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SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES.

BY THE

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Socialism and religion.



SOCIALISM AND THE CHURCHES.

AN ADDRESS GIVEN AT THE BAPTIST CHAPEL, FOREST HILL, LONDON, TO THE LONDON BAPTIST ASSOCIATION ON JUNE 30TH, 1908, BY JOHN CLIFFORD, M.A., D.D., AND REPRINTED BY PERMISSION FROM THE "WESTBOURNE PARK RECORD."

THE word "Socialism," it will be remembered, came into use about the year 1835—a little more than seventy years ago—as descriptive of the heroic and self-sacrificing efforts of Robert Owen for the improvement of the social and domestic conditions of the workers of this country. It was descriptive of an endeavor to displace the fierce and disastrous competitive methods and conditions of industrial life by the introduction of co-operative and organized action based on justice and intended to promote the general welfare.

Socialism is a movement, and not merely a theory or a set of theories. It is of the first importance that we should regard it in that light, so that we may not be entangled in the various speculations which have sought shelter under the Socialistic label, or be misled by the sophisms and vagaries of some of its advocates, or blinded by the prejudices and falsehoods of some of its antagonists.

Primarily, it is a movement in the Social State, as "Modernism" is a movement in the Roman Catholic Church, or as Puseyism was an ecclesiastic movement, originating about the same time as Socialism, within the Anglican Church, or as the Evangelical Revival was a religious movement in the eighteenth century. Essentially Socialism was, and is to be judged as, *a movement, a tendency, a pushing forward of the inner soul of humanity towards its predestined goal.*

Now, as a movement it has a governing idea and a practical method, but the vital element is its *spirit*. Socialism is a spirit of justice and charity, of broad sympathies and general goodwill, of universal amity and benevolence, of service to others and not of getting for self. H. G. Wells, in that most illuminating and enriching book, "New Worlds for Old," says: "Socialism, as he understands it, is a great intellectual process, a development of desires and ideas that takes the form of a project—a project for the re-shaping of human society upon new and better lines." It is that; but it is more. It is an ethical and religious effort, proceeding from within the soul of the human race, for pulling down principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, and bringing every thought of man into captivity to the obedience of the teaching and spirit of Jesus Christ, the Savior and Leader of men.

But whereas there is no doubt as to the spirit of Socialism, its working idea is not so easily caught or readily expressed. It is too early in the history of the movement, and its development as an idea is too infantile, for us to define it with accuracy and adequacy. Moreover, the idea takes the form of the political mould in which it is cast, and therefore we have one expression of it in Germany, another in France, and another in England. "The Encyclopædia of Social Reform" just published, after giving a long string of definitions from different authors, sums up the result in which they agree, thus: "Socialism may be said to be *the collective ownership of the means of production by the community* democratically organized, and their operation co-operatively for the equitable good of all" (p. I, 129).

But it is a more English way of thinking to look at an idea as it is embodied in a familiar fact, such as that department of the State called the General Post Office. Englishmen are not theorists, and are rarely captured by theoretical reasoning. We are practical men, and can more clearly understand Socialism as we see it at work at our own doors and in our own streets, than from any lengthened statement.

The Postal Service.

Here we see the Socialistic idea in operation. And first, we note a large number of our fellow-citizens enrolled as servants of the whole community. As children, most of them have been trained in State schools, and at the expense of the State. Then they have passed their examinations and been assigned their posts according to their qualifications. They do their appointed work without seeking to amass great riches. They are fairly content with their wages. They have a moderate measure of comfort. They are not anxious about old age. They have a sense of security; nor do they dread the workhouse, for pensions are secured to them. In London they have their Sundays free for mental and spiritual culture, and if they desire it, for work for the world. Clearly they are animated, not by the spirit of greed but by the Socialistic spirit of service. They own nothing. The buildings in which they labor are not their own; the red pillar-boxes which they empty do not belong to them. There is no private ownership, and yet they do not "dawdle;" they do not waste their time. They are honest and industrious. Our letters come with regularity, and on the stroke of the clock all through the day; and they find their reward in the moderate wage they receive, and the sense that they discharge their duty.

Their home-life is their own. The relations between husband and wife and children are sweetened by the removal of all uncertainty and anxiety as to income; and in all other respects the postman is as much master of his home and of his life as any citizen of the land. At present he pays rent to a private person for his home. In a fuller Socialism that rent will go to the whole community; and in all probability his hours of toil will be fewer, his freedom wider, and his life richer in the things of the mind and spirit.

There you have as in a mirror the idea and spirit of the Socialistic movement. That is what it does. That is what it means. That is what it seeks to do for the individual citizen and for the whole commonwealth. That is what it seeks to achieve of liberty, of contentment, and of widespread serviceableness. The illustration does not tell all that is to be told ; but it answers objections, corrects mistakes, and affords a surer guide to the idea of Socialism as a movement than a whole sheaf of definitions.

Socialism Constructive.

Now the Post Office is a constructed State effort. It is a creation of intellect. It springs from the brain of Rowland Hill, and it advances by the State-building efforts of successive Post-masters and others to its present world-wide proportions and immeasurable usefulness. In that respect it is typical of Socialism as a movement. Socialism is intrinsically constructive. It displaces the haphazard labors of an individual by the organized efforts of all. I know it is often said that "England has blundered into greatness." I do not believe it. I know she has "blundered" into misery and cruelty, into perilous wealth for the few, and chains and curses for the million ; into debasement and defilement for her daughters, and ruin for her children ; and therefore no sign of the times is brighter than that which assures us that the hour has struck in which this "blundering" must stop, and the most direct route be taken from the Tartarus in which so many of our fellows suffer to the Elysian fields of mutual service and general wellbeing.

Hence, Socialism seeks to create a State which shall exist for all and be served by all ; a State which shall provide work for all, and reward that work according to the quality and quantity of the work done ; a State which shall give liberty and justice, security and comfort to all men, women, and children ; a State which shall "fix a definite minimum of welfare below which no one shall be allowed to fall," and yet shall not permit anyone to be defrauded of that to which he is justly entitled ; a State in which service and honor, and not mere greed and vain show shall be the chief motives of action ; a State in which every facility that the combined action of the whole of the intellect and goodwill of the community can invent or create, shall be offered for the training of the young, the protection of the imperilled, the succour of the weak, the comfort of the aged, the diffusion of happiness, and the increase of moral worth. Socialism will not leave everything to chance or to "good fortune," or to inheritance, or to superior might. It expects thought. It asks for intelligence. It invites science. It combines citizens together, and seeks to bring into a system the whole of the tendencies now working in the heart of the civilized world for the common good.

The Sanity of Socialism.

This movement, as I have said, is still very young : but it is becoming increasingly sane, balanced, statesmanlike, scientific, and

trustworthy. I admit that the "swollen floods of sophism, fallacy, cant, and rant," let loose by the agitation for the "Rights of Man" have not entirely disappeared; but I hold that the impracticable and implacable theorist is no longer representative. Every man who calls himself a Christian cannot be accepted as a sample of the Christian spirit or the Christian method; nor can everyone who wears a Socialist badge and carries a Socialist banner be justly regarded as speaking for the movement. Still less ought the assertions of the man whose one object is to bespatter and destroy Socialism to be allowed any place in the scales of judgment; assertions, for example, made by a man I will not name, that "Socialism is atheism," or that "the very essence of Socialism is that all the ten commandments should be swept away"; assertions based either on the misquotations of opponents or on the wild speech of non-representative men. For it is undeniable that the doctrinaire and cantankerous Ishmaelite is disappearing from the movement. The doctrinaire is far to seek. The mere theorist is at a discount. Few now expect a sudden revolution; most work to hasten a natural and orderly evolution of the Socialistic State. The historic sense is begetting the feeling that to-morrow must grow out of to-day, just as whatever elements we have of order and of progress, of liberty and good legislation, have grown out of yesterday.

Its Catholicity.

Socialism is not a class movement. Labor is in it; but so is science. The democrats of the streets proclaim its ideals, but so do students of the universities. Agnostics confess its obligations, and orthodox Christians are eager to forward its aims. In fact, the feature of the world's life that is the most prophetic of the future is the subsidence of the exclusive dominance of individuality, and the emergence of the social consciousness, of the sense of intimate, I may even say fraternal, relations—relations not only to the denizens of the home, the members of our "set," or of our "church" or profession; but to the municipality, to the nation, and to humanity. The whole sweep and trend of the age is Socialistic. No one is satisfied with the present condition. Everybody admits it has anti-human elements, and the anti-human is felt to be anti-social, irreligious, ungodly, the modern Antichrist. The men of wealth feel its presence, and some of them clutch their gold with a fiercer passion, as though they feared its departure. The men of avarice are aware of it, and publish their "lies" broadcast to keep up their dividends, increase their trusts, and convey the gains of our common life into the pockets of the few. The civilized world is gradually but surely travelling towards Socialism. The good seed sown with weeping and tears by Carlyle and Ruskin, Lord Shaftesbury and Saint Simon, Proudhon and Fourier, Ebenezer Elliot and Ernest Jones, and others, is yielding its harvest in some thirty, in some sixty, and in some a hundred fold. We have socialized transit and illumination, and we are socializing hygiene and medicine. Officers for the care of the health of the public, and district nurses for

ministry to the sick, are becoming part of our civic and political administration. Just as we organize for the defence of our citizenship by the army and navy, so we are constructing a department for the defeat of disease and the maintenance of health. As we have socialized the teaching forces of Great Britain, so we are travelling towards the organization by the State of a body of highly educated men to watch over the physical health and strength of the nation.

Nor are we limiting the functions of the State to the body. The training of the young citizen for citizenship has definitely passed out of the hands of blind chance. It cannot be left to individual caprice or bigoted and crippling churchmanship. It is the first duty of the commonwealth to its young. The provision of libraries and museums, of reading rooms and picture galleries, of the recreative ministries of art and of the discipline and order of science, are following. Technical training for industrial life is becoming part of the daily bread offered to the citizen, not on the grounds of individual hunger, but from the necessities of communal growth and progress. Then it is increasingly felt that we cannot leave the worker ignorant of the trade of the world. He must have access to a national bureau of information concerning the changing conditions of labor—the reverses in this department, and the demands in that—so that he may be able to take opportunity when it is at the flood, and may arm himself against a sea of misfortunes. Already we have gone far in these directions. Recently our Board of Trade has taken up the responsibility of mediating in the conflicts of large industries; and now we have the declaration that a certain amount of the funds of the State is to be set aside for the promotion of international peace and goodwill, in order to provide hospitality and fraternity for bodies of visitors to our shores from other lands.

The civilized world is gradually making room for the Socialist movement. The heathen rage and "Municipal Reformers" say vain things against the march of this Socialist spirit, but it is in vain. Bit by bit, inch by inch, the social conscience grows. The moral and social implications of the fundamental human fact that "we are members one of another," demand legislative adoption. Quietly and slowly, but inevitably, the sway of the sense of social duty rises and rules so that this twentieth century is sure to be the century of a conquering and beneficent Socialism. Professor Dicey, in his "Law and Opinion of the Nineteenth Century," traces the gradual escape of the English people from the fierce antagonism to political and social government which darkened the first four decades of that period, through the hard and selfish individualism of the fifties and sixties and seventies, on to the dawning, in the latter part of the century, of that Socialism which is destined to be the distinction and glory of this.

The Divinity of Socialism.

The fact is, and this is what I want to show, this is the plan of God. Socialism, in the soul of it, is divine. It is of God. He is

behind all, and in all, and through all, working out His great redemption of mankind. God has His plan in every generation, and I cannot hesitate to believe that "the plan of God in this generation connects itself with that irresistible social tide which rises higher and higher against the dry strands of our time, seemingly making ready to inundate all the old moorings of the world, and to give the race entirely new levels of departure forth upon its immense mission. We are weary of endless sociological wranglings, and often deeply incensed with the intolerant Socialisms of our day. And yet, weary or incensed, the tide of a realized common life, a tide which bears on its heaving breast the neglected truth of the world, keeps on rolling in, like that superb Hangchow bore of which Professor Edmunds has been writing so interestingly in *The Popular Science Monthly*—a something invincible to any barriers erected against it, continually destructive of false individualism, and yet a something which bears up with it into the pent places of humanity a mighty saving freshness from the deep oceans of divine purpose. Indeed, the Socialism which makes for fulness and unity of the common life 'spreads undiminished, operates unspent,' and has already covered, and covered to its permanent sway, whole regions of human experience."

It is political, in the sense that it has to get its work done through Parliament; it is civic, because it acts through the municipal and urban councils; it is international, for it seeks to displace the enmity of nations to one another by amity; it is literary and artistic, for it uses all forces that heal and help our suffering races; but in all and over all it is fundamentally spiritual and religious. In the language of John Shorthouse, "The world spirit is often the Christ spirit, and . . . when we begin to see that His footsteps may be traced in paths where we little expect to find them, we shall no longer dare to talk of the secular life," but shall rejoice to recognize that these, too, are the ways by which the kingdoms of this world are becoming the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ.

Still, I do not say that this movement is the *final* form of human society. We do not know, we cannot tell. Finality is a word we cannot place on anything. It does not belong to our vocabulary. But Socialism is the next, the necessary, the vital, the saving movement. Yet, just as the wage-earning period, with its colossal capitalists; its giant plunderers, usurers, and sweaters; its princes of philanthropies; and its myriads of miseries and cruelties, was confessedly an advance in the conditions of slavery; so Socialism may only be a stage in the wonderful evolution of the manifold life of the children of God.

The Churches Awake.

Now since that picture of the spirit, idea, method, and goal of constructive Socialism is demonstrably accurate, is it not a thing incredible that any of the churches of Jesus Christ should be fiercely antagonistic to it, or coldly critical, or haughtily sceptical, or superciliously indifferent?

Indeed, already those moods are passed or passing. The churches are awake to the golden opportunity at their doors. They are beginning to see that this is the hour of their visitation ; that they must rise and interpret the revelation given by God in the social Bible of the world's life, and take the fullest advantage of this widening and unifying of the life of men for the establishment of the gracious and redeeming rule of God over the earth. As the Reformers seized the hour of the awakening of the intellect and conscience of Europe for the proclamation of the original Gospel of God, and the assertion of the rights of man against the tyrannies of priests and popes ; as Wesley, Carey, and Howard, breathing the new social spirit created by the light which had been cast on the incalculable values of every human soul, made the epoch of the Evangelical Revival, of redeeming philanthropy, and of missionary enterprise ; so the churches have already found in the presence of this vast change of social ideas and feeling, that

“New occasions teach new duties ; time makes ancient good uncouth ;
They must upward still, and onward, who would keep abreast of truth.
Lo, before us gleam her camp fires ! We ourselves must pilgrims be,
Launch our Mayflower, and steer boldly through the desperate winter sea,
Nor attempt the future's portal with the past's blood-rusted key.”

It must be confessed that the churches have been slow of heart to perceive all that God has been teaching. They should have been the first to learn ; they have been the last. They ought to have led ; they have to follow. Their place was in the van ; they are still in the rear ; but they are in the rear, and in time will march on to their true place. They have had their vision. To them, as to Peter, sleeping and hungry on the housetop of Simon the tanner, the divine revelation has come. The sky has opened to their view, and what seemed to be an enormous sail has descended from heaven, and in it are seen all kinds of questions and problems, domestic and social, civic and national, questions of strikes and lock-outs, property and rent, sweating and intemperance ; and a voice has been heard saying, “Rise, disciples of Christ, face these questions, and help to find the right answer.” “On no account, Lord,” has been the answer. “We have never yet touched these unspiritual things ; they are outside our boundaries, and belong to the secular life of men.” Again a second and a third time the voice has been heard saying, “What God has created you must not regard as unholy. His creative acts cleanse all the products of His power. The life of the State is His care. Labor is sacred. It is not for you to call His work unclean, or to restrict the outflow or overflow of His impartial love.”

And while the churches have been greatly perplexed as to the meaning of the vision they have seen, men arrive from the Cæsareas of industry and literature asking for an interview, and reporting that they, too, have had a vision of the aid the churches may and ought to render in the present stress ; for God, by His own gracious Spirit, has been preparing men, outside the bounds of the churches, to listen to the message they have to deliver concerning the relations of these economic and social questions to the spiritual life of man, and God

says, "Rise, and go without any misgivings, for it is I who sent them unto you."

So the churches are going to Cornelius. Our Free Churches have been sending their Simon Peters for a long time. What changes we have seen in our attitude during the last forty years! How the horizons have been lifted! What new sympathies throb in our hearts! How the compassions of Christ for the multitude move within us!

But the most welcome sign of change is in the Pan-Anglican Congress, for it has devoted, apparently, about three-fourths of its time, and more of its interest, to these vital problems of the world—gambling and intemperance, opium and alcohol, sweating and housing, low wages and unemployment—tracing them through their wide ramifications in the social organism, their destructive effects on young and old, and indicating the means by which these evils may be abolished.

The fact is, Christian men are ceasing to see any incompatibility between a rich and full spiritual life and the effort to reconstruct society on a Christian basis; and nearly all churches agree that in order to save men from sin and sinning they must face the whole life of man, the physical and industrial and social, not less than the life of the conscience and the will, of faith, and of love. They *must* enter into the Socialist movement. Admitted that it leaps up from unexpected quarters, and that our Rabbis have been heard saying with mordant contempt, "Search and look, out of Lanark and Paris ariseth no prophet"; admitted that the bold and adventurous apostles, according to the standard of the "schools," are unlearned and ignorant men, and threaten to overthrow the temples of orthodoxy, and to cast out the priests from the synagogues; yet it has to be confessed that they are inspired and sustained by the Christian conviction of the upward and onward progress of the destinies of mankind, are gripped by the vital truths and quickening fundamentals of the Kingdom of God, and are urged forward in their zealous crusade by genuine good will. Admitted, moreover, that the difficulties in the way of this social reconstruction are enormous; that to substitute a new economic system for the old, however brutal and destructive of human life the old system may be, is a task demanding the concentrated energy of an age, or perhaps of ages; that the institution of private property in land, houses and the like, is mixed up, seemingly inextricably, with the passions and habits and interests of men, and has been for centuries; that rent and interest are apparently as necessary to us as our breathing; admit all, still the churches feel and know they cannot hold aloof from this movement. It is of God, part of His plan, and they must accept it; fall in with it; and face it with courage, and hope, and do their best.

But what is their best?

What the Churches must not do.

That I will attempt to show; and first, let me say with the utmost emphasis, the churches must not imagine for one moment that they have to cease from their simple and unflinching testimony

to their own truths and ideals as fellowships of Christians organized expressly for the preaching of the gospel and the cultivation of the spiritual life. There must be no slackening of devotion to our *primary* work, no lowering of our aims; no submission to the dominion of the flesh and of sense. Soul is supreme in the life of man and will remain supreme. Soul is all, and all in all. Men may deny it. They do, they will, and not altogether without reason considering what poor Christians we are; but in the long run they are confronted and convinced by the irresistible logic of facts. History and present experience alike declare that no other name than that of Christ is given whereby we can have social salvation. Apart from His idea and spirit and work we can do nothing effectively; not even take the accurate measure of man's real need, or the height of his possibility. This work of preaching and living the Christ is primary and fundamental to the actions of the churches in the constructive social movement; and it requires vast reserves of courage and perpetual alertness. The world is always with us, and its maxims and customs and spirit always gravitate towards "compromise." At each stage the question rises how much of this wrong can we tolerate: and we are frequently ensnared by the evil we tolerate into treating it as though our toleration of it has made it good and just in itself. Our duty as churches is to keep the ideal at its highest, *i.e.*, as high as the standard set us by Jesus Christ; to say that the Kingdom of God is within men or it cannot be without; that all national progress depends on character; that the springs of social well-being are in the hearts and wills of men; to insist that a tolerated evil is still evil; that a wrong that is hoary with the weight of years and crowned with the approval of the great, is still a wrong. The churches are to witness against "compromise" even when it endures it, to resist the invasion of the realm of conscience by the magistrate, to assert the moral limits of accumulation, to war against trusting in uncertain riches, to insist that though a "time limit" for an evil system may be extorted, it does not cleanse the evil during the time of its existence, or excuse men from doing battle to end it altogether.

The Churches must care for the Spiritual Element of Socialism.

Nor is this all. The churches must take care that this social movement is not narrowed down to the economic side of life, as though a man had but one side to his nature, and was not a mysterious being with immeasurable possibilities both in time and eternity. It is for the Church to insist upon and secure the *spiritual* quality of Socialism. Owen and Marx have affirmed the economic element. The Fabian Society has illuminated and enforced the historical, and made clear that we cannot bury the old order and start as from creation's dawn. H. G. Wells and others have contended for the rational and ethical element; the churches must add the most important of all, the spiritual. It is this we can give. It is this we must give. Not apart from the economists, but with them; not apart from the evolutionary Socialists of the Sidney Webb school,

but with them and through them ; not apart from the professors and teachers of the science of sociology, but with them ; informing and quickening the collective mind, and supplying that spiritual momentum which is absolutely requisite so that the constructive Socialism of the State may attain to the fulness of the stature of the perfect manhood of Christ.

This is our place in God's plan. The movement will not advance on sure and solid lines unless it is fed with the intelligence and faith, the patience and love, the hopes and high ideals, the sense and the enthusiasm of *spiritual* brotherhood. Without that aid it will sink into a dull, dead mechanism, or a more or less skilfully constructed machine, and become a mere matter of ballot boxes and suffragists, as if man were only created to "mind" a machine, and women were added only to give pleasure to him when the "minding" was done, and children followed so that the "minding" of the machine might not come to an end.

Let not the churches fear. If they are alive they will be wanted. If they are not alive they had better be carted away and buried. If they are faithful to Christ and His teaching and spirit, they will supply one of the most influential forces for forwarding the great social change. Socialism demands a far higher level of intelligence, of knowledge, of drilled capacity, of freedom and of moral worth than individualism. You cannot re-mould society out of illiteracy, indiscipline, intemperance, and selfishness. The full co-operative commonwealth is only possible where you have the best all-round type of man and woman—educated, drilled, self-reverent, self-controlled, self-sacrificing, free, and brotherly : capable of suppressing greed of gain and finding satisfaction in service. Efforts for the construction of Socialistic conditions break down for lack of character. Men are not yet "moralized" up to the point where a co-operative community is possible. Therefore the churches, made up of disciples of Christ, must give themselves to the work of what Paul calls "edification" or "man building"; they must stir and illumine the conscience, create good and healthy opinion, turn opinion into conviction, and conviction into action, elevate ideals, stiffen will, and fire with enthusiasm, and so supply the character, freedom, and force on which the order and progress of mankind ultimately rests.

The Emancipation of the Churches from Anti-Social Conditions.

Again, the churches should free themselves from every anti-social alliance and anti-social condition. They ought not to have any complicity as churches with politics and practices based on social inequalities, social monopolies, and anti-Christian social distinctions. The Christian society should realize in all its arrangements the ideal of the social commonwealth, and breathe in all its actions the bracing air of liberty and equality and fraternity. It ought not to accept any special favors from the State. It must render to Cæsar the things that belong to Cæsar. It is of right the foremost trustee

and chief guardian of the liberties of man ; because it has to render to God the things that are God's ; to care for liberty of conscience ; that liberty which includes and guards the liberty of speech, and of the press, and all the great freedoms of the soul of man. It must not be content with evil conditions because they are inherited, and yield large advantages to itself as a society at the expense of the freedom and rights of other members of the community. It must not hold itself aloof from or averse to change, because it may suffer thereby ; but be willing and even eager for the changes that lead to the greater good of all.

Indeed, in the Church of the New Testament we see existent, in principle and in germ, what we expect to enjoy in a perfectly constructed social state. The Church of God in the Acts and Epistles knows nothing of class distinctions—has neither laymen nor clerics. "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation," is the description Peter gives of the group of saints to which he belongs. The apostle and the prophet, the teacher, the evangelist and helper are one ; all distinctions within the body disappear in the one sacred distinction of being within the circle of the people of God. It knows no separating class arrangements. It is the foe of caste. Mammon worship is swept utterly away by the flowing waters of the Church's generosity. Race antipathy is alien to its spirit, and love is poured out in steady and limitless floods. There, in the ardors and achievements of the first churches, we have set before us what we ought to seek with full purpose of heart for all men.

Study.

Further, the churches must encourage and systematize the study of social facts by their own members. It is fitting that we should know the main current of the whole Socialistic movement, and follow the story of the organization of the masses of workmen into a solidarity of interests ; why it is here ; why it has come now ; what it means and towards what it is driving. Ignorance is the prolific mother of misery. Our young people do not know, and therefore they do not consider, how the bodies of their fellows are stunted, their minds crippled and fettered, and their souls lost by the hardness of economic conditions. The young Socialists outside the churches enquire, and enquiry leads to sympathy and action. The Fabian Society instructs by its literature and discussions. Professors of sociology teach in the schools of economics and political science connected with the University of London ; but the churches need to organize and direct classes for this study, so that our young people may be able to analyze and classify the social conditions of the workers ; know the civic institutions that affect their life ; the legislation as to insurance and pensions, factories and mines ; the laws of taxation, and so on ; and be led to see these facts in their relation to the deeper realities of the spirit, and from these high considerations seek the abolition of unjust land laws, make war on the causes and sources of poverty and vice ; and qualify for high-minded and self-denying service to the State.

Electoral Action.

Nor should the churches fail, at the times when they can control the constructive efforts of the commonwealth, to put men into office who are, by conviction and sympathy, in favor of using the wealth that accrues from our communal life for the good of all; and eager to prevent its being appropriated for the selfish enrichment of the few. They ought to exclude from civic and political work those who juggle with the words "liberty" and "reform," in order that they may the more easily filch from the public purse the riches that belong to all, and return to power only those representatives of the people who will either largely modify or else get rid of laws and institutions that stand right across the path of the social reform—such as the House of Lords, the rule of the land by the few, the swollen tyranny of the drink trade, and the like—and who will be prepared to introduce that better era in which the community shall be administered for the good of all. The churches ought, whilst not, as churches, identifying themselves with Socialist organizations, to take their full share in the gradual reformation and rebuilding of society; to welcome every practicable extension of the Socialistic principle; and inspire their members to give themselves in all humility and lowliness of mind, with much patience and love, to organize our common life on the principles of brotherhood, of social helpfulness, and of the laws of the kingdom of God.

And assuredly the churches can and ought to keep the minds of men alert to note every existing wrong in the framework of society, to feed the courage and patience that battles with that wrong and tries to rid the world of it, and to inspire that passion of the Cross by which men will be ready to toil and fight and suffer for that full redemption and regeneration of the individual and of the world which Jesus Christ came to effect.

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