and cannot otherwise be helped, then we may lawfully give assistance from the property of others, whether it be taken openly or by stealth."[1]

He devotes considerable space to questions of buying and selling. Advantage must not be taken of the necessity of the buyer, nor may the buyer take advantage of the ignorance of the seller. He decides, in spite of some of the earlier Fathers, that certain forms of trading are lawful; but it is dishonest to engage in the exchange of commodities if one's motive be gain, and not a modest livelihood. A moderate income derived from trading, if you are yourself actively engaged in the business,—such an income as shall be adequate to the support of your family and household, or that you may have to give to the poor or to the public service,—is legitimate. Such an income is to be considered as salary taken for work rendered. He would seem to admit the

[1] Quoted by R. W. Carlyle in the *Economic Review*, Jan. 1894.

morality of moderate rent from houses,[1] but interest from anything else, whether in money or in kind, he considers unlawful. Even if you forego the use of money by which a profit might be made by yourself, you have no right to claim interest on that account, or for the risk you run as lender. The only form of interest that Aquinas would allow is a small sum to secure the lender against the possibility of the non-return of the capital. He absolutely condemns speculative trading, or gain resulting from a skilful use of the markets. The adequate reward of labour, a proper living wage, must be considered in determining the price of commodities. He lays down the absolute law that all commerce must base itself upon the Gospel precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also unto them." "He clearly considers that in any particular country or district there is for every article, at any particular time, some one just price: that prices, accordingly, should not vary with momentary supply and demand, with individual caprice, or skill in the chaffering of the market."[2] The significance of St Thomas is that he was not only an original thinker, but the representative of the more moderate traditions of the Church on these subjects.

It is valuable to notice that when the economic revolution of the eleventh century, involving the growth of towns, the formation of merchant bodies, the establishment of markets, sought to justify a

[1] Rent on land itself was but grudgingly permitted by the Church. God's ultimate intention was common ownership. Rent, therefore, could only be taken as payment for services annually rendered.

[2] Ashley, *Economic History and Theory*, vol. i. p. 146.

theory of absolute individual property and unlimited freedom of contract, it was met by organised resistance on the part of the Church, with its two doctrines of the just price and the sinfulness of interest. These doctrines were enforced from the pulpit, in the confessional, in the ecclesiastical courts: "and we shall find that, by the time that the period begins of legislative activity on the part of the secular power, these two rules have been so impressed on the consciences of men that parliament, municipality, and gild endeavoured of their own motion to secure obedience to them."[1]

It has been pointed out in a previous chapter that the original of the confessional was essentially social and democratic, and now that the Church had begun to come into its kingdom, it exercised an enormous influence in the affairs of men. It required above all that penitents should examine themselves as to their guilt in the matter of the seven deadly sins. One of these sins was avarice; covetousness or avarice was defined as eagerness for gain, or the desire of what is now called getting on, the desire to be rich. The theologians, following St Paul and St Augustine, and indeed the law of the Church, stigmatised this desire to get on as idolatry. In Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the Good Parson gives as example of the deadly sin that extreme enforcement of the legal rights of the lords of land which prepared the way for the modern system of competitive rents. St Chrysostom had led the way centuries before in his definition of covetousness as the desire for more things than those to which our faculties can correspond—over-endow-

[1] Ashley, *Economic History and Theory*, vol. i. p. 132.

ment, we might call it. Virtue is the mean between two vices: over-endowment or avarice is the one vice, the opposite of which is under-endowment, or thrift, which the Fathers as unanimously condemned. In books for the training of confessors, the taking of interest is always instanced as one of the chief forms of the deadly sin; buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest is another form. The penitent was obliged to confess such actions as these, and could not be shriven until he had promised to make such amends as were possible.[1]

This teaching is not only to be found in Aquinas and other encyclopædists and in popular manuals of devotion, but becomes an integral part of Church law itself. Canon law, or Church law, was only very gradually codified. At first, like all forms of law, it is found in floating traditions and customs. In course of its compilation, it is developed or modified according to the particular tendencies of the age. There are several strata of Canon law; the first compilation belongs to the middle of the twelfth century. Considerable additions are made about a hundred years later; a third compilation, now considerably swollen, bears the date of 1298; a fourth belongs to the early fourteenth century. The first two compilations, as we should expect, are more frankly social-democratic than the later, or rather, the later reiterate the earlier law with all kinds of reserves and modifications. But the law of the Western Church lays it down that, in God's original intention for the world, the use of all that is in the world ought to be common to all men.

[1] *Cf.* Marson, *Vox Clamantium*, p. 215.

The earlier compilations, unimpeded by later reserves, prohibit every kind of money interest. If you lend money to a man expecting to receive from him more than you have given, you are a usurer. "Usury is whatever is added to the capital, whether it be food, clothing, or whatever else you like to call it."[1] All payment of money in return for the giving of credit is usury. Prohibition of this practice appears first in a bull directed by Alexander III. in 1176 to the Archbishop of Genoa, which city was then struggling with Pisa for commercial supremacy in the Mediterranean. "You tell us it often happens in your city that people buy pepper, or cinnamon, or other wares at the time not worth more than £5, promising to pay those from whom they receive them £6 at the appointed time. Though contracts of this kind and under such a form cannot strictly be called usuries, yet nevertheless the vendors incur guilt, unless they are really doubtful whether the wares will be worth more or less at the time of payment. Your citizens therefore will do well, for their own salvation, to cease from such contracts."[2] St Thomas Aquinas had said: "A man has not the right to do what he likes with his own," and this becomes the law of the Church. In some cases, a lender who had not been promptly paid back the capital had taken possession of the poor man's land.[3] The Canon law in such cases laid it down as sin, if he did not restore the land immediately he had received from its produce the value of the sum originally lent. The law appears to

[1] Ashley, vol. i. p. 158. [2] Quoted by Ashley, vol. i. p. 160.
[3] Ashley, vol. i. p. 159.

include under the sin of usury the action of those who do not lend themselves, but retain what their fathers, or those whose wealth they have inherited, had received through usury, and also to condemn those who borrow at a low rate of interest to lend at a greater. This, in any case, is condemned in a manual for confessors in wide use in the later Middle Ages. The Jewish law on economic questions is often referred to, as are also the precepts of the Gospel. Rent on houses is apparently allowed, and in the case of those who could not earn their own living, Innocent III. had allowed that their money might be committed to a merchant for the obtaining of moderate gain. The first legal prohibition of usury was passed by the Council of Nicæa in 325, but only applied to the clergy; the prohibition was extended to the laity in Western Europe by the capitularies of Charles the Great and the councils of the ninth century. Church legislation clashed with the Roman law, which was studied by the secular lawyers as the highest embodiment of human wisdom, and which permitted usury, enforcing the payment of interest as well as capital.

The capitalist had no right to a reward, in the earlier opinion of the Church, unless of course his remuneration was not that of a capitalist, but of an actual trader or manager. The living wage was always insisted on; but it is in the Church's legal theory of the sources of wealth that Canon law conflicts most directly with modern political economy.

It has been usual until recently, with the rank and file of modern economists, to speak of three "factors," "instruments," "agents," or "requisites" in production, viz. land,

labour, and capital, and to put them all on very much the same level of importance. Mediæval thinkers saw but two, land and labour. The land was the ultimate source of all wealth; but it needed human labour to win from it what it was able to provide. Labour, therefore, as the one element in production which depended on the human will, became the centre of their doctrine. All wealth was due to the employment of labour on the materials furnished by nature; and only by proving that labour had been engaged in bringing about the result could the acquisition of wealth by individuals be justified. "God and the labourer," as one widely read theologian expressed it, "are the true lords of all that serves for the use of man. All others are either *distributors* or beggars"; and he goes on to explain that the clergy and gentry are *debtors* to the husbandmen and craftsmen, and only deserve their higher honour and reward so far as they fitly perform those duties, as "ruling classes," which involve greater labour and greater peril. The doctrine had thus a close resemblance to that of modern socialists; labour it regarded both as the sole (human) cause of wealth, and also as the only just claim to the possession of wealth.[1]

Mr Ashley goes on to say that the canonist doctrine only differed from modern socialist teaching on this point, in that it allowed varying rates of remuneration for different kinds of services. This, however, is a mistake, for modern socialists allow that such varying rates will, in all probability, obtain in the socialised state.

It is sometimes objected by Christian critics of socialism that it involves compulsion, and that the Church can have nothing to do with compulsory measures. This argument has been partly considered in a previous chapter.

The early Christian had no political rights; the political power of the Empire was used to crush

[1] Ashley, vol. i. p. 393.

them out of existence. It is little short of amazing that under such circumstances their leaders should not have developed a theory of the essential evil of government and of all compulsion, especially if they had had in their minds a picture of a non-resistant Christ, and were under the guidance of His Holy Spirit. Their own socialist philosophy, the existence of which these particular critics do not seem to deny, could under these circumstances only function in voluntary experiments, in semi-communism, in the giving of alms considered as a repayment to the poor, as a debt of justice. But so far from holding that State compulsion was essentially antichristian, they developed the doctrine that State compulsion, the pagan compulsion that was crushing them out of existence, was in its essence Divine. We find in Church tradition nothing of that horror of the State which haunts the mind of so thorough-going an individualist as Herbert Spencer. St Basil defines the State as an organised whole, the parts of which are men trained out of separate aims into common life. A particularly autocratic ruler or despotic form of that State was from time to time fiercely opposed. We have already referred to St Ambrose's opposition to the Emperor, and there are in later centuries treatises on kingship which are full of warning. The king must appoint rulers who must protect the weak, and not lord it over his subjects who are actually their equals. There are brave sermons in the ninth century, especially on the king as champion of the poor, and coronation addresses warning kings of the fate of tyrants. Sedulius Scotus threatens ruin to

evil monarchs, who are described as lions and wolves. They are no true kings, but tyrants. "They reign, but not by Me." But even these opponents of particular tyrants are not led into a general opposition to governments and their compulsions.

There was never any question, if the Church should itself be in the position to obtain political influence, of refusing that position; and, in point of fact, immediately it was able to function politically it did so, and used its power in what our critics themselves call a socialist direction. John Henry Newman, still an orthodox Anglican, and as always in politics a conservative, has no doubts upon this point:—

> Strictly speaking, the Christian Church has been a visible society with necessarily a political power and party. It may be a party triumphant or a party under persecution, but a party it must always be prior in existence to the civil institutions with which it is surrounded, and from its latent divinity formidable and influential to the end of time. . . . If the primitive believers did not interfere with the acts of the civil government, it was merely because they had no rights enabling them legally to do so. Where they have rights the case is different. . . . Since there is a popular misconception that Christians, and especially the clergy as such, have no concern in temporal affairs, it is expedient to take every opportunity of formally denying the position and demanding a proof of it. In truth, the Church was framed for the express purpose of interfering or (as irreligious men will say) meddling with the world.[1]

Society works so smoothly and politely for the comfortable classes that they forget that the civilisation which secures them in their comforts rests ultimately upon force. By force they took the

[1] Newman, *History of the Arians*, part ii. chap. iii. p. 264. Quoted by Marson, *ibid.*, p. 201.

people's land; by force they secure to themselves a certainty of interest upon the wealth produced by the majority: the rate is recoverable at law. For behind the ballot box and parliamentary laws are the bars of prisons, the batons of the police, and the bayonets of soldiers. They do not question compulsory government now. They are only shocked when a just kind of compulsion is suggested as substitute for an unjust. Anarchy strictly means no government, no compulsion. It is a curious position that we should have to teach Conservatives not to use anarchist arguments. Man, as the Christian religion teaches us, is a social and interdependent animal. By the divine law of his nature he lives in society, and the fact of society cannot be considered without the fact of force of some sort and in some degree. If we were to be independent, says St Chrysostom, "should we not be untamable wild beasts? By force and necessity God has subjected us to one another" (2 Cor., Homily 17).

For these reasons Christians who have been trained to think will not use the argument that socialism is necessarily wicked because it involves compulsion. There is nothing in their New Testaments to lead them to such a supposition; everything in their traditions contradicts it.

It may be thought that I have drawn too roseate a picture of the Middle Ages, and that, even if it has been proved that Church thought and Church legislation modified and corrected secular law in a socialist direction, the actual results did not amount to much. Some will bring forward the evidence of the peasants'

rising as conflicting with my contentions. What cause was there for revolution if grievances were so few? But this rebellion predates my period, and was itself among the many causes that led to the later prosperity. Moreover, few people understand revolutions. The slums never revolt. There is a point at which all spirit of revolt is ground out of the people. "It is a popular fallacy that long-continued oppression and misery cause revolutionary impatience. On the contrary, it is while the bit is new in the mustang's mouth that it rears and plunges. To the fellahin of Egypt poverty and exploitation seem as inevitable as the fall of night and the coming of death."[1] When a people saturated with memories of better days are forced under the yoke, rebellion is inevitable. Church tradition was with them; the landed plutocracy and ecclesiastical officialdom were against them. It was the rising of a Catholic democracy appealing to their religion in justification of rebellion. They were led by priests and friars—Wat Tyler, John Ball, Jack Straw—who, if they knew little of Canon law, knew much of the Gospel to which itself appealed. For over twenty years John Ball and other priests had been preaching up and down the countryside. Three archbishops had opposed them. The sermon that led Archbishop Langham to have him arrested and imprisoned is characteristic of this agitation.

In the beginning of the world there were no bondmen; no man ought to become bond unless he has done treason to his lord, such treason as Lucifer did to God. But you

[1] Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, p. 16.

and your lords, good people, are neither angels nor spirits; both you and they are men, men formed in the same similitude. Why then should you be kept like brute beasts? and why, if you labour, should you have no wages?

Good people, things will never go well in England so long as goods be not in common, and so long as there be villeins and gentlemen. By what right are they whom men call lords greater folk than we? On what ground have they deserved it if all came from the same father and mother, Adam and Eve? How can they say or prove that they are better than we, if it be not that they make us gain for them what they spend in their pride?[1]

One of John Ball's letters, a signal for the rising, commences: "John Ball, Priest of St Mary's, greets well all manner of men, and bids them, in the name of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to stand together manfully in truth." The organisation of the peasant clubs throughout various counties, and their intercommunion, was for the most part the work of the clergy of the English Church. "Rarely has a democratic movement produced such men of character and capacity as the great uprising of 1381 produced; rarely has a people responded to its leaders as the people responded in that year."

What, then, were the aims of the Church in the earlier Middle Ages, in so far as they affected the material and social life of men? The attempt to develop the tradition of the Gospel and the early Fathers, and to apply it to the social life of their age. The opposition to interest, the doctrine of just price and living wage, the regulations of commerce and agriculture, were methods expressing the Church's desire that men should live justly in the bond of

[1] *Wat Tyler and the Great Uprising*, by Joseph Clayton.

fellowship, that the Kingdom of God might be established in their midst. We have noted the intimacy between theology and politics in Canon law. The greatest book of the Middle Ages, dealing at such length with economic questions, is given a theological title (the *Summa Theologia*). Anything approaching a defence of plutocracy or an individualistic commercialism is branded as heresy. The modern divorce between theory and practice, between God and man, between theology and politics would have got short shrift in those days; heresy was not only deflection from right theological thinking, but according to a Church law of 1311, to quote one among many instances, "If anyone fall into the error of daring pertinaciously to affirm that to engage in usury is not a sin, we decree that he shall be punished as a heretic, and enjoin all ordinaries and inquisitors to proceed with rigour against any suspected of this heresy."[1]

There has been more than one attempt, on the part of certain critics, to do away with the value, in a socialist direction, of the early and mediæval anti-usury pronouncements and legislation. The opposition, it is contended, is based on an absurd misconception of the nature of money. But the mediæval conception of money was purely incidental. If one of the arguments used to defend a certain proposition is discovered to be unsound, it does not necessarily invalidate that proposition, nor does its defender abandon the position for that reason. And what was the essential position of the Church? That the poor

[1] Ashley, vol. ii. p. 150.

should not be exploited; that all should be, in their various stations, contributors and producers. It was merely a repetition of the earlier economic law, "If any will not work, neither shall he eat."

We are not bound by the letter of the earlier Canon law, though, if we were so bound in it, we should be compelled to fight the present system to the death. We are bound by the spirit of that law, for it is the spirit of the earlier tradition and of the Gospel. A new form or outward letter is developing in our own day, which more adequately safeguards and expresses the Church's philosophy of the common life. That form is economic socialism.

VIII

THE REFORMATION

Recapitulation—Protestant and Catholic ideas contrasted—Protestant individualism the mother of modern commercialism—Individualistic and Puritan tendencies in Catholic Communions—Modifications and evasions of the Canon law—Mr Ashley whitewashes the later practice of the Church—Jesuit and Calvinist defences of commercialism — Molinæus: a farcical condemnation, 1546 — Pius VIII, 1830: contrast with St Thomas Aquinas—Rigorism and corruption—John Major, 1600, Papist and anti-Catholic—The Blessed Thomas More's evidence on the miseries of the poor—Protestantism indirectly pro-plutocratic—Calvin, the true and honest Protestant—More and Calvin contrasted—Protestantism boldly justifies usury — Lutheranism, a compromise — Luther supported by the plutocracy: attacks the peasants—Luther sometimes denies the right of usury—Melancthon, the complete Protestant individualist—Nitti's evidence on Church leniency and feudal severity—Papal claims and pre-Reformation abuses—The English Reformation and the people's religion—The Great Pillage —Thomas Hancock's quotation—The Anglican interdependent ideal is Catholic — Papist uniformity broke unity — Cranmer's action quoted—Lever on the parliamentary permission to usury—His protest effectual—Anglican bishops denounce the aristocracy and plutocracy—The Anglican Church against interest and land-grabbing—Jewel on five per cent. as theft and murder—Latimer before the landlords—Latimer quoted by Bishop Gore — Other Anglican divines quoted—Protestant leaven at work: Bullinger's decades—Anti-democratic Puritanism—William Laud, the martyr-archbishop—Laud, the enemy of property and Puritanism—The Puritan "liberty" and its defence of slavery—Individualistic attack on the liturgy and catechism—Is the Papal Church the friend of the poor?—Between the millstones—The Restoration.

VIII

THE REFORMATION

"The enormous increase of money which had been produced by the trade of Uzziah's reign threatened to overwhelm the simple economy under which every family had its croft. As in many another land and period, the social problem was the descent of wealthy men, land-hungry, upon the rural districts. They made the poor their debtors, and bought out the peasant proprietors. They absorbed into their power numbers of homes, and had at their individual disposal the lives and the happiness of thousands of their fellow-countrymen. Isaiah had cried, 'Woe upon them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no room for the common people, and the inhabitants of the rural districts grow fewer and fewer.' Micah pictures the recklessness of those plutocrats—the fatal ease with which their wealth enabled them to dispossess the yeomen of Judah. 'They covet fields and seize them, houses and lift them up. So they crush a good man and his home, a man and his heritage.' This is the evil—the ease with which wrong is done in the country! 'It lies to the power of their hands; they covet and seize.' And what is it that they get so easily—not merely field and house, so much land and stone and lime; it is human life, with all that makes up personal independence, and the security of home and of the family. . . . The tyranny of wealth was aided by the bribed and unjust judges. . . . But meantime Micah feels that by themselves the economic wrongs explain and justify the doom impending upon the nation. . . . The rich in their immoral confidence that Jehovah was neither weakened nor could permit such a disaster to fall on His own people, tell the prophet that his sentence of doom on the nation, and especially on themselves, is absurd, impossible. They cry the eternal cry of respectability: 'God can mean no harm to the like of us. His words are good to them that walk uprightly, and we are conscious of being such. What you, prophets, have charged us with

are nothing but natural transactions.' . . . They pride themselves that all is stable and God is with them; . . . they feel at ease, yet injustice can never mean rest. . . .

"While Micah spoke he had wasted lives and bent backs before him. His speech is elliptic till you see his finger pointing at them. Pinched peasant-faces peer between all his words and fill the ellipses. And among the living poor to-day are there not starved and bitter faces—bodies with the blood sucked from them, with the Divine image crushed out of them? . . . Many families of the middle class are nourished by the waste of the lives of the poor. To a large employer of labour, who was complaining that his employees, by refusing to live at the low scale of the Belgian workmen, were driving trade out of the country, the present writer once said: 'Would it not meet your wishes if, instead of your workmen being levelled down, the Belgians were levelled up?' His answer was, 'I care not so long as I get my profits.' He was a religious man, a liberal giver to his Church, and he died leaving more than one hundred thousand pounds."—GEORGE ADAM SMITH, *The Twelve Prophets*, chap. xxvi.[1]

WE have seen that the Catholic conception of religion involves two theories which dominate modern socialism, theories concerning the body and concerning fellowship. The doctrine of both Church and socialism concerning the body is, that outward, sensuous, material things count; that to treat man's body as vile or of no account is to wound his whole personality; to ignore man's physical needs is sacrilege; that, though man does not live by bread alone, he does live by bread; that the physical instincts, though dangerous and often leading men into sin, are not essentially evil but good; that the mission of the Church is to redeem, not ghosts nor beasts, nor mere creatures of intellect, but men; and that man is a tri-unity of body, mind, and spirit. The doctrine of both the Church and socialism concerning

[1] Compare this quotation with the evidence of the state of England in the following chapter.

fellowship is that the individual is not redeemed, saved, built up into a rich and generous personality in isolation, but in association. There is a wide sense in which the mediæval phrase, "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus," is true.

When the Catholic philosophy dominated Europe, we have seen it express itself in economic theories, and to some extent practice, which would be described by individualists of to-day as disastrous socialism.

It should be made quite clear that the mediæval Church was not in practice dominant, but was only able considerably to modify existing anti-Christian ideas and institutions. It must again be insisted that this modification was not identical with economic socialism, but that the main lines of attack by Churchmen and others to-day upon economic socialism are equally an attack upon the practice of their Church in its quick and robust ages, and upon the fundamental and orthodox ideals of Catholicism which formerly expressed themselves in anti-interest and in sumptuary legislation, and now express themselves in economic socialism. If we contrast the Protestant conception of religion with the Catholic, and trace the course of economic history after the Reformation, we shall notice that in both theological doctrine and economic practice Protestantism directly contradicts the Catholic ideal. We must, however, remember that no man is absolutely Protestant or Catholic, for no man is absolutely logical.

Luther, for instance, retains many Catholic ideas; Calvin is more essentially Protestant; and immediately we have said that, we remember that Luther was not

uncompromisingly opposed to the earlier mediæval conception of economics, while Calvin went beyond even the Jesuits in his approval of usury. We shall find the Roman Church becoming more and more Protestant, laying less and less stress on the dogmas of fellowship and of material sanctity. It is often and rightly said that Protestant individualism is the mother of modern commercialism; but we must remember that there are certain Catholic tendencies in Protestant bodies, especially in the present development of those bodies, and that anti-Catholic individualism has made considerable inroads into the historic Churches, the Church of Rome, the Church of Russia, the Church of England.

These individualistic tendencies are to be noticed in the pre-Reformation period. Just as there has from time to time been a wave of Puritanism sweeping over the life of Catholic bodies which came near to denying the orthodox doctrine of the body, so there have been waves of individualism in Catholic countries, theories which came near to denying the orthodox doctrine concerning fellowship. A wave of this kind was passing over Europe in the later Middle Ages. A Puritan tendency is noticeable in the pre-Reformation Churches of France and England. Preachers who fancied themselves to be unimpeachable Catholics were popularising a base Sabbatarianism, appealing to the intricate outward letter of the Jewish law for a precedent, and interpreting that letter in the most lifeless and inhuman sense. But neither the Roman Church nor the post-Reformation English Church would officially endorse such heresy; the Roman

Church was more willing to compromise with the heresy that arose in another direction. Towards the end of the Middle Ages ecclesiastical lawyers and theologians were beginning to make all kinds of evasions in the matter of the doctrine of fellowship and its expression in socialistic legislation. Even Mr Ashley, who stands almost alone among expert historians of the period, in his endeavour to minimise the break between earlier and later canonists, admits that these modifications and evasions do sometimes amount to the assumption of an altogether new position. Langenstein, even late in the fourteenth century, only defends rent charges from the guilt of usury under special circumstances. To live upon rents, if such a source of income enabled nobles to live in luxurious idleness, or plebeians to desert honest toil, is a violation of the Divine command, "In the sweat of thy brow thou shalt eat bread." During the fourteenth century the more conservative theologians still brought all commercial and political practices to that particular test: did they or did they not enable men to live by means of rent and interest upon the wealth produced by the working communities, and to give no adequate service for wealth so extracted from the producers? Church officialdom, however, begins to speak with less certain voice, and veers round to the side of parliaments of landlords and plutocrats. Mr Ashley would have us believe that, with the rise of the middle classes and the development of modern commercialism, the Church merely adapted her teaching to the new needs, altering the letter, but preserving the spirit. The later canonists

met the business man's desire for exemption from the earlier law concerning usury, not by a frank avowal that usury was justifiable, but by allowance of an infinite number of exceptions to the general rule. Mr Ashley is right when he says that "the original prohibition had really aimed at preventing the oppression of the weak by the economically strong," but he goes on to say that the "gradual exemption from the prohibition of methods of employing money which did not involve oppression, instead of obscuring the original principle, may have brought it out more clearly." It is the assumption that the methods of middle-class commercialism do not involve oppression which must be emphatically challenged. The judgments of the later Papal courts in the matter of rent charges are suspect, when we remember that a large part of the revenues of ecclesiastical bodies consisted of such charges. The pro-rent judgments of Martin V. and of Calixtus III. become the basis of an actual addition to the Canon law, which, however, dates in the post-Reformation period.

It is immensely significant that the philosophy of the undivided Church, and the political expressions of that philosophy, should have been frankly socialistic; that after the schism of East and West the socialist teaching is not quite so evident, but that the Western Church was still making an effort to uphold the social tradition and to apply it; that the socialism of the Church is fainter and less evident in the years immediately preceding the Reformation, and that the further schism known as the Reformation, which rent the body of Christ into many fragments, marks the

decline of Catholic socialism, that is, of essential Catholicism in both the Protestant and the Papal communions. The Franciscans are among the worst offenders; their popularity was therefore great with the business men and financiers of the times. The Jesuits, of course, being a purely post-Reformation Order, are the defenders of individualist commercialism as against the older Catholic belief; they are anxious to prevent the moral standards of the Church from coming into too violent a collision with the necessities of everyday life. But the Jesuits were only filling up the measure of their immediate fathers, for the Lateran Council, under Leo X., had adopted many of the modifications and contradictions of the later canonists, defining usury merely as "gain sought to be acquired from the use of a thing not in itself fruitful without labour, expense, or risk on the part of the lender." Mr Ashley himself admits that from this time "Churchmen were more and more reconciled to the idea of payment for the use of money, *even by the poor who could make no business investment of the loan.*"[1] In face of this new departure, the frank justification of usury in 1546 by Molinæus is not surprising, and he might well have been spared the charge of heresy brought against him by those who would preserve the condemnation of the term usury, when they had altogether ceased to condemn the thing.

It may be added that leaders of the Roman Church have been more and more inclined to justify the principle of usury, but that even the Congregation of

[1] *Cf.* Ashley, ii. p. 447.

the Holy Office, with the approval of Pius VIII., in 1830 did not dare whitewash usurers. They decided that those persons who regarded the fact that the civil law fixed a certain rate of interest as in itself a sufficient reason for taking interest were "not to be disturbed."[1] Contrast this with St Thomas Aquinas, who distinctly lays it down that even if interest is permitted by law, that does not make the action any less guilty.[2]

The defenders of this new departure in the direction of commercialism have to account for the fact that it belongs to a period admitted by Protestants and Romanists alike to be corrupt. It was an age of literalism which may be compared, for its sheer futility, with the rigorist and literalist age which preceded the coming of Christ. In both periods religion had come to consist in detailed obedience to ceremonial laws which had become meaningless. In both ages the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, saw to it that modifications should be made in favour of those who were able to purchase them. The monasteries were in their decadence; their later alms-givings encouraged rascally idlers, and were not of much help to the genuine poor. The motive of alms-giving was even corrupted. People were to give liberally, not because alms was a just debt and we must hunger and thirst after justice, but because heavenly comfort in the future could so be purchased, and the pains of purgatory be lessened. Masses for the dead, which in their essential idea are defensible

[1] *Churches and Usury*, A. S. Rose, p. 31.
[2] *Cf.* R. W. Carlyle, *Economic Review*, January 1894.

enough, were actually defended for the grossest reasons. The Mass itself, the social meal which had been the safeguard of the Catholic ideal of fellowship, had been turned into a private, individualistic affair. Religion was becoming a question of payment, and the pious were those who had the longest purse. The liberal foundations of hospitals for the relief of the sick and needy had been diverted into the pockets of lazy and plutocratic priests, who thus lived upon the bounty of the poor. Glaring abuses in connection with the doctrine of indulgences were but one of many signs of the general decadence.

It was all very well for a later canonist, John Major, a Scotchman,[1] to urge the prohibition of vagabondage and begging; it was only part of his general policy, for he had "shown himself open to the lessons of practical life," in accepting Eck's[1] bold attempt to justify the taking of interest in the modern sense; but vagabondage and beggary had been enormously increased by the agrarian changes which deprived tenants and cottagers of their land and made them wanderers on the face of the earth. The Blessed Thomas More thus describes the results of the evictions then taking place:—

"By one means or other, either by hook or crook, they must needs depart away, poor wretched souls—men, women, husbands, wives, fatherless children, widows, woful mothers with their young babes, and their whole household, small in substance and much in number, as husbandry requireth many hands. Away they trudge, I say, out of their known and accustomed houses, finding no place to rest in. All their household stuff, which is very little worth, though it

[1] A Papist writer, *circ.* 1600.

might well abide the sale, yet, being suddenly thrust out, they be constrained to sell it for a thing of nought. And when they have wandered abroad till that be spent, what can they then else do but steal, and then justly, pardy, be hanged, or else go about abegging? And yet then also they be cased in prison as vagabonds, because they go about and work not; whom no man will set to work, though they never so willingly proffer themselves thereto. For one shepherd or herdman is enough to eat up that ground with cattle, to the occupying whereof about husbandry many hands were requisite."

The Act of 1533–34, limiting the number of sheep any one man might keep, gives a similar account. Owing, it declares, to the union of farms and the change from arable to pasture, "a marvellous number of the people of this realm . . . be so discouraged with misery and poverty that they fall daily to theft, robbery and other inconvenience, or pitifully die from hunger and cold."[1]

I have said that Protestantism has its expression in economic practice, and that both in philosophy and practice it is the opposite of that Catholic theory of life to which the earlier Church was moving; I have suggested that in a very real sense the Roman Church has narrowed down into an introspective Protestantism, since the schismatic period of the Reformation. It is curious to notice that the Council of Trent, although it reformed many of the grosser external abuses, tied the Papal communion down to rigorist and anti-Catholic conceptions. Meanwhile, on the Continent at least, religion was by the Protestants being switched off the human democratic line, on to lines which would not bring it into conflict with the economic developments of the middle classes; for when one speaks of the economic expression of

[1] Quoted by Ashley, vol. ii. p. 353.

Protestantism, one must remember that it is not direct but indirect. For the Protestant religion, in its clearest and most logical aspect, divorces body from spirit, and preaches that our faith is alone concerned with men's individual souls and with questions of spirituality. There have been attempts made to prove that Luther and Calvin were directly concerned as religious teachers with social reform, in that they contributed to a theory of the separate functions of Church and State which the majority of people nowadays have come to accept. Religion they held to be concerned with the spiritual side of man, statecraft with the material. This theory may or may not incidentally have led to wise modern views, but in its origins it only serves to prove my point. By teaching that religion, as such, is not concerned with politics, Protestantism has played into the hands of plutocracy, and has rightly found among plutocrats its keenest defenders.

Hence the Continental Reformation may, in some senses, be considered to have completed the corruption of the immediately pre-Reformation Church; for although the protest was on the side of honesty, as against evasion and a ceremonialism which had once lived, but had now stiffened into the rigidity of a corpse, yet it was on the side of such honesty as that of Molinæus, whom we have seen demanding that tortuous evasions should be abandoned, not that men might return to the earlier condemnation of usury, but that they might frankly defend it by an honest break with their traditions. If one would study Protestantism in its essence, it is to Calvin rather than to Luther

that one must go. Calvin hated indulgences, hated the buying and selling of religion, hated the later evasions of Canon law; so did Sir Thomas More. Both were honest, both attacked the corruptions of their age; but where More desired an honest Catholicism, Calvin desired an honest Protestantism; it was not only dead ceremonial he objected to, but ceremonial of any sort; it was not only the petty evasions of Canon law he minded, but the Canon law of which they were the evasions. More was literally a reformer, for he urged men to re-form an ancient Church by understanding and being seized upon by the living spirit of its tradition. More's reformed religion would once more quite inevitably and quite naturally have blossomed forth in sensuous and ceremonial joy and in common fellowship. Calvin's religion was essentially a denial of these things.

We find in Calvinism the peculiarly Protestant theories that men are vile, that men's bodies are contemptible, that religion is a private affair, that man cannot be saved through the mediumship and ministry of men; therefore no man shall come between "my soul and my God." In Calvin's teaching we find that genesis of Protestant individualism which regards religion "as a little private transaction of a strictly confidential character between a man and his God." Henceforward the individualist plutocrats who are greedily capturing the land and capital, and are making everything private property, are inclined to substitute individualist ideas of God for the common Fatherhood of the Lord's Prayer and the Catholic liturgies. One finds them continually, in their books

of devotion, talking of "my God" as if He were as much their private property as their houses and their servants. It was indeed providential for the middle classes, who were then coming into existence, that this individualist religion, both in the Roman, and even more in the Protestant Churches, should have been ready to their hand. Calvin became the champion of plutocracy, and his doctrines were eagerly espoused by those who were making a little Heaven for themselves on earth by plundering the people's possessions, and looked forward to a little Heaven above, which was to be a close preserve for a small aristocracy of the pious. Bossuet tells us that Calvin was the first theologian to propound the modern distinction between interest and usury; and if this is doubtful, it is at least true that he first popularised this modern distinction. Ashley's comment is intensely significant: "The judgment of Calvin was certainly of much influence in weakening the old repugnance to usury; especially as the great commercial people of the next century, the Dutch, chanced to be Calvinists. Moreover, it is at once apparent that a justification of usury itself was far more impressive than the allowance of any number of exceptions. Calvin's teaching was, therefore, in a very real sense a turning-point in the history of European thought." It must, however, be added that even Calvin shrank from a defence of interest in its grosser forms, for, according to him, usury must not be demanded from men in need, nor must any man be forced to pay when oppressed by need or calamity. In after centuries his authority is quoted

for the later Protestant proposition that interest, so far from being sinful, is in accord with the Word of God.

We must not look in those times of storm and stress for strictly logical systems of religion. Even Calvin, prince of logicians, left the Protestant system incomplete ; the Neo-Calvinists filled up the gaps.

Lutheranism was far less logical, far more a protest of the heart than of the head. It may be said to have resulted in a compromise between Catholic and Protestant ideas, Protestantism largly predominating. More than one historian has contended that the Lutheran Reformation was, in reality, a religious reform in favour of the interests of the wealthy classes in Germany. These classes were becoming powerful, but were still excluded from political expression; their representation in State assemblies was merely nominal. There resulted a bitter rivalry between the feudal aristocracy and the rich industrialists, who were supported by the lesser nobles.

In the meantime, the poverty-stricken rural population rose up against their despoilers; they burnt down the castles of the nobles, and swore that they would leave nothing to be seen upon the land but the cabins of the poor. The rich middle class seemed at first to side with them, and at Strasburg, Nuremburg, and Ulm the peasants were encouraged, aided, and provided for. However, the bourgeoisie soon grew alarmed at the spreading of insurrection, and made common cause with the nobles in smothering the revolt in the rural districts. Luther, who was then at the apex of his power, condemned the rising in the name of religion, and proclaimed the servitude of the people as holy and legitimate. "You seek," wrote he, "to free your persons and your goods. You desire the power and the goods of this earth. You will suffer no wrong. The Gospel, on the contrary, has no care for such

things, and makes exterior life consist in suffering, supporting injustice, the cross, patience, and contempt of life, as of all the things of this world. To suffer! To suffer! The cross! The cross! Behold what Christ teaches!" Were not these teachings given in the name of the faith to a famishing people in revolt against the tyranny and avidity of the ruling aristocracy, fatal to the future of the peasant masses, whose very sufferings were thus legitimatised in the name of the religion that should have come to their aid?[1]

Luther's attitude is very puzzling. He admits that the claims of the peasants are not contrary to natural law or to equity, but quotes Scripture to justify his opposition to the rebellion. He does not seem ever to have made up his mind upon the subject of interest; in his earlier writings he describes the middle-class theory as a pretext, he denounces the grip-monies, and exclaims: "Little thieves are put in the stocks; great thieves go flaunting in gold and silk." He is convinced that no form of usury is Christian in which payment is demanded from the deserving poor; he goes further than Calvin in the Catholic direction, for he absolutely condemns the *census personalis*, *i.e.* the placing of a charge upon so intangible a thing as an artisan's skill. In this condemnation he would seem to oppose, by implication, the bulk of the share-holding and interest-mongering of the present day. He allows, however, many modifications of the stricter law, and is by no means sound on the subject in the sense of the early Church.

Melancthon is much more uncompromisingly in favour of interest, his only reservation being that it

[1] Nitti, *Catholic Socialism*, p. 75.

should be moderate, according to the estimate of just men. He was more violent than Luther in his denunciation of the communistic theories of the Anabaptists. He regarded with horror, the canonist doctrine that property belongs essentially to God, and was in the first place given to all men in common, and that if, by an arrangement of human law, some possess more property than others, they must regard themselves, not as owners, but as clerks or stewards of the superfluity of riches, and that what human law has arranged, human law can alter. According to Melancthon, property exists by Divine right. To deny the rights of private property is contrary to the laws of nature and the precepts of the Gospel.[1]

It would not, of course, be accurate to say that there was no difference between the post-Reformation Roman theories and practice and extreme Protestant theory and practice; and merciless as has been the treatment of the poor in both Roman Catholic and Protestant countries, this mercilessness has not been so deliberately defended by Roman as by Puritan apologists. It is generally admitted that the condition of the poor, even in the corrupt period immediately preceding the Reformation, was not so hopeless as it became when the Church lost her estates. Nitti describes the action of the civil power, after having stripped the Church of her possessions, pressing an iron hand upon the starving people; the barons oppressed their unhappy vassals, while the Church feudatories, who had neither daughters to marry nor courts to keep up, were very clement towards the

[3] Melancthon, *Opera*, Breitschneider edition, vol. iii.

poor peasantry. While the unfortunate serfs of the barons were harassed with continual vexations, the vassals of the Church were treated with consideration. The feudal aristocracy and the rich bourgeoisie are responsible for the despoiling of the Church. In the kingdom of Naples, the extortions of the barons were almost unendurable; but the greatest abbey in the south of Italy, the abbey of Cava, renounced all right to the personal labour of its vassals, and assumed the obligation of paying them adequate wages. "The inhabitants of Cava," writes a liberal historian, "enjoyed, under the protection of the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity, immunity from taxes, privileges in traffic, the use of an almost free port at Vietri; they cultivated fertile lands free from burdens without the oppression of *angheria* or *perangheria*, which had been abolished by Abbot Philip in 1322, without any seigneurial vexations, in a condition almost *ex lege*, not being subject to the king, as were the cities of the demesne, nor to the feudatories; they prospered from day to day, till they reached such a height of prosperity that even the Neapolitans envied their flourishing commerce and great wealth."[1]

If the study of the Reformation generally is intricate, the study of the particular course it took in England is no less puzzling. As a protest against Rome, both in England and on the Continent, nations which adopted the Reformation had come to the quite definite conclusion that the claims of the Pope had grown to be a menace to the welfare of

[1] Quoted by Nitti, *Catholic Socialism*, p. 78.

Christendom. Cranmer, at Cambridge, collected the Papal assumptions; here are some of them:—

If any man denies that the Pope is ordained of God to be Primate of all the world, he is an heretic and cannot be saved.

Princes' laws have no force against the Pope's decrees, and to oppose such decrees is sin against the Holy Ghost.

The Pope may depose kings and release subjects from oaths of obedience; appeal to him is final; he may use force against anybody. He is above all councils.

Neither the French nor the English Churches, nor any other integral portion of the Catholic Church of Christ, was free of this tyranny. English benefices were handed over to non-resident Italian priests or to mere laymen. In spite of certain Acts of Parliament and the protests of Archbishops Peckham, Langton, and Grosseteste, the Canon law, by its corrupt additions, made the Pope an imperialist autocrat, who claimed absolute rights over the *Ecclesia anglicana* and other national Churches. Roman controversialists would have us believe that the cause of the English Reformation is to be found in the lusts of the English king. It would be as difficult as it would be undesirable to whitewash Henry VIII., but his divorce was merely the match that set light to the gunpowder. The Pope had over and over again legitimatised such a union as was proposed; but Clement was between two fires, and thought he could rather afford to offend the English king than Catherine's nephew.

That the Reformation primarily aimed at clipping the Papal claws is clear, but the further objects of the English Reformers and the desires of the English people are by no means clear. It was a kind of intellectual turmoil; ideas and customs were thrown

into the melting-pot, and either the nation swung round from Catholicism to Calvinism, from Calvinism to Romanism, from Romanism to Anglicanism, coming to some harbourage in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, or this vacillation is only true of a few prominent men, the bulk of the nation all the time remaining indifferent. Whatever was the process, the result seems to have been that the people of England further lost hold of organised religion, although it is not until the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century that the Church almost entirely loses its influence upon the people. Protestant historians have attempted to minimise the importance of the pilgrimages of grace; these risings of the people, however, were a formidable protest against the Protestant changes. They would have been more formidable if the corruptions of the Church, the scandals of indulgences, the money-grubbing of the higher clergy and the Papal court had not sickened and wearied the ordinary man. He was genuinely shocked at the divorce, in spite of the King's popularity, but could not regard the curtailment of the later Canon law with anything but satisfaction.

The Church of England, that is, the christened people of England, were listless and disheartened. Some time before the Reformation the pillaging of their parochial property had been begun by the monasteries: the worst was still to come. It has been stated that pauperism came in, not by the suppression of the monasteries, but by the disendowment of the parishes. If the robbery of the monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. was disastrous, the robbery of

the Catholic poor in the reign of Edward VI. was an infinitely greater disaster. For about six years the great pillage raged.

"The property of one kind or another owned by the parish communities throughout England in the first half of the fifteenth century must have amounted to an aggregate which represented millions of money." In the reign of King Henry VIII. the property of monasteries, chantries, and hospitals was annexed. There followed the spoliation of gilds, chapels of ease, colleges, and more hospitals. And now in Edward VI.'s reign "the plunder of the poor by the rich"[1] increased in volume. Religion had nothing to do with the business; "the richer classes went raving mad with the lust of gain."[1] The Protestant superstition that would do away with sensuous worship because it cast the body and its sensuous needs outside the realm of religion provided a cloak for plunderers, who passed an Act that the missals, images, pictures, etc., should be destroyed or defaced. But the scramble had already begun. "In three years it may be said that almost all the parish churches in England had been looted, and before the end of the king's reign there had been a clean sweep of all that was worth stealing from the parish chests, or the church walls, or the church treasuries." In the next generation there were churches by the score that possessed not even a chalice or a surplice. Our parishes were ruined. In the homilies of 1562, the homilist exclaims: "It is a sin and shame to see so many churches so ruinous and so foully de-

[1] *Cf.* Jessopp, *Before the Great Pillage.*

cayed, . . . defiled with rain and weather, with dung of doves and owls." Thus was accomplished "the disendowment of all the parishes of England."[1] It was not, in Dr Jessopp's opinion, the suppression of the monasteries but the disendowment of the parishes that created pauperism. Compare the churchwardens' accounts of any county parish in the fifteenth century with those of the same parish in the seventeenth or eighteenth, and what a change has come over the scene! Where there was at one time interest and vitality, there reigns squalor and meanness in the assemblies, now shrivelled to three or four parishioners. Then came the conscientious objectors and the abolition of the church rate, followed by the last scene of all, in which the Local Government Act of 1894 describes the once glorious parish commune as "a place for which a separate overseer is or can be appointed."

It is amusing to listen to some descendant of the Cecils, Russells, Cavendishes, Seymours, Dudleys, FitzWilliams or the like, denouncing as robbers those who would restore the land and treasures of the people to their rightful owners. Whatever may have been the underlying motives of the Reformers, the motives of these gentry were quite evident. Even the anti-Catholic sceptic David Hume is obliged to admit that the suppression of the monasteries was very much regretted by the people, for the monks had not equal motives to avarice with other men; they were most indulgent landlords and residents on the soil; when their lands were annexed, the rents were at once raised by rapacious stewards and spent

[1] *Cf.* Jessopp, *Before the Great Pillage.*

by the lords elsewhere, farmers were expelled, cottagers robbed of their commons, and whole estates laid waste; there was a great decay of the people and a diminution of the former plenty.

The building up of modern landed estates and the formation of new nobilities from the spoils of the Church and the poor, mark each of the four great epochs in the life of the Church of England. First there was the dissolution of monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII.; secondly, spoliation of the Catholic poor in the reigns of Edward VI. and Elizabeth; thirdly, the abolition of the national episcopate and the expulsion of those clergy who remained true to Catholic tradition by the Puritan Parliament during the Civil War; fourthly, the imposition upon the people of the so-called Commonwealth by a military oligarchy of Dissenters in 1649. Each of these periods is marked by the "estating" of a greedy nobility, old and new, at the expense of the Church and its christened people.[1]

Amid the rival theories and controversies of Catholic and Protestant historians on the Reformation period, one or two things stand out clearly. The English Reformers did not wish to build a new Church, but to reform an old; they did not wish to create a schism, they had no intention of breaking with Catholic tradition. The Anglo-Catholic theologians maintain that it was the later mediæval Church that had broken with its Catholic past. Jewel and the English apologists repudiate the imperialism of the

[1] *Cf.* Thomas Hancock, *Pulpit and Press*, "Clergy of the Church of England on Landlordism."

Roman claim; the Catholic idea had been the democratic idea of the General Council, the Pope claims to dispense with councils. Gradually there had been growing up in Europe, under the ægis and protection of the Church, independent nationalities. The English nation had no desire to break the union of Christendom; it was the Papal autocracy and its preposterous claims that would break Europe in pieces. The English bishops have been accused of Protestant insularity and independence. They wished the Catholic Church to be independent of autocracy. For the rest, they were not insular or independent, for they appealed to ancient tradition and to the decision of an international Catholic council. Interdependence, the old Catholic ideal, was theirs. If they were driven in upon themselves, and if the Church of England became isolated and self-sufficient, it was because the only international unity possible in those days was despotic uniformity.

We have seen that the Church of Rome and the individualist Protestant Churches were repudiating Catholic ideals. The Church of England boldly appealed to those ideals. The despotism of Rome should no longer crush ancient tradition or the liberties of English people; neither would the Church submit to the despotism of the written word as interpreted by the Protestant sectaries. Its watchword was not the Bible only, but the Bible as interpreted by the living traditions of the Church. Its liturgy, largely adapted from ancient sources, its calendar of saints and fathers, its insistence upon sacraments are signs of its Catholicism.

So absolutely is it true that one cannot, if one will, divorce a good or bad theology from its economic expression, that, just as Protestantism and Papalism have been seen to have had individualistic expression, so the reformed Catholicism of the Church of England at once expresses itself in protest against the robberies of the aristocracy and plutocracy. Even Cranmer, most vacillating of reformers, is courageous in his opposition to landlords and merchants of Kent in their attempt to rob the poor of their common schools. Thomas Lever preaches over and over again against the robbery of the people's land as the greatest grief that had been done unto the people of this realm. In a sermon before the king he denounces the "covetous landlords" who, "taking the ground in their own hands, turn all to pasture."

Another Anglican theologian addressed to Parliament in 1551 "an information and petition against the oppressors of the poor commons of this realm." "Now I will speak," says he, "of the great and intolerable usury which at this day reigneth so freely this realm over all and chiefly in the city of London, that it is taken for most lawful gains. Yea, it is well most heresy to reprove it, for men say it is allowed by Parliament. Well, the most part I am sure of the godly assemble and Parliament do know that the occasion of the Act that passed here concerning usury was the unsatiable desire of the usurers, who could not be contented with usury unless it were unreasonable much. To restrain this greedy desire of theirs therefore, it was communed and agreed upon

and by authority of Parliament agreed that none should take above ten pounds by year for the loan of one hundred pounds. Alas that any Christian assemble should be so void of God's Holy Spirit that they should allow for lawful anything that God's Word forbiddeth. Be not abashed (most worthy councillors) to call this Act in question again."[1] He denounces those who would gloss over the plain commands of Scripture and pretend that the taking of interest was the counsel of the Saviour. An apologist for usury is no less than "a membre of the devil and a very anti-Christ." The Church protest was so strong that for the time it carried the legislature before it, and the statute of Henry VIII. was repealed in 1552 under Edward VI., and the preamble to the repeal admits that "usury is by the Word of God utterly prohibited."

In later times the comprehensive policy adopted by the Elizabethan government may be shown to have hindered the formation of a strong and persistent tradition in this matter, but during the reigns of Edward VI., of Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. ceaseless protest was made by bishops and priests of the English Church against the robbery of the poor by the nobles and gentry. No wonder that these aristocrats espoused the cause of a more tolerant Puritanism. There is a discourse upon usury in dialogue form by Thomas Wilson, Doctor of the Civil Laws, one of the Masters of Her Majesty's honourable Court of Requests, probably written some little time before the Act of 1571. It was printed in 1572, and went through several editions. In this dialogue he

[1] Quoted by Ashley, *Ec. Hist.*, vol. i. p. 465.

refuses to draw any distinction between lending to the well-to-do and to the needy; he utterly condemns the now prevailing distinction between biting and fair usury. The imaginary opponent is made to appeal to Molinæus and the Calvinist divines, the best of the age, as Bucer, Brentius, Calvin, and Beza,"[1] that is, to Papist and Protestant as against Anglo-Catholics in this matter; but the dialogue closes with his conversion.

Bishop Jewel thunders against usurious practices, saying:—

> If I lend £100 and for it covenant to receive £105, or any other sum greater than was the sum I did lend, this is that, that we call usury; such a kind of bargaining as no good man or godly man ever used; such a kind of bargaining as all men that ever feared God's judgment, have always abhorred and condemned. . . . It is the overthrow of mighty kingdoms, the destruction of flourishing states; the decay of great cities; the plagues of the world and the misery of the people. It is theft, it is the murdering of our brethren, it is the curse of God, and the curse of the people. This is usury, and by these signs and tokens ye shall know it.

Mr Rose also quotes Bishop Sandys as follows:—[2]

> By what means soever thou receivest more than was lent, thou art a usurer towards thy brother, and God will be a revenger against thee; . . . all reason and the very law of nature are against it; all nations at all times have been against it as the very bane and pestilence of a commonwealth.

Bishop Hooper says: "As for usury, it is none other than theft."

Bishop Pilkington says:—

[1] Ashley.

[2] *Churches and Usury*, by H. S. Rose, p. 36.

The usurer speaketh courteously and dealeth cruelly; he defendeth his doing to be charitable when he eateth up lands and goods, turneth infants abegging, and overturneth the whole kindred.

Mr Rose concludes that there "is not the least reason to suppose that these doctrines were not representative of the views then held . . . by the fathers of the Anglican Church."

Jewel had been under no illusion as to the source of interest. To the argument that a capitalist lends money on usury to a merchant, and that the merchant is able to pay him out of his gains, he replies:[1] "Who then payeth the £10? . . . The poor people that buy the corn. They feel it in every morsel they eat." The only investment and interest he allows is an investment by those incapable of work, orphans, madmen, diseased merchants; and even in this case there must be real risk.

So much for capitalism. We have seen how the revolution in agriculture, which was turning arable land into sheep-walks, and the despoiling of the lands of the Church and the Catholic parishes was bringing a greater misery upon the poor man than had ever been. Bishop Latimer, described by a modern writer as "the darling of the London poor," preaching before the king, arraigns the nobles and court gentry in the following words: "You landlords, you rent raisers I may say you step lords, you unnatural lords, you have for your possessions yearly too much!" Himself the son of a small yeoman, he had witnessed the decay of English agriculture and the expulsion of

[1] Jewel's *Works*, Parker Society, vol. ii.

the poor from their holdings and the rack-renting of farms. "Whereas there have been a great many householders and inhabitants, there is now but a shepherd and his dog." "All such proceedings do intend plainly to make the yeomanry slaves." "He that now hath my father's farm payeth £16 a year (four times the former rent), and is not able to do anything for his prince, for himself, nor for his children, nor to give a cup of drink to the poor." "The commons be utterly undone, whose bitter cry ascendeth up to the ears of the God of sabaoth."

Latimer, for all his Protestantism against Rome and against candles and images, is a strong anti-Calvinist. God has come to save all mankind. "Christ shed as much blood for Judas as He did for Peter." The works he objected to, the works without faith that could never save a man, are the adorning of churches, the going on pilgrimages, the decoration of images which some men substitute for the works of mercy.

> The images are to be clad in silk garments and those also laden with precious gems and jewels, as who should say that no cost could be too great; whereas in the meantime we see Christ's faithful and lively images, bought with no less price than His most precious blood (alas, alas), a-hungered, a-thirst, a-cold, and to be in darkness, wrapped in all wretchedness, yea, to lie there till death take away their miseries.[1]

Later, we find Francis Trigg, an Elizabethan divine, preaching in 1592 at Grantham: "All towns are undone. Their common things and lands are taken

[1] Quoted by Bishop Gore, *Latimer as Christian Socialist* (C.S.U.).

from them; . . . so now, where Christ's family have been maintained, grow trees or nettles."

Hutchinson, an earlier theologian, had told the same tale. Nothing can exceed the bitterness of its repetition in 1609 by William Symons, of St Saviour's, Southwark. Three years later, Thomas Adams, not yet expelled by the Puritan Long Parliament from his cure of St Bennet's, Paul's Wharf, preached in St Paul's Cathedral, in the reign of James I., against the landlords and their thieveries, and speaks of the "poor's blood which they have sucked." These men must restore the stolen lands to the towns, the churches, and the poor. Preaching in his own church in 1616, he likens the depopulator to the wild boar that will forage and lay waste all if he be not restrained. "Yea, he lays waste the commonwealth though he encloseth to himself. He wasteth societies, communities, neighbourhood of people; he turneth them out of their ancient doors and sends them into the wide world to beg their bread." He concludes that this kind of beast should be hunted down.

But as early as 1586 the Protestant individualist leaven was at work. The Province of Canterbury in that year ordered the younger clergy to obtain a copy of Bullinger's decades, and make an abstract of one sermon every week. Now, this Continental Reformer was a good anti-Catholic, for he held that certain forms of interest were not in themselves unlawful, nor yet condemned in the Holy Scriptures. Only biting usury is there condemned. Calvinism was making headway within the national Church, and became in this country an absolute Puritanism,

developing its original doctrines in a more inhuman direction than had been the case in Germany. For instance, Calvin himself had been as free from Sabbatarian views as Luther, who boldly pronounced that if anyone wished to curtail a Christian man's liberty in the matter of the Sunday, then he would order them to dance on it, sing on it, ride on it, feast on it, to do anything to maintain the ancient liberty. This Puritanism was eagerly espoused by the land-stealing class, who urged on the Nonconformist against the bishops. The plutocrats often kept Nonconformist chaplains in their houses, compelling their tenants to attend their meetings and abstain from communion with the mixed assembly in their parish churches. These rich men were always preaching the benefits of holy poverty to the clergy. Archbishop Bancroft explains this to the people at Paul's Cross: "They do greatly urge upon the ministry the apostolic poverty to the intent that they may obtain the prey." "I doubt not it is manifest to you that covetousness hath thrust them into this schism." The monks at their worst had been better than their plutocratic successors. So says Prebendary Thomas Lever at Paul's Cross, and tells the people they are stark blind not to see it. Lever tells the king and the court that the miseries of the people are due to the robberies of the nobles, who have turned them from their holdings; "so now old fathers, poor widows, and young lie begging in the mirey streets."

For the time, the rising tide of Puritanism is stemmed by William Laud, the martyr archbishop, who in season and out of season preached the doctrine

of equality before the law, against the Puritan theory of immunity in the case of courtiers and gentlemen. Heylin seems to have thought his life might have been spared, if he had only been as willing as were the Nonconformists that the rich should fill themselves with good things, while the poor were sent empty away. The Puritan lecturers and private chaplains of the plutocrat twitted the archbishop with the meanness of his birth. The Puritan Baxter sneers at Laud and his suffragans as upstarts who had sprung from the dregs of the people. These upstarts enraged the landlords by administering to the churchwardens of every parish in their dioceses the following oath: "Swear that, all affection, favour, hatred, hope of reward, gain, displeasure of great men, malice, or other sinister respect set aside, you shall deal uprightly, truly, and justly, presenting all the truth and nothing but the truth, without partiality, having God before your eyes." "Hath any neighbouring great man encroached upon any part of the churchyard, enclosing it to his garden, etc.? Present him or them so transgressing." "Is any maintenance given to free and public schools detained or inverted? By whom is it practised?" No wonder the Puritans complained: "Many nobles and worthy gentlemen are curbed and tyrannised over by some base clergyman of mean parentage." The archbishop compelled the worthy gentlemen to disgorge part of the plunder. We have heard of the tyrannies of the High Commission Court. He had powerful landlords brought into that court for seizing almshouses, common lands, the endowments of free schools, portions of the

common churchyards, and for "walling up the ancient ways." His enemy Fiennes charged him with being the foe of "property and Puritanism." Laud stood for the people of England. Cromwell stood for the people of God in England. "Nothing angered Laud so much as the claim of a great man to escape a penalty which would fall upon others. Nothing brought him into such disfavour with the great as his refusal to admit that the punishment which had raised no outcry, when it was meted out to the weak and helpless, should be spared in the case of the powerful and wealthy offender."[1]

When the people of Lancashire complained to the king that the Nonconformists were laying upon their shoulders burdens too heavy to be borne, to curtailing their ancient right of enjoyment on Sundays and holy days, it was by Archbishop Laud's orders that the English clergy were compelled to read that most Christian of documents from every pulpit, which proclaimed to the people their liberty of games and dancing on what the old Christian Fathers called the Day of the Sun. The title Nonconformist is here used in its historic sense as meaning one who remains in the Church of England while refusing to conform to the Catholic faith. The action the archbishop took in the matter seems to infuriate our Protestant historians almost as much as his opposition to plutocracy. They leave no stone unturned to blacken his character and to describe as martyrs the favourite preachers of the plutocrats, who were using the pulpits of the Christian Church to disseminate their anti-

[1] Gardiner.

Christian theories of the Sabbath and of private property. These champions of liberty, expelled from their cures for refusal to conform to the Christian doctrine, carry with them their gospel of freedom beyond the seas, and establish free Protestant States in whose constitution the private property rights of rich men are fully acknowledged, and their right in slaves is proclaimed to be a precept of the Gospel.

When the Puritan Party gets the upper hand in England, it demonstrates its love of liberty by boring the saintly John Naylor's tongue through with a red-hot iron, for daring to be a Quaker; abolishes the festivals of the English people, Christmas, Easter, and the like; makes Sunday recreation penal, and generally establishes that type of religion which has led a revolted country into something not very far from atheism. Meanwhile the Pilgrim Fathers in their newly formed colonies were passing laws which punished with flogging any man who should kiss his wife on Sunday, and which reserved the death-penalty for those who walked too far or played games on a Sunday afternoon. Thus was liberty of the Protestant kind fully established in this country and beyond the seas. The Puritan lords had, as Clarendon says, never forgotten "the shames which they called an insolent triumph upon their degree and quality and a levelling them with the common people."

Here is a newspaper report of the martyrdom of Laud, published a few days after the execution:—

The Archbishop of Canterbury was this day beheaded on Tower Hill. The man did stand much upon his integrity, and at his death did justify his innocence,

expecting I believe some honour to be done unto him in another age in whose almanacks he would shine in rubric and be canonised for some saint or be crowned for a martyr.

The tendency of that Puritan age was to substitute sermons for the Catechism. There was no document in the Church of England that the innovators hated half so much, for it must be remembered that the Protestant Catechisms start with the assumption that only an elect few can be saved out of the vileness of common life, while the English Catechism starts with the assumption that all christened people are members of the one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. This could not but shock the Puritans, who held that God had created most of them for damnation. They could not believe that God had cleansed the common folk; therefore they fought against "the common creed, the common law, the common prayer, and the common sacraments of Christianity." All these things were to them common and unclean.

One of the complaints of Laud's adversary Henry Burton against the Common Prayer was, "it cut short sermons." The worship that is social strikes at the individualism of the man in the pulpit; it is an apostolical reminder to him not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think. The pulpit, the symbol of individualism, was the idol which they set up in place of the Eucharist, the symbol of social unity and community. It was held as part of the right relation of Church and State both amongst the Nonconformists and Separatists that the civil magistrate ought to compel "the mixed multitude," as they called the one body in Christ, to "hear" their sermons and lectures.[1]

It has lately been contended by certain Roman

[1] *Cf.* Thomas Hancock, "Archbishop Laud" (*Pulpit and Press*).

Catholic writers that the Papal communion is always the champion of the poor against the plutocrat. They bring, as evidence, the spoiling of the Church of England, which they call the Church of Rome, by Protestant landlords and other wealthy men. They contend that if we had not thrown over the Papal dominion these griefs would never have come upon us. It will be sufficient answer to remind ourselves that in Queen Mary's reign the Pope made advances to England, offering to receive the wealthy thieves back into communion, assuring them of full absolution, and that they would not be expected to restore any of the stolen property.

Since the days of the Commonwealth, Christ's poor have been ground between the upper and nether millstone of the landed aristocracy and the monied plutocracy. The Restoration under Charles II. calls forth no such sturdy champions as Archbishop Laud, and not long after, the Puritanism which had triumphed outside the Church wins a more lasting victory by capturing its pulpits and its wealthy congregations.

IX

THE NIGHT OF CHRISTENDOM

Decreasing faith and increasing misery—Wealth increasing more rapidly than population—A bastard religion—Christo-capitalists oppose the Factory Acts—The condition of the children in mills, mines, and fields—Cheaper than horses—The chloroforming of the poor—The apostasy of Churchmen—The Dorsetshire labourers—A base hymnology—The work of Elizabeth Fry—Revivalism—Shaftesbury, Maurice, and Kingsley—Maurice and the Catholic revival—Maurice on baptism—1848—"Politics for the people."

IX

THE NIGHT OF CHRISTENDOM

"A number of the hireling prophets, whom we have seen both Amos and Hosea attack, gave their blessing to this social system, which crushed the poor, for they shared its profits. They lived upon the alms of the rich, and flattered according as they fed. . . . The false prophet spoke, consciously or unconsciously, for himself and his living. He sided with the rich; he shut his eyes to the social condition of the people; he did not attack the sins of the day. This made him *false*—robbed him of insight and the power of prediction. But the true prophet exposed the sins of his people. Ethical insight and courage, burning indignation of wrong, clear vision of the facts of the day—this was what Jehovah's spirit put in him, this was what Micah felt to be inspiration.

"The prophet speaks:—

Thus saith Jehovah against the prophets who lead my people astray,
Who while they have ought between their teeth proclaim peace,
But against him who will not lay to their mouths they sanctify war!
Wherefore night shall be yours without vision,
And yours shall be darkness without divination;
And the sun shall go down on the prophets,
And the day shall darken about them."

GEORGE ADAM SMITH, *The Twelve Prophets*, chap. xxvi.

"The condition of the labourers deteriorated from the time of Elizabeth onwards, but in the middle of the eighteenth century it had been materially improved owing to the increase of wealth from the new agriculture and from the general growth of foreign trade. But then came the great Continental wars and the industrial revolution; and it is

a sad but significant fact that although the total wealth of the nation vastly increased at the end of last century and the beginning of this, none of that wealth came into the hands of the labourers, but went entirely into the hands of great landlords and new capitalist manufacturers."—GIBBINS, *Industrial History of England*, p. 186 (University Extension edition).

WITH the decline of the Catholic faith the "Golden Age of the labourer" passed away. There has been since then a steady deterioration in the position of the working classes, with the exception of a brief period in the middle of the eighteenth century. The argument that abject poverty was inevitable was met in an earlier chapter by an examination of a hundred years of English life which afforded a complete denial to this statement. People who use this argument are apt to shift their ground and admit that there really was a comparatively golden age for labour, but to account for it by pointing to the smallness of the population in that period. The industrial revolution of the early nineteenth century enormously increased the wealth of the rich, but reduced the poor at the same time to a more abject slavery than they had known for hundreds of years. That this was not accounted for by the increase of population is proved by the fact that, although population has so vastly increased since the fourteenth century, the output of wealth per head has multiplied out of all proportion to the increase of the population.

In the early nineteenth century you have on the one hand "the idea of religion as a little private transaction of a strictly confidential character between a man and 'his God,'"[1] and on the other hand an

[1] Rashdall, *Doctrine of Development*.

economic state of affairs among the working classes which historians dealing with the period do not hesitate to describe as slavery.

Meanwhile, what had become of God's Catholic Church, *i.e.* of the christened people of England? Puritan individualism had scourged them along the road to Calvary, and now they find themselves crucified between two thieves. The name of the one is "Next-worldliness," the name of the other is Capitalism. From its cross democracy cries, "I thirst," but the chief priests and scribes deride Him, saying:—

> Nothing is worth a thought beneath
> But how I may escape the death
> That never, never dies;
> How make mine own election sure,
> And when I fail on earth secure
> A mansion in the skies.[1]

Adherents of this bastard Christianity are never tired of pointing the finger of scorn at socialism, calling it atheism. None of the younger leaders of the socialist movement in this country are atheists. Many of the earlier leaders turned to atheism in protest against the official religion of their day and its monstrous consequences. Official Christianity had brought the christened poor into chronic misery and atheistic despair. Out of the depths the democracy cries: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

These capitalistic Christians, who found the next world so useful an asset in their war against God's poor, chloroforming them into submission by threats

[1] From a popular hymn of this period.

of hell and hopes of paradise, did not really think that the chief end of life was the mansion in the sky; unless, indeed, it was by the merest accident that they had secured to themselves so many desirable mansions on the earth. How had it been done? The wages of the fathers had been reduced to starvation level, so that the mothers were forced into the mills, the children sold into slavery. In 1819 the condition of the people had so far improved that the Christian rich could no longer obtain children of under nine years of age for more than fourteen hours' daily labour in their factories. An Act of Parliament to this effect was violently opposed by the majority of Christian employers, and the ruin of the country was as usual threatened. Such an Act was tyranny; it threatened freedom of contract; it was robbing the rich and interfering with the right of the poor parent to do what he liked with his own. So the Christo-capitalist weeklies argued then; so they argue now. The editor of the *Spectator* is even now put up at Church congresses to defend those iniquitous times. He is proud to call himself the champion of the Manchester school, a school of thinkers who opposed the Factory Acts as being socialism and snivelling sentimentality.

Before the passing of those Acts, the workhouses and semi-starving parents supplied child-stuff for the working of the system. The pauper children were from time to time inspected and packed into waggons and canal boats and sent to the mills. Child-traffickers often took the children off the guardians' hands and kept them in a factory dis-

trict in dark cellars until the mill-owners could send their inspectors to examine them as to height and strength and general bodily fitness. They then became the property of the employer, who did not trouble to feed them or clothe them too well, for children were so cheap and the supply almost unlimited.

The following quotations are from the University Extension edition of Gibbins's *Industrial History of England*:—

> The hours of their labour were only limited by exhaustion, after many modes of torture had been unavailingly applied to force continued work. Children were often worked sixteen hours a day, by day and by night. Even Sunday was used as a convenient time to clean the machinery.
>
> Their life was literally and without exaggeration simply that of slaves.
>
> In stench, in heated rooms, amid the constant whirling of a thousand wheels, little fingers and little feet were kept in ceaseless action, forced into unnatural activity by blows from the heavy hands and feet of the merciless over-looker, and the infliction of bodily pain by instruments of punishment invented by the sharpened ingenuity of insatiable selfishness.[1]

They were sometimes literally fed with food that the swine did eat. They slept by turns and in relays in beds which were never cool, one set of children being sent to bed as soon as the other had gone off. The sexes were not always discriminated, and disease and vice flourished. When the children tried to run away, men on horseback were sent after them and scourged them back into captivity. Irons

[1] Page 179, etc.

were then riveted to their ankles to prevent escape. They died off like flies in summer, and were buried secretly at dead of night lest the number of the graves should startle the people. What is true of the factories is also true of the fields. Slave-gangs of children were hired out to the farmers, and brutally ill-treated and overworked. Child-slavery in the mines was even worse. Girls and women, as well as boys, were used as beasts of burden underground, dragging loads of coal in places where no horses could go, harnessed and crawling along the dark passages.

The condition of the children reflects the condition of the general mass of English labour in the early nineteenth century. Working people were stabled worse than horses, for they were cheaper than horses. They were treated worse than dogs, for they were cheaper than dogs.

The profits of farmers, landlords, mine-owners, and mill-owners increased at an almost incredible rate. Every attempt—and they were few enough—on the part of the poor to shake off their chains was denounced by middle-class official Christianity as atheism and treason. For the most part the people had been so nearly bled to death by underfeeding and overworking, and so thoroughly stupefied by the religion of next-worldliness, that they hearkened not unto Marx, Owen, and Kingsley for anguish of spirit and for cruel bondage. To the christened poor of England poverty and exploitation seemed "as inevitable as the coming of death." It is only when social reform has won for the people a little bread and a

little breathing-space that they revive sufficiently to begin to feel their wrongs. Starved and sweated Haggerston votes Tory. Colne Valley votes for Revolution.

Mr George Russell has collected some of the results of the Protestant individualist religion, and they form an interesting commentary on the condition of the English Church in the early nineteenth century. In 1794 Sydney Smith became curate in charge of a village on Salisbury Plain; he found the church empty and the villagers "aliment for Newgate, food for the halter—a ragged, wretched, savage, stubborn race." Five years later he wrote: "In England (except many ladies in the middle rank of life) there is no religion at all. The clergy of England have no more influence on the people at large than the cheesemongers of England." William Wilberforce, visiting Brigg in 1796, found no service on Sunday morning, and all the people lounging about the streets. He found Stamford in 1798 "a sad, careless place; . . . a shopkeeper said that none of the clergy were active, or went among the poor." Archdeacon Daubeny, vicar of North Bradley, just before the close of the eighteenth century, found the people so barbarous that they would pull down the walls of the Church and vicarage, then rebuilding, and cut and destroy the trees. In 1800 Bishop Horsley said: "For the last thirty years we have seen but little correspondence between the lives of men and their profession; a general indifference about the doctrine of Christianity, a general neglect of its duties." About the same time the Bishop of

London wrote that the state of the kingdom, political, moral, and religious, was so unfavourable as to excite the most serious alarm. In 1805 the rector of Alderley, afterwards Bishop of Norwich, found that the clerk used to go to the churchyard stile to see whether there were any more coming to church, for there were seldom enough to make a congregation. The former rector used to boast that he had never set foot in a sick person's cottage. Mr George Russell shows that the official Church had forgotten her mission to the poor and had become the ally of the governing classes. So bitterly were the clergy opposed to anything that could be called socialism that the country parson was spoken of as the black recruiting sergeant of the rich. Mr Russell tells us that at that time the parson was described as "a furious political demon, rapacious, insolent, luxurious, having no fear of God before his eyes"; the popular cry in the villages was, "More pigs and less parsons."

The bishops in the House of Lords incurred an amount of hatred which only a perusal of their votes can explain.

They were defenders of absolutism, slavery, and the bloody penal code; they were the resolute opponents of every political or social reform; and they had their reward from the nation outside Parliament. The Bishop of Bristol had his palace sacked and burnt; the Bishop of London could not keep an engagement to preach lest the congregation should stone him. The Bishop of Lichfield barely escaped with his life after preaching at St Bride's, Fleet Street. Archbishop Howley, entering Canterbury for his primary visitation, was insulted, spat upon, and only brought by a circuitous route to the Deanery, amid the execrations

of the mob. On 5th November the Bishops of Exeter and Winchester were burnt in effigy close to their own palace gates. Archbishop Howley's chaplain complained that a dead cat had been thrown at him, when the Archbishop—a man of apostolic meekness—replied: "You should be thankful that it was not a live one."

In 1829 Samuel Wilberforce, afterwards the famous bishop, wrote to a friend: "I think that the Church will fall within fifty years entirely, and the State will not survive it much longer."

The Rev. W. Nassau Molesworth says in his *History of England from the Year* 1830 that he could himself recall "the fierce shout of applause which rent the air at a large public meeting in Canterbury—when one of the speakers suggested that the noble cathedral of the city should be converted into a stable for the horses of the cavalry."[1]

Here is an instance of the procedure of Church and State about this period. In 1832 six agricultural labourers in South Dorsetshire, led by one of their class, George Loveless, in receipt of 9s. a week each, demanded the 10s. rate of wages usual in the neighbourhood. The result was a reduction to 8s. An appeal was made to the chairman of the local bench, who decided that they must work for whatever their masters chose to pay them. The parson, who had at first promised his help, now turned against them, and the masters promptly reduced the wage to 7s., with a threat of further reduction. Loveless then formed an agricultural union, for which all seven of them were arrested, treated as convicts, and committed to the assizes. The prison chaplain tried to bully them into submission. The judge determined to convict them, and directed that they should be tried for mutiny under an Act of George III. specially passed to deal

[1] Right Hon. George Russell, *The Optimist*, p. 234, 1908.

with the naval mutiny at the Nore. The grand jury were landowners, and the petty jury were farmers; both judge and jury were churchmen of the prevailing type. The judge summed up as follows: "Not for anything that you have done, or as I can prove that you intend to do, but for an example to others I consider it my duty to pass the sentence of seven years' penal transportation across His Majesty's high seas upon each and every one of you."

The sermons of that time were very models of Christo-capitalism, and if one takes the trouble to trace the more particularly individualistic and next-worldly sentiments in our hymn-books back to their source, their origin will almost always be found in the period we are now considering. The religion of a thousand per cent. is admirably expressed in the following verse:—

> Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee,
> Repaid a thousand-fold will be;
> Then gladly will we give to Thee,
> Who givest all.

The spirit of the nineteenth century breathes in the Protestant addition to an early Greek hymn, "O Paradise! O Paradise!":—

> O Paradise! O Paradise! I greatly long to see
> The special place my dearest Lord
> In love prepares for me.

One can hardly imagine that even God Himself could forgive young people in robust health singing, "'Tis weary waiting here," unless it were on the plea of their evident insincerity. We believe that Christ was the revelation of the character of God, and He

did not go about the world encouraging young people to seek an early grave, nor suggesting that disease and premature death were His heavenly Father's will. He had come that they might have life, and He restored to the enfeebled material and mental as well as spiritual vitality. Protestant individualism flung back the gift of life into the face of the Life-giver.

To about the same period belongs, "The rich man in his castle, the poor man at his gate." It must not for a moment be thought that this line is a relic of feudalism, for the feudal system, whatever its faults, never exalted the rich man or his estate of riches as God ordered. It had its Orders of society, but it was left to Christo-capitalism to preach the Divine Right of vulgar plutocrats.

It may be considered fanciful to suggest that the slightest tendency towards a Catholic democratic revival would find its expression in the deletion of these capitalist and next-worldly sentiments from our hymn-book, and in a pro-socialist tendency among the clergy and people. But what are the facts? The *English Church Hymnal* contains none of these versions, includes retranslations of old Catholic hymns, reinserting the social sentiments, which were carefully omitted in nineteenth-century hymn-books, and includes a considerable number of hymns sung at socialist gatherings. This particular hymn-book is daily gaining in popularity, and bids fair to oust all others in the future. The new Nonconformist "Fellowship" hymn-book is even more outspoken.

Among Nonconformist bodies, the least individual-

istic have been "the Friends." Their belief in the Living Spirit has to a large extent counteracted their undervaluation of the outward and material form, and the Society has given us Elizabeth Fry, a great pioneer of prison reform, and other social reformers.

There has been little short of a revolution in the thought and spirit of the Church of England within the last fifty years. Eighteenth-century individualist Deism left the nation cold and indifferent. Evangelical revivalism for the most part attracted people of the upper and middle classes. Even Wesleyanism, tinged at first with Catholic democratic sentiment, and therefore with some slight enthusiasm for social reform, soon became frankly individualistic, next-worldly, and middle-class. Perhaps revivalism of any sort, however perverted its theory of religion, was preferable to the deadness of the eighteenth century, for it meant an awakening of the heart, and men once awakened sometimes prove better than their creed. It would be hard to imagine a narrower faith than that of Shaftesbury; it would be hard to find a more generous-hearted man than this great Evangelical leader. The logic of his creed should have driven him to the anti-socialism of Calvin and Charles Wesley, but his heart escaped from the nets of his intellectual creed into the glorious liberty of the Gospel of Christ, and he became the champion of the children of the poor. He had against him the dead-weight of a huge Christo-atheist majority, but his indomitable perseverance spelt ultimate victory.

But it is to Kingsley and Maurice, rather than to

Shaftesbury, that we must look for the rebirth of that Catholic democratic theology which inevitably translates itself, and in their own time began to translate itself, into practical socialism. It is a significant comment on contemporary teaching that Maurice writes of himself, referring to his childhood, as "a being destined to a few short years of misery here as an earnest of, and preparation for, that more enduring state of wretchedness and woe." Clumsy critics will always describe Maurice and Kingsley as broad Churchmen, but in fact they protested against broad Churchism as being almost as anti-Christian as Puseyism or popular Protestantism. Their lives were devoted to the revival of the Catholic democratic Faith. Maurice was a profoundly original Catholic theologian, not bound by the letter of tradition, but developing its spirit. I might instance his teaching on the Eucharist, on the sacrament of marriage, on confession, on prayers for the dead, on many other points of faith and morals; but perhaps his exposition of baptism is most characteristic.

Maurice rejected the Protestant theory of an invisible Church, and the Romish theory of a vicarious Church, in favour of the Catholic theory of the Church as a visible society ordained by Christ to bring about the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the world of men and women as planned in *heaven*, in the ideal world of God's mind, will, intention. It is in the truest sense the actual world, because it is the world as divinely and eternally constituted in the will of God. Over against it are the temporary "kingdoms of this age"—*i.e.* of the competitive age in which men

are at sixes and sevens—which the Church has to translate into the kingdom of unity or at-one-ment, into the Kingdoms of God and of His Christ, into the Kingdom in which each, by serving all, best serves his eternal self and grows into full, eternal, or overmastering life. The underlying fact is the kingdom or solidarity of men, the fact of God's Holy Family. That fact is so blurred by egoism, impurity, and other deadly sins and deadly ignorances, that men arrange their lives, domestically, politically, commercially, as if the fact did not exist. The Church is a body of men converted to the fact and sworn to convert others to the fact, and to frame the social life upon the fact.

Broad Churchmen said that baptism declared the fact. Maurice added that it not only declared the fact, but helped you to *effect* it, by effecting something for you—*i.e.* by translating you out of the false, unnatural soil of barren individualism (your birth soil) into the richer, more natural grace soil of a common fellowship, a "common salvation," by incorporating you into a visible fellowship established to bring into practice and actuality the latent unrecognised fact of men being God's family. Such a transplantation constitutes a new chance, a new start, a new birth, and hence is most accurately called Regeneration.

By this regeneration into a socialist fellowship the individual may lose his egoistic soul or life "for My sake and the Gospel's," and save it unto life eternal—*i.e.* unto full, generous, robust, overmastering life. Of course the partial apostasy from fellowship of the local congregation, into which the child is immediately

received, impoverishes the new soil; but so long as the Church has the fellowship tradition, social liturgy, and living socialistic sacraments, the part apostasy of the local congregation, though appalling, is not fatal, nor can it totally destroy the effect of baptism.

Neither Maurice nor Kingsley were economic socialists in our modern sense. Maurice, indeed, was as pro-monarchy a man as Ruskin, but modern socialism owes a considerable debt to both these prophets of the nineteenth century. He speaks of the dense commercial strength which one encounters even in religion as a more overpowering nightmare upon the soul than any bad influence ever felt. In 1840 Lord John Russell told the House of Commons that the people of England were in a worse condition than the negroes in the West Indies. By some curious twist of the mind, common enough in the history of religion, many of the Christian capitalists were so filled with indignation against black slavery abroad that they had no time to consider the white slavery at their doors which was securing them their enormous fortunes. The state of society in England, wrote Dr Arnold to Carlyle, was never yet paralleled in history. Cobden, champion of individualism and opponent of Shaftesbury, yet inflamed the first agitation of the anti-corn law league with story after story of the tragedy of rural labourers; women pawning their wedding rings to buy food, people living on boiled nettles or decayed carcases of dead cattle.

The great emigration was flinging numbers beyond

the sea, inflamed with revolt and despair and bitterness against their own land.

In want, in terror, and with a sense of the crushing injustice of the times, they cursed the land in which they had been born. . . . The Reform Bill had disappointed them, all their trade conflicts had ended in failure. Even the resounding attacks against the Corn Laws, then beginning to fill the country, excited little interest among the working classes, and so they gave little response. The betrayal and failure had made them sad and hopeless.

In 1848 the storm burst. The long period of European sleep and silence suddenly flared into resonant action. Lamennais, back "amongst realities once again" after the experience of his fortress-prison, was called to represent the people in a republican assembly. "A great act of justice is being done," was his cry; "cannot you feel the breath of God?" Mazzini, after years of obscure poverty in the back streets, "the hell of exile" in London, was soon to find himself raising the red banner of God and Humanity upon the wall of Rome. Every throne in Europe tottered, and most were thrown to the ground. The barricades were up in Berlin, in Milan, in Paris. The air was filled with the clamour and havoc of change. The revelation of the coming of terrors seemed at last realised in the ways of men; with the sun becoming black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon blood-red, and the stars of heaven falling to the earth, as a fig-tree when she is shaken by a mighty wind.[1]

Maurice's method is well illustrated in his application of the Bible, and especially of the Revelation, to the interpretation of the moment. In Prussia, in Hungary, in Lombardy, in Poland, the people were up and were fighting in the streets. The Republic was proclaimed in Paris. In all this Maurice and

[1] *Leaders of the Church*, 1800–1900, p. 60, "F. D. Maurice," by C. F. G. Masterman.

Kingsley recognised the end of an epoch and the coming of the Kingdom of God.

> If any preacher had tried to impress you with the belief that some signs and wonders were near at hand, if he had tasked his imagination or his skill in interpreting the hard sayings in Scripture to tell you minutely what those signs and wonders would be, are you not sure that his anticipation would be poor and cold when compared with the things which you have heard of and almost seen? . . . Do you really think that the invasion of Palestine by Sennacherib was a greater event than the overthrowing of nearly all the greatest powers, civil and ecclesiastical, in Christendom?[1]

On 6th May 1848 was published the first number of *Politics for the People*, under the editorship of Kingsley. Physical force methods were repudiated; a passionate appeal was made to the Church. The editor writes: "We have used the Bible as if it were a mere special constable's handbook, an opium dose for keeping beasts of burden patient while they are being overloaded, a mere book to keep the poor in order." Maurice was often alarmed at the vehemence of the party he had created, but he stood by his friends. Kingsley was like a flame. He writes: "I will speak in season and out of season. My path is clear and I will follow it. God has made the Word of the Lord like fire within my bones, giving me no peace till I have spoken out."

It is quite possible that Maurice and Kingsley and their like would have drawn back from the development of economic socialism as espoused by Churchmen to-day; but just as the abolition of slavery is an

[1] Quoted by Masterman, *ibid.*

inevitable deduction from Pauline philosophy, and the Lollard revolution from the teachings of the theologian who repudiated it, so Church socialists of the present owe much of their socialist make-up to these Catholic Fathers of the nineteenth century. In them the voice of the Catholic Church, so long silenced, had once more been uplifted.

X

BEFORE THE DAWN

The low-water mark in theology and life—The coming of dawn—The passing of Christo-capitalism — Whateley and other bishops of mammon—The Tractarians and Newman—Manufactured individualistic revivals—Ritualism and social reformation—Father Dolling—The Guild of St Matthew—The teaching of Stewart Headlam—The Christian Social Union—The 1908 Pan-Anglican Congress—Lambeth Conferences of 1867, 1878, 1888, 1908—Episcopal socialism and the 1907 report—Temporary reaction—Socialistic Nonconformity—A Christo-capitalist newspaper—The Roman apostasy—Uncatholic Puseyism—The autocracy of Rome —Newman and Manning on the right of the starving to help themselves—An Italian manifesto—A Roman socialist and the Catholic Socialist Society—Modern heretics and their newspapers—The condition of England, a slight improvement on 1840—The Church in chains—International federation *versus* imperialism and competition—The common bond of socialism—The opportunity of the Church of England—The Church Socialist League.

X

BEFORE THE DAWN

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth. The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and by the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and strangers shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured: but they that have garnered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have gathered it shall drink it in the courts of my sanctuary."—ISAIAH lxiii.

IT is generally admitted that the years 1800–1830 show the low-water mark of the Catholic democracy both in theology and daily life. Perhaps neither commerce nor religion can ever be so cruel or evil again. The popular religion of our day is weak and nebulous, the condition of the people miserable; but the worst is past, and we are witnessing the faint streaks of dawn. Bishops no longer openly justify the more monstrous forms of usury and slavery. Christo-capitalism is dying. Its defenders are almost silent. The Editor of the *Spectator* and the Rev. Lord William Cecil receive an importance altogether out of proportion to their intellectual strength, because they appear to be the sole survivors of ultra-individualism at Church Congresses and

other official gatherings. This curious creed lingered on into the early eighties. By 1838 the plutocrats had so gained in social and political power as to have become formidable rivals of the landed aristocracy. The bishops appointed by plutocratic governments, and as yet untouched by the Oxford Revival or the Catholicity of Maurice, reflected the Christo-capitalism of their patrons. We find Archbishop Whately teaching: "The Israelites were forbidden in the law of Moses to lend to their brethren on usury, that is, interest. But they were allowed by God's law to receive interest on the loan of money lent to a stranger, *and this shows that there can be nothing wrong in receiving interest.*"[1] The Bishop of Manchester in 1880 wrote: "The great Founder of Christianity recognises and implicitly sanctions the practice of lending money at interest. 'Thou oughtest to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.'"[1] About the same time the Bishop of Rochester writes: "Money, like every other talent, is to be made the most of; and it is our duty to see that we do make the most of it; . . . but making the most of it does not necessarily mean the highest possible return for it; simply the highest interest compatible with good security."[1]

To what extent, it may be asked, did the Oxford Revival of 1833 contribute to that revolution in thought and practice which is bearing the English Church along in the direction of Catholic democracy? Its leaders were altogether opposed to what may

[1] *Cf. The Churches and Usury*, pp. 41, 42.

be called the Manchester School in theology and economics. One of them at least recognised that there were political implications in the Christian faith. If the fundamental philosophy of socialism involves the worth of the body and the sensuous life and the doctrine of fellowship, the Tractarians, insisting on the outward and visible Church and the ministry of men, the Incarnation of God and the Communion of the Saints, sensuous worship and the need of man's forgiveness, were helping to lay the foundation of Catholicism in religion and socialism in practice.

But the virus of individualism had not been expelled, and even Newman, the genius of the movement, remains in many respects a Protestant to the end of his life. Mawkish introspection and disproportioned next-worldliness still mark their hymns and their books of devotion. Their mission preachers, though touched with the Catholic spirit, are not always clearly distinguishable from Christo-capitalists of the Torrey-Alexander type. The religion of these latter persons is now so unable to revive Christian thought, that their boasted revivals are rather to be seen on the hoardings than in the hearts of men. The "ritualist" movement of to-day tends towards social-democratic ideals, partly because it is the practical development of Tractarianism, but largely owing to the fact that it is infused with the spirit of Maurice-Kingsley Catholicism. Father Dolling is a good instance of this; he was not a socialist, but his sympathies were extremely democratic

and socialistic. He had probably never read a word of Maurice, but in the preparation of his sermons and of his theological defences against the attacks of the bishops he generally turned to a brother priest who was working with him and was one of his greatest friends. This priest was a thorough-going Maurician.

The Guild of St Matthew, under the fearless leadership of Stewart D. Headlam, carried on the work of the Catholic Democrats of 1848. This Guild claims to be the first socialist society in England, pre-dating even the Social Democratic Party. Its socialism is certainly more uncompromising than that of Maurice, but in one fundamental it differs from Maurice, and in another from the economic Church socialists of to-day. Maurice taught that the Church was the mouthpiece of the Kingdom of God, and that the Mass was the witness to the fellowship of that Kingdom. Stewart Headlam teaches that the Church *is* the Kingdom of God, and sometimes even appears to teach that the Mass *is* the fellowship of men. In a recent speech, he told the Guild that, if they could not get people to be socialists, they could at least get them to go to Mass, and he suggested that the more or less universal substitution of Mass for Matins would almost mechanically work out into an economic revolution. Italy and Spain do not quite bear out this contention. The Church socialists teach that land and industrial capital must be in the hands of the whole people; the Guild would tax land in the hope that the capitalists' power would be gone when the value of the land was deflected from private

pockets to the pockets of the community. Mr Headlam himself does not seem clear upon this point, for he has for many years been on the executive of the Fabian Society, who have pronounced clearly for the public ownership of both land and capital. The younger members of the Guild are invariably on the side of Mr Headlam of the Fabian Society, and against Mr Headlam of the single tax. But whatever be the economic position of this little Guild, its theological and political influence on the thought of Churchmen has been incalculable.[1]

The Christian Social Union, which includes many bishops, and has a membership of over six thousand men and women, is to some extent the child of the Guild of St Matthew, but the Guild is not proud of its offspring. It glories in its indefiniteness, and seems to consider it a crime to arrive at any particular economic conclusion. It flings a wide net, gathering both good and bad. An unkind critic has described it as for ever learning, but never coming to a knowledge of the truth. But whatever be its defects, it has convinced a large mass of English church-goers of the importance of social questions. It has persuaded them that the Christian religion essentially involves social righteousness in some form or other. The danger of Social-Unionism is that its leaders, arriving at no clear dogma in theology or politics, and being for the most part political undenominationalists, have no fixed standard by which to judge the value or otherwise of any suggested social reform.

[1] Readers should make themselves familiar with Mr Headlam's works, and especially with his *Laws of Eternal Life*, an invaluable commentary on the Church Catechism (Verinder, 376 Strand, W.C.; 3*d*.)

The Pan-Anglican Congress of 1908 was a triumph for Christian Social-Unionism. The idea of social responsibility, and of a close union between politics and religion, dominated the huge meetings at the Albert Hall. The socialist tendency in the Church of England cannot be doubted, for if even the bishops, appointed by anti-socialist governments and recruited from the ranks, not of the ablest, but the safest men, are becoming influenced by socialist thought, the socialist current among the rank and file must indeed be vigorous.

Nor can it be said that the bishops are becoming collectivist because it pays, for any tendency in this direction is at once met by alarming diminution in capitalistic subscriptions to home and foreign missions and other diocesan funds. It is more difficult now to be a socialist than it was ten years ago. People are beginning to fear and hate us, for they have nowadays to take us seriously.

The socialist wave in episcopal quarters must be attributed to another cause.

There is a great increase in the ranks of those clergy who have felt the converging influence of the Oxford Movement and the Maurice-Scott-Holland-Headlam Movement. Their ranks have swollen so enormously that it is impossible even for our enemies to choose all their bishops from schools of thought entirely uninfluenced by them. Therefore it comes to pass that many of our prelates believe in the redemption of the body, in the sacredness of man's material sensuous life, in a Divine kingdom of justice to be set up here and now, and in original goodness.

Where there is this philosophy there will be the possibility of socialism.

But where is this socialist tendency to be found among the bishops? Let us look at the facts.

At the first Lambeth Conference, in 1867, social and economic questions were not so much as mentioned. The same may be said of the Lambeth Conferences of 1878 and 1888. Eleven years ago bishops from all parts of the English-speaking world again assembled at Lambeth, and the Lambeth Encyclical of that year reports that many think the present industrial system unjust, urges the application of the principle of brotherhood; for, as result of such application, "many of the mischiefs of this system would ultimately be prevented."

The rich must be warned that it is more difficult for them to enter the Kingdom of Heaven than the poor. The poor have their own temptations and troubles. It is especially the duty of the Church to lessen these troubles; but they themselves must exert themselves to acquire character and act on high principle. Some are particularly in need of help, *e.g.* the unemployed. Sympathy and study are asked of Church people. The letter concludes lamely enough: "Help in individual cases of need is the task the Master gives us." The appended resolution commends the report of the Lambeth Committee. The bishops of the committee are glad to see increased interest of Church people in economic questions. They recognise that the Church represents Christ here and now, and must set up the Kingdom of God here in our midst, and must redeem the bodies as well

as the souls of men. Nevertheless, it is the duty rather of laity than of clergy to concern themselves with this side of the work, discretion is needed, and the *primary* duty of the Church is, after all, to the soul. The Church must not pronounce on the relative merits of socialism and individualism, except in so far as it is bound to drive in the following fourfold wedge:—

(*a*) Brotherhood: as counterpoise to relentless competition.

(*b*) Labour. Every man of every class is bound to serve mankind. Idleness is not permissible.

(*c*) Justice. While on the one hand "inequalities are inwoven with the whole providential order of human life," and would seem to be recognised by Christ, yet on the other, the social order "must not ignore the interest of any of its parts, and must be tested by the degree in which it secures for each, freedom for a happy, useful, and untrammelled life, and distributes as widely as possible social advantages and opportunities."

(*d*) Public responsibility. "Certain conditions of labour are intolerable." We repudiate and condemn "open breaches of social justice," as also "the belief that economic conditions are to be left to the action of material causes uncontrolled by moral responsibility," for "*A Christian community is responsible for the character of its own economic and social order, and for deciding to what extent matters affecting that order are to be left to individual initiative, and to the unregulated play of economic forces.*"

So far and no further had the official Church moved

by 1897. But I know of no official statement of the bishops since that date which does not fully recognise that the mission of the Church is to set up a Kingdom of God on earth. This mission is insisted upon in the present Archbishop's sermon at the opening of the 1908 Pan-Anglican Congress at St Paul's Cathedral. The Church "must strive more valiantly to mend what is ignorant and amiss in the world around us, and to hasten on earth the coming of our Lord's Kingdom."

Of course, utterances of individual bishops go much further. The Bishop of Birmingham tells us that the socialistic ideals of the Master and of the early Church included the living wage, the right to work, support for the weak, the aged, and the children; we must return to those ideals "if possible without violence, but in any case return." The Bishop of Utah frankly urges Marxian socialism and return by the method of revolution. The Archbishop of Melbourne criticises the practicability of certain socialist proposals, but asserts that socialism in his country is founded on Christian principles. The Bishop of London, in words almost identical with those of the new Archbishop of York, speaks of the ideals underlying the Labour Movement, "Justice, Fellowship, and Equality of Opportunity." They are his own ideals. The Bishop of Carlisle urges drastic land reforms and the equality of opportunity. The Bishop of Hereford's collectivist radicalism is well known. The Bishop of Truro demands sympathetic study of economic socialism, and the Bishop of Wakefield has taken the chair for Mr Keir Hardie.

It is also significant that the son of Archbishop Temple, and sons of the Bishops of Manchester and Southwark, and many others coming from episcopal families, are socialists, while the son of a late Archbishop of York has spoken from I.L.P. platforms.

The individual utterances of bishops do not perhaps count for much. Some prelates are apt to hedge on other occasions and destroy much of the force of their previous words, but there are few of them who would not now endorse Bishop Westcott's eulogium on the underlying principles of Socialism :—

> Individualism regards humanity as made up of disconnected and warring atoms; socialism regards it as an organic whole, a vital unity formed by the combination of contributory members mutually interdependent. It follows that socialism differs from individualism both in method and in aim. The method of socialism is co-operation; of individualism, competition. The one regards man as working with man for a common end; the other regards man as working against man for private gain. The aim of socialism is the fulfilment of service; the aim of individualism is the attainment of some personal advantage, riches, or place, or fame.

After the "socialist field-day" of the Pan-Anglican Congress, 242 "archbishops and bishops of the Holy Catholic Church, in full communion with the Church of England, assembled from divers parts of the earth at Lambeth Palace, in the year of our Lord 1908." They issue an Encyclical, which defines the Church as ordained for the welfare of mankind and the true happiness of all. The democratic movement presents an opportunity for Christian service, for its ideals are the Christian ideals of "brotherhood, liberty, and mutual justice."

For these ideals underlying social democracy the 242 bishops claim Christ's sanction, and the teaching of the ancient prophets. "We call upon the Church to consider how far and wherein it has departed from these truths. . . . In so far as the democratic and industrial movement is animated by these ideals and strives to procure for all, especially for the weaker, JUST TREATMENT AND A REAL OPPORTUNITY OF LIVING A TRUE HUMAN LIFE, WE APPEAL TO ALL CHRISTIANS TO CO-OPERATE ACTIVELY WITH IT." This appeal is then incorporated in the formal resolutions, which conclude: "The social mission and social principles of Christianity should be given a more prominent place in the study and teaching of the Church, both for the clergy and laity."

The 242 archbishops and bishops assembled at Lambeth urge upon Church people the consideration of the report of their own committee of twenty-seven bishops, and of the report of a committee of Convocation published in 1907.

These documents of the National Church will probably be looked upon by future ecclesiastical historians as by far the most important pronouncements of Anglican bishops since the beginnings of the Reformation.

Their object is to consider "the tidal wave of democracy, flowing in the direction of social reconstruction." They note with satisfaction "the new prominence given to the wage-earners," "the growing sense of dissatisfaction," "the claim increasing in intensity for justice in the distribution of the proceeds

of industry," as also the universality of the movement. They continue as follows :—

"It is the privilege of the Church to welcome this movement as one of the great developments of human history, which have behind them the authority of God. It follows that it is the mission of the Church to help to keep the spirit of democracy true to the Divine purpose. Its aim, therefore, will be to assert a claim, and to recognise an obligation."

"*The Claim.*—That the whole sphere of human life, material as well as spiritual, must be consecrated to the highest purpose; that every human aspiration, that every natural human desire, is meant to find its legitimate satisfaction, while all human wills and activities must be brought under the sway of Christian law."

"*The Obligation.*—That it is the duty of the Church to apply the truths and principles of Christianity, especially the fundamental truths of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, to the solution of social and economic difficulties, to awaken and educate the social conscience, to further its expression in legislation (while preserving its own independence of political party), and to strive, above all, to present Christ before men as a living Lord and King in the realm of common life."

"An attitude of aloofness on the part of the Church, or timidity in facing its obligation, can only mean a serious failure in its work and a hindrance to its influence, and must tend to strengthen the feeling amongst the wage-earners that the Church is the ally of the comfortable rather than of the poor, and that

it identifies itself with the interests of wealth and property; with the result that the people become indifferent to the Church, distrustful of its interest in their lives, and persuaded that it is out of sympathy with their hopes and aims."

"The question inevitably arises, Why does the Church fail to win the sympathy and regard of those who seek an ideal so largely in accord with the Lord's own principles, since it is plainly wrong to suppose that this democratic movement is in itself atheistic or antichristian?"

The answer is to be found on the one hand in the shameful divisions of Christendom, in the lack of practical fellowship, in autocratic methods of Church government; and on the other hand in elements of individual and class selfishness and an inadequate perception of the need of individual redemption from the dominion of sin.

They reprove the Church for being too slack in establishing groups everywhere for the study of social and economic questions (groups suggested by them in their 1897 report). Such groups of Christian men and women should "make it their aim to bring the sense of justice . . . which is common to Christianity and to Democracy to bear upon matters of everyday life in trade, in society, etc."

"We need Christian men and women who will give serious study to social problems and make the best of their opportunities of training in social service; who will then be qualified to take their place on public administrative bodies, both local and national; who will protest both by word and example, both in

public and in private, against anything that is immoral or unjust; who will call into action any legislative machinery which already exists for the public welfare, and stir up public opinion on behalf of the removal of wrong wherever it may be found, thus making an earnest endeavour to share in the transforming work of Christianity 'for their brethren and companions' sake.'"

"In other words, the Church must concentrate its resources on recreating, inspiring, and using its own Demos, making of it a truly elect people, a laity, an instructed and disciplined 'people of God.' But this Church 'laity' is to be raised up for service to the whole nation and to the world, and not for merely denominational interests; men of all classes of society united as comrades to fight the battle of the Lord against sin, the world, and the devil by virtue of their baptism."

"This will lead on to a more general revelation of brotherhood in the Church itself, without which it is hopeless to expect to be able to win the confidence of the people."

"On matters of public morality and social reform Christians of various denominations can and do co-operate, and it is therefore hoped that in this way also the common service of men will increasingly draw together those who are otherwise grievously divided."

The Church must be active in proclaiming national and international justice, the laws of health, the importance of self-education, and in warning the rich of the sin of idleness, the incompatibility of

selfish luxury with professing Christianity, and "the duty of substituting justice . . . for a condescending and thoughtless benevolence."

They then insist on a thorough overhauling of Church government in a democratic direction, the upholding of material good and of spiritual vision as both necessary to the development of the people, for this is the dual ideal of "the ever-present Kingdom of God."

The Lambeth Conference further urges the careful study of the report of 1907 issued by the bishops, deans, etc., assembled as a committee of the Convocation of Canterbury.[1] The Report commences with a root-and-branch repudiation of Manchesterianism or individualist commercialism, and approves the teachings of "those deep-seeing men, Carlyle, Maurice, and Ruskin." Modern economists are right when they assert that—

"The majority of men are found to be not free to bargain, or to pursue their own interests. They are too weak and ignorant. They are exploited by the strong. . . . The real end of industrial organisation is to combine efficient production with such a distribution of the commodities produced as will enable the greatest number of people to find a full opportunity of self-realisation and joy."

"The true riches of a nation are vigorous and happy men and women, willingly and intelligently co-operating for the good of the community."

The report proceeds to show that the Christian

[1] *Cf.* S.P.C.K. 2d. Report of Committee of Convocation on Economic Questions, 1907.

religion is a development from that of the Jews, whose Old Testament legislation insisted on a just wage, prohibited interest, and secured the land to the people, denouncing the exploitation of the poor. In Old Testament times private gain was restricted by public well-being; manual labour is the necessary basis of society. We are not bound by the letter and detail, but we are bound by the moral principles underlying this legislation. Christ deepened and universalised Old Testament conceptions. Now, the neighbour is "everyone who has need." The pursuit of riches is condemned. "Each is to work with his own hands to support the weak, that he may have to give to him that needeth." These principles apply not only to the Church, but also to the State. "Individual salvation . . . has been disastrously isolated . . . from the social idea of original Christianity and the teaching of brotherhood."

"Christ, our Master and severe Judge, holds us responsible for every one of His members whose life has been wasted by our common neglect." "Idleness, whether it is that of the rich or the poor man, is an offence against God and man."

"It is intolerable that any part of our industry should be organised upon the foundation of the misery and want of the labourer."

The doctrine of the "living wage" is then insisted on, and the duty of consumers considered. Private action must be pushed as far as possible, but "undoubtedly the individual by his private action is able to do little to alter what is amiss. The law must help—that is, the expressed will and power of the

whole community." Churchmen must insist on carrying out the present Factory, Truck, and Sanitation Acts; but, furthermore, although the committee do not think it wise for the Church as a society to *identify itself with any one particular political party*, and while they urge fairness in preaching justice and goodwill to all men, and particularly warn preachers against mere flattery of and toadying to the artisan class, yet they are compelled "to urge that the Christian Church should make clear to itself the nature of the demand for the reconstruction of society which is at present urged upon us. Behind the more technical (industrial and political) proposals lies a fundamental appeal for justice, which the Christian Church cannot ignore. It is bound to make a much more thorough endeavour than it has yet made to appreciate this appeal in all its bearings; and to consider whether the charge made against the present constitution and principles of the industrial world, and the present division of the profits of industry, is a just charge. Certainly the Christian society is competent to deal with the fundamental moral question, and is bound to press upon its members the duty of facing it."

Then, in consequence of such deepened reflection upon the fundamental moral issue, it is undoubtedly the case that we shall need an advance in our present law touching social and industrial problems. "It is time, we think, that the Christian conscience of the country voted urgency' among parliamentary and municipal questions for all the group of problems which concern the grossly unequal distribution of

wealth and well-being; the waste of life and capacity through lack of proper nourishment and training; the sweating of women's and children's labour; the deficiency, in the surroundings of so many, of those things which are the ordinary essentials of physical and moral well-being."

"We are convinced that the Church has a teaching which it ought to give on all matters which concern the acquisition and distribution of wealth, in its bearing on human lives; and that this teaching involves not only private effort, but municipal and political reforms. Thus we want the Church as a body to come forward to the support of such legislation as embodies or tends to render more practicable the Christian view of the worth and meaning of human life, and the belief in the Divine principle of justice."

Church people who are dominated by this ideal must come forward as voters and candidates for parliamentary and municipal elections; for although the older systems of alms-giving and the like must not be neglected, "something more is wanted than improvements in our methods of administering charitable relief. We have to go deeper to the grounds of the existing misery and want and unemployment; and while we do our best to deal with the present distress, direct our chief attention towards furthering the reorganisation of society on such principles of justice as will tend to reduce poverty and misery in the future to more manageable proportions."

This, then, is the official teaching of the National Church, as seen in the most recent deliberations of her bishops on the subject of social democracy.

A reaction has set in since the Lambeth pronouncements. The Archbishop of Canterbury—that same Archbishop who bids us do all in our power to bring in God's Kingdom here on earth, and who refuses a five minutes' interview with the Leicester unemployed, after their tramp to London under the leadership of Lewis Donaldson, a loyal priest of the National Church—seems bent on perpetuating the heretical divorce between things spiritual and things material.[1] The Archbishop of York, dissociating himself from economic socialists, defends them from their baser assailants, supports their ethical assumptions, and certain of their political proposals. The forces of plutocracy are doing all in their power to stifle the bishops and prevent a repetition of the Lambeth pronouncements, but the episcopal reaction can only be temporary.

The revolution in thought is not confined to the Church of England. The movement known as the New Theology expresses itself politically in many cases in socialistic schemes. The Rev. R. J. Campbell's Progressive League, which numbers many thousands of members, although it does not tie its people to economic socialism, is largely socialist in tendency. Not only the new theologians, like Mr Campbell and Mr Rhondda Williams, but older-fashioned theologians, Mr Rattenbury, Mr Kirtlan, and Dr Clifford, are socialists and belong to some economic socialist society. An undenominational international body known as "The Christian Socialist Fellowship," urging the national-

[1] *Cf.* the reason given by the Archbishop of Canterbury for not voting on the Budget proposals of the Liberal Government of 1909.

isation of land and capital, is making rapid progress; while the Free Church Socialist League, formed in 1909, has considerable chance of success, although we have yet to learn the nature of its economic basis. This socialist movement among Nonconformist bodies is the expression of their abandonment of their original reasons for schism from the National Church. Most of the leaders frankly state that they have no particular quarrel with the English Church, and see no essential value in separation from her. The term Catholic has no longer any terrors for them, and, though their theology is often hazy, such as it is, it is an approach to the Catholic faith in the value of fellowship and of outward life, and a frank denial of Calvinism and the capitalistic religions of the recent night. Sensuous worship is no longer held up to ridicule, some form of liturgy is often adopted, Catholic views of the next world often held. It is not a very far step from all this to the recognition of one outward and visible fellowship among men.

Official Dissent stands outside this Catholic movement among Nonconformists. The most popular Nonconformist journal still stands frankly for the old Christo-capitalism. It is always ready to whitewash a plutocratic sweater, so long as he shows the necessary interest in missionaries, is severe about Sunday, and sufficiently lavish in his donations to chapel building funds. Some months back I was taken over the worst slums in Glasgow—perhaps the worst in Europe—and we had waded through darkness, filth, and misery, and come out at the other end with sore hearts and sore throats. The wages of this slumdom

were in some cases 16s. 10d. a week; the hours of work and the rents were monstrous. The workers are the victims of a loathsome skin disease arising from the chemical vapours in which they are compelled to labour. At one time no meal-hours were allowed, and the régime was a twelve-hour day and a seven-day week. When the pious employer who was responsible for this state of things was attacked, and a Nonconformist minister had sent back a cheque for a chapel building fund, saying he did not like to partake in the price of blood, the journal in question came to the defence of the princely philanthropist, and was particularly insulting to his critics. At the time of his death, a writer in this same journal gushed over the wonderful city, Glasgow, with its "numbers of men of commercial standing and repute . . . who cling to Evangelical principles, and while diligent in business find in religious work for the benefit of their humbler fellow-creatures the romance of their lives." Referring lightly to the attack on the conduct of his business, the writer suggests that it did not weaken his influence among business men, "for he kept straight on his course, and people bethought them that a man of such obvious goodness could not consciously be guilty of injustice to others." Fever-ridden slums and poison-infested works are too close to the Christo-capitalists and too necessary for their existence for them to trouble much about them; but, says our eulogist, "at one time, hearing of the danger of typhoid fever in Livingstonia, he gave £4000 to provide and send out several miles of steel piping to bring pure and unadulterated water into the mission station."

Is it any wonder that, so long as this journal calls itself Christian, Mr Robert Blatchford should prefer to call himself agnostic?

It has been suggested in a former chapter that the schisms in Europe at the time of the Reformation narrowed down the Church of Rome as much as any other body. A study of her popular books of devotion, sermons, and hymnology would suggest that she has been visited with neurotic introspection and intellectual barrenness. The Catholic faith is more completely denied in the official Roman body than among certain English Dissenters. The High Church Puseyite, in spite of his many social virtues, has done his best to perpetuate or revive certain evil tendencies in early Church history. He treats the Christian ministry as a separate class receiving its authority, not from the whole priestly democracy, but from some distant planet. He calls this the authority "from above," and describes democratic authority as "from below," thereby destroying the Catholic idea of the Church. Papal Catholicism is, however, the logical development of High Church sectarianism. In this system, not only is the priestly body of the people ignored, but it is counted anathema that even the priest-caste and their bishops should be considered authoritative. The groundwork of modern Romanism, and to some extent of Puseyism, is that God is really absent from the world. Their doctrine of the Real Presence is a corollary of the Real Absence. God is the occasional visitor, who must be brought down into the world in Mass wafers and Papal encyclicals. Nowadays the issue is Vaticanism *versus* Catholicism.

The Pope claims to be, not only above, but apart from the bishops, priests, and councils, sole emperor on earth representing the Sole Emperor in heaven. The following are typical pronouncements of modern official Romanism:—

The proposition which defines that power has been given by God to the Church to be communicated to pastors who are its ministers for the salvation of the soul; understood in the sense that the power of ecclesiastical ministration and government in the pastors, is derived from the body of the faithful; heretical.[1]

Moreover, the proposition which defines that the Pontiff is the Administering Head; explained in the sense that the Roman Pontiff receives his administrative authority, not from Christ in the person of St Peter, but receives from the Church his power of administration, by which as the successor of Peter, the true vicar of Christ and head of the whole Church, he rules in the universal Church; heretical.[1]

Papal and High Church journals alike condemn the Catholic democrat for holding that the international Christian democracy is a royal priesthood, and that, for the sake of Holy Orders, bishops, priests, and deacons are appointed from the whole priestly body for different functions and administrations, and that the official priesthood is the mouthpiece of the Christian democracy. As a Roman modernist has recently said, "the theocratic conception of ecclesiastical authority is incompatible with democracy, whether the authority be Papal, Episcopal, or Sacerdotal. If ecclesiastical authority is to justify itself, it must be of the people, for the people, by the people. The Church must be democratised, or it

[1] *Encyclical on Modernism*, "Pascendi," footnotes.

cannot survive; and after all, in democratising itself it will but return to its first principle." Cardinal Newman, who is sometimes claimed by modernists as their precursor, would have shrunk from such sentiments. Cardinal Manning was theologically narrower than his rival; but his heart outran his intellect, and although he was incapable of thinking out a fundamental Catholic theology or of coming to any clear economic conclusions, he put himself at the head of the movement among the dockers and other unskilled labourers, and wrote bravely in defence of what was called the New Unionism. Especially bold was his defence in the *Fortnightly Review* of the right of starving men to steal. The Archbishop of Toronto, in a letter to the *Chicago Times*, defended Manning, asserting that there was never any doubt, from the point of view of the Catholic tradition, about the duty of stealing rather than starving. Archbishop M'Hale also supported them.[1] Compare their contention with Cardinal Newman's note to the *Apologia*, where he admits as indisputable the right of starving men to help themselves.

There is considerable plain speaking on social subjects on the part of a small section of the French clergy to-day, but the recent claims of the Papacy and its anti-socialist attitude make their position one of great difficulty. The clergy during the period of the Revolution for the most part sided with the aristocracy, but Lamennais and a vigorous minority of priests and lay people brought new life into the

[1] Nitti, *Catholic Socialism*, p. 381.

Church of France from 1840 to 1848. In the thirties the Catholic cause was almost universally thought to be lost. In 1843 the Church had only one friend in Parliament. In 1846 the one had become one hundred and forty-six. In 1848 the Church party was equally successful.

There is in Italy a Catholic democratic movement, anti-clerical and anti-papist, which in many respects recalls the action of priests, monks, and laity under Garibaldi. Its adherents published in 1908 a manifesto entitled *Why we are Christian Socialists*, which quotes with approval one of the speakers of the Pan-Anglican Congress where he says: "The Church should open her doors to this new current of Christian life which is bursting forth from the troubled conscience of the masses." The time will come in which "Christian brotherhood will triumph completely," but this will only be "when the chains of servitude, which have been forged by property and the wage system, shall have been broken, and society shall have become a union of equals, each of whom shall fulfil his own task and be able to honour fully the claims of his own spiritual personality." Mr A. L. Lilley quotes this remarkable document as saying that, "if the dogma of original sin has a meaning for us, it is in so far as it may be regarded as the theological symbol of the origin of private property. Indeed, on the day that man first said, Mine and thine, with regard to the means of production, the curse of God fell upon the human race and its uninterrupted disaster began." "The Gospel flourishes anew in this dawn of democratic

expectation. For Christ against the Vatican—that is our motto; for socialism against all the parties of reaction and conservatism."[1]

A faithful band of Roman Catholic socialist laymen in Scotland and England find themselves in a painful dilemma. One of their most progressive bishops tells them that it is no more possible for a Catholic to be a socialist than it is for him to be a Wesleyan. A Roman Catholic writer in the *Clarion*, March 1909, fears that the Papacy now claims infallibility in matters political as well as in matters of faith and morals. The *Catholic Times*, the most influential Roman weekly in this country, declares socialism to have been condemned in the Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* of 15th May 1891, and the Encyclical on Christian Democracy of 18th January 1901. Despite these denunciations from headquarters, there are a few brave Roman priests in Europe and in America, and many laymen, who are Catholic in their economic ideas as well as in name. The Rev. John A. Ryan, D.D., argues in the *Catholic Fortnightly Review*, an American publication, that the teaching of Leo XIII. was aimed at communism rather than socialism. According to this theologian, a Roman Catholic may quite properly believe and advocate that—

> The instruments of production and exchange should be owned and managed by the community, but the private owners of these instruments should receive fair compensation.
>
> Landowners should receive from the State as much as they have paid for their land, and should be permitted to retain permanently and to transfer or transmit the land that

[1] Quoted by A. L. Lilley, *Church Socialist Quarterly*, Jan. 1909.

they cultivate or occupy, but should be compelled to pay to the State annually its full rental value, exclusive of improvements.

Since the great industries managed by the State would set the pace, small industries which an individual could operate by himself or with the help of two or three others might remain private. This would involve private ownership of the simple machinery and tools used in such industries—for example, agricultural implements and the sewing-machine of the custom tailor or dressmaker.

The incomes of persons employed by the community should be regulated by needs, efforts, productivity, the social welfare, and not merely by the principle of equality.

All goods which immediately satisfy man's wants, such as food, clothing, dwellings, furniture, utensils, etc., should be privately owned, and subject to full power of disposal by the proprietor.

The integrity of the family and parental control over the children should be as secure as Catholic teaching desires.

Until recently, as has been said, the construction of modern socialism has been undertaken for the most part by men who, though they are often Churchmen by the fact of their baptism, have repudiated the theology and practice of the Church as it presented itself to them. The Agnostics are just as much Christian heretics as the Puseyite and the Evangelical; each holds strenuously by some portion of the Catholic faith, each denies some other equally essential aspects of it. Calvin and Dr Pusey believed in God and not in man. Marx and Belfort Bax believe in man and not in God. Many High Churchmen believe in original sin, but not in original righteousness. Many Atheists believe in original righteousness but not in original sin. Mr Bernard Shaw believes in God's goodness, but not in His power.

The Revivalists believe in God's power, but not in His goodness. The editors of the *Church Times*, the *Clarion*, the *Guardian*, the *Agnostic Annual*, and the *British Weekly* respectively believe and respectively repudiate integral portions and implications of the Catholic faith. We might well exclaim with St Paul, thinking of our own people and of our own times, "He hath included all under sin, that He might have mercy upon all." There is in Agnosticism a real movement nowadays towards the Catholic religion; there is in "Ritualism" as evident a movement in that direction. The Neo-Evangelicals have abandoned their irreconcilability; Nonconformists have abandoned the very reasons of their schism. Modernist Romans are joining hands with democratic Anglicans, Agnostics, Presbyterians, and Dissenters. The socialist movement is bringing all these forces together on a common platform, and in our own day we see the revival of the Catholic Church in its embryo stage.

The condition of the people is appalling. A Prime Minister has told us of twelve million people on the verge of starvation. We still send hundreds of thousands of children to school in an underfed condition. Sweating still flourishes in our towns, and is little altered for the better since the time in which Kingsley wrote his *Alton Locke*. The half-time system for children still flourishes in the North, and in the South of England child-labour is also excessive, sometimes amounting to sixty hours a week. Our industrial system still results in the overwork and underfeeding of the many, and the underwork and

overfeeding of the few. Adulteration in trade is everywhere prevalent, hours of adult labour are generally excessive, overcrowding is too common, and a large class of people seem to have learnt untruly, by means of rent and interest, to get somebody else's living in that rut of death in which it has pleased the devil to leave them.

Yet for all this there has been change, not only in thought but in conditions. Evil as are the conditions of the twentieth century, terribly as they contrast with the conditions of the fourteenth or even the seventeenth, there is some slight improvement since what we have called the low-water mark of 1800 to 1830.

It is significant that this improvement in outward conditions should be concurrent with the embryo revival of the Catholic religion. I have sketched the part that bishops and clergy of the National Church have played in this revival, and have traced the various lines—Romanist, Anglican, Nonconformist, Agnostic—that are converging towards this Catholic religion.

In England the Church is fettered, as are its Nonconformist offshoots, by reliance on the subscriptions of the capitalist. Not only are bishops appointed by capitalist governments, but the people have been robbed of their rights in the parishes, and the private patron appoints to the most important cures. On ecclesiastical bodies, Convocations of Canterbury and of York, ruridecanal meetings, diocesan committees, the artisan class is almost wholly unrepresented. For, in spite of all we have said, the official Church is

still the ally of the rich against the poor. For all this, secular socialists are turning to the Church of England for clear and forcible pronouncement on the social question, and perhaps those of them who study this book will find in it some answer to their own oft-repeated question: "Why is it that definite Churchmen make better socialists than members of other religious bodies?"

The Church of England stands at the parting of the ways; her own peculiar position should help her towards socialism. The socialist is anti-imperialist and anti competitive in the economic sphere. Is not that precisely the attitude of the English Church in the religious sphere? She criticises and repudiates the imperialism of Rome and the competitive theories of Dissent. Her ideal is one of national Churches, but these national Churches are not to be insular and self-sufficient; they are but democratically governed provinces of the International or Catholic Church of God. She herself appealed for an international council in the troubled days of the Reformation. For such an international council she still longs. Is it inconceivable that the Church of England should learn to be more flexible in things non-essential, more firm in Catholic fundamentals? There are not wanting indications that she will allow a little more liberty of prophesying to her nonconforming sons and daughters, and might be persuaded to provide alongside of her liturgies for extempore prayer and other types of service dear to the nonconformist mind. Is it outside the bounds of possibility that the service of the Eucharist, symbol and bond of fellowship, should

once more become the common service of the parish, and that all Christians uniting in that common worship should be allowed considerable liberty in the matter of other services and addresses? What is most urgently needed is a reinterpretation of the creeds and their application to the practical life of men, the democratisation of the Church, an effective desire to meet both Nonconformists, Atheists, and Agnostics, listen to their criticisms, and, with their help, rebuild the national religion, without sacrificing a single essential principle. At the same time, forgetting our insularity, we must hold out the right hand of fellowship to those comrades in the Eastern and Roman communions who love Catholicism more than they love Pope or Czar. All this we must do, after unreserved acknowledgment of our own national crimes and blunders, cloaking nothing, confessing everything. To have the strength and the flexibility of tempered steel—that is the task of the Church of England, in both the spiritual and the material realm. To recover and to develop the Catholic faith in every sphere—physical, mental, and spiritual,—that is the work that lies ready to our hands.

There is one body within the National Church which has not yet been mentioned. The Church Socialist League is the most vigorous champion of Catholic democracy that has yet taken the field. Its power is already out of all proportion to its numbers; its growth has been phenomenal; its activities are numberless. It alone has the unreserved confidence of the secular movement. A colossal work lies before

it. If the League has the energy and the wisdom, it may act like leaven upon the sluggish conscience of the age. It may be that God is raising up its members for the revival of the national religion and for the hope of an international Catholicism. The Church Socialist League may prove itself one of God's chiefest instruments for translating "Christianity" into the religion of Jesus Christ, and the kingdoms of this world into the Kingdom of Heaven. For we are witnessing in our own times the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy: "And it shall be in the last days, saith God, I will pour forth my spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: yea, and on my bondmen and bondmaidens in those days will I pour forth of my spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heaven above and signs on the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the day of the Lord come, that great and notable day: and it shall be that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

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