

CHRISTIANITY AND POLITICAL IDEALS

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Published in London by

THE BELFRY PRESS LTD. (T U.)

173, HAMPSTEAD ROAD,

N W 1

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	
CONSERVATIVISM AND CATHOLICISM	5
SOCIALISM AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD	13
COMMUNISM AND THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS	20
IS THERE A CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY?	28

FOREWORD

By THE REVEREND W E ORCHARD, D D

The addresses which have been reprinted by my friend, the Rev W Rowland Jones, are certainly worthy of every Christian's consideration. They may raise more problems than they solve, his vigorous criticism of our rival political parties may offend those who are so attached to them that they believe in their finality, and almost yield to their principles the degree of infallibility. But the addresses are meant to stimulate individual thought, and the criticism is at least impartial. Perhaps, however, the most important question raised is whether there is a Christian Sociology. Christian Social Idealism has hitherto been too closely dictated by theories which, whether they are true or realisable, were certainly not inspired by belief in the Christian Revelation, or guided by Christian Doctrine. It is probable enough that one political party, one economic theory rather than another is nearer to Christian principles but here motives cut across political divisions and must in the end change or corrupt theories. Christian Sociological Theory must start from its own foundations in the teaching of the Scriptures and the Doctrines of the Church, and while it must not shrink from appraising what is true that others have arrived at without the guidance given us, nor restrain our joining forces in any definite project that can claim Christian adherence, it ought to have a programme of its own. The idea that the Christian Gospel only allows us to set forth somewhat vague principles, and yields nothing that can be expressed in a programme, is a very doubtful proposition, and anyhow is woefully ineffective either in securing agreement or inspiring action. The question is worth a just consideration whether the Gospel is not full of fundamental economic teaching, and whether the Church's formulated doctrines do not prescribe certain definite lines of social progress. At any rate, this is a question to be kept in mind by every devout reader of the Gospel, and by every loyal Churchman, and might well form the subject of impartial, persevering and fearless investigation by various groups, learned and simple, their results to be made known and be presented to the general conscience of the Church for approval and then for a united call to social action.

W E. ORCHARD

17 AUG 1929

1. CONSERVATIVISM AND CATHOLICISM

It has frequently been noticed that piety and politics do not seem to live happily under the same roof. The man who is conspicuous for his religious devotion is frequently very lacking in social passion, whilst the man who is ardent for the reform of society frequently has neither time nor patience for the cultivation of the spiritual life. This may, to a large extent, be explained as a matter of temperament. Some are mystics by nature and find it easy to be passive in the presence of God. Others, by their very nature, feel that they are helping humanity only when they are doing something practical.

When all allowances have been made for temperament, however, it still remains to point out that this divorce between politics and piety is due to a fundamental misconception of what Christianity really is. Interest in politics simply means interest in people around us, how they live, how they behave, how if at all, they are to be governed. Such an interest is implied in Christianity. Nobody can be a Christian by quitting the world and living in a desert. That was the error in early monasticism. Its protest against the sin of the city was to leave the city and live in solitude. It practised piety by ignoring politics, but it very quickly found that solitary isolation in the desert was not the best way to cultivate the soul. Communities sprang up in the desert, and the lonely isolation of the hermit gave place to monasticism as we know it, where communities lived together and practised the social virtues in their responsibilities to each other. But even communal life is not complete Christianity. Francis and his followers recognised this when they turned the city slum into their cloister and kept their religious vows by sharing the life of the very poor for Christ's sake. The life of piety must have its expression in a vigorous attempt to remodel the world according to the ideals of Jesus.

It is necessary, however, to point out the opposite danger. Sheer reckless absorption in politics, even to the neglect of the needs of the soul has been sometimes exalted as the truly Christian ideal. The parable of the Last Judgment, in which the ultimate test for heaven is the amount of social service we have done, is quoted as a proof of this. The story of Wilberforce, flinging himself so ardently into the work of freeing the slaves, so that when he was asked about his soul's salvation he replied, "I had forgotten that I have a soul," has been quoted as a glowing example of the spirit of Jesus. We must beware, however, of such extremes. Politics without piety is just as dangerous as piety without politics, and perhaps more to be feared.

The true corrective is found in the example of Jesus. His passion for the service of man often led him to neglect even the requirements of physical sustenance. "He gave himself no time, no, not so much as to eat." But even although that was so, it did not lead to a neglect of prayer. He borrowed from the hours of sleep and prayed long into the night, or rose before it was yet day. Such an ardent life would be impossible physically for us. It ought, however, to convince us that the true ideal is a life of piety, in which the cultivation of the soul has first place. But for what? In order that we may then be able to carry the inspiration of prayer to the needy multitude, and help build up the kingdom of God. We are not even aiming at a full Christianity unless we are aiming at this true balance. There must be intensive soul-culture, but there must also be extensive social service, there must be devotion to God, but there must also be devotion to humanity, and if our temperament leads us to over-emphasise piety, to the neglect of politics, or vice versa, we must put a curb upon our temperament, and deliberately cultivate that to which it does not lead us. Too much piety leads to pharisaism, and too much politics leads to blind partisanship, both of which are marks of an unbalanced nature and also symptoms of an anaemic Christianity.

The opponents of Christianity point to the fact that whilst the Church has produced a glut of books on theology and piety, it has produced hardly any books on social ideals. Whilst it has called in the assistance or alliance of the world to safeguard essential Catholic truth, it has allowed the world to fight unassisted in its struggle for social justice. Such a sweeping statement overlooks some of the great events of history. It forgets that even the monks, whose main interest was in the spiritual life, were the devoted teachers of the peasant and labourer, the great check against destitution in the middle ages. It forgets that the great charter of British freedom, Magna Carta, would never have been wrested from royalty if the Church had not joined in the demand for it.

It is unfortunately true that since the Industrial Revolution which marks the rise of modern politics, the Church has kept an unchristian aloofness, or has interfered only to help thwart the ideals of liberty and justice. It must be admitted that during the last two or three hundred years the Church in England has not allied itself with the efforts of the people towards social betterment.

Where so many of the Church's critics ignore the facts is in their failure to recognise that in our own age a deliberate attempt is being made by the Churches to put this wrong right. The Churches are awaking to their social responsibility and are beginning to recognise that a complete Christianity demands a definite interest in politics. Such a movement as the Anglo-Catholic School of Sociology is evidence that even the Established

Church, so long associated with reaction, is beginning to ask questions about modern social problems

Admitting then, that a full vigorous Christianity must have something very definite to say about politics, two courses are open to us. We must be prepared to examine, without any prejudice, the social ideals of the various political parties, and discover whether we can definitely label any of them Christian. If we can do that, then it is the duty of the Church corporately to ally itself with that group in the political struggle. Such a definite identification of the Church with one political party has been condemned as unwise, because it would alienate immediately all those people who belong to another political party. We only urge or justify such an identification if after careful examination we have come to the conclusion that the policy of that party is definitely a Christian policy.

What if we examine these ideals and come to the conclusion that no political party can be called Christian? Are we then to keep aloof from politics and give ourselves exclusively to what we call spiritual work? That is what so many of the Churches and its leaders have done. We contend that that is a mistake. If there is no Christian policy of social reform in any of the political parties, then it is our duty to work out along Christian lines a new ideal and a new practical policy for establishing it. It ought to be quite possible to work out a definite, exhaustive, and yet quite simple formula of Christian social policy to lay down the method of its establishment step by step, and to win adherence to it.

We shall, then, tread this path. Let us examine the three main political parties and their ideals, let us ask whether they are Christian, and if not, how they can be made Christian.

CONSERVATISM.

Consider first the Conservative Party. This is the oldest political party, and is also the party which is almost wholly responsible for the development of our present social system.

Modern politics in England, and its emphasis on party government may be considered to have arisen about the time of the first Reform Bill in 1832. It was then that the name "conservative" first began to be used to denote that party which sought to conserve what was best in the past, and to move very slowly, if at all, in the direction of alteration. Until the war the Conservatives and the Liberals were the only two influential parties in the State, and the only difference was that the Liberals were more amenable to change and more conscious of the need for reform, than the slow-moving Conservatives.

Political life in this country has undergone a very deep change since the war. During the war Conservative and Liberal sank their differences, which were actually very small, and united in an effort to bring the country safely out of the conflict. That union is never likely to be deeply severed, because there is still a common enemy not in another nation but in our own. The most remarkable event of post-war politics has been the rise to influence and actual power of the Labour Party, and the gradual merging of the two older parties in their common opposition of this new candidate for place and power. Thoughtful people now recognise that the main choice in politics is between the Conservative Party, which clings to our present system, and the Labour Party, which bases its policy upon its desire, not for reform, but for a complete change in our present system. Side by side with these two political parties is the very small but very aggressive Communist Party, which events in other countries teach us not to ignore.

What is Conservatism? I have had a constant struggle with the printer to get him to print "Conservatism" instead of "conservatism." The distinction is important. Conservatism is the desire to preserve that which is best in the past, surely we must all be conservatives in this sense. Conservatism has come to mean much more than this, and implies the acceptance of many things which have quite recently sprung up and have few roots in the past. Conservatism, taking the word in its root meaning, does not link you on to a political party. Conservatism most definitely does

Let us try then to do full justice to the man who says, "I am a Conservative in politics." He means first of all that he does not wish to see the system under which we live fundamentally changed. The building up of the industry and trade of the British Empire, the extension of its influence in new and undeveloped lands, the maintenance of its laws, and the purging of its old established Church from error are to the Conservative good and right and proper things. He believes very strongly in the inculcation of patriotism, and whilst he would not admit that he denies the general principle of universal brotherhood, he does feel that the Britisher, because of his heritage and his more advanced civilisation, is better favoured than the rest of mankind. But his privileges thrust upon him a responsibility, which is to act in a fatherly way to the backward races, to develop their countries for them, and to govern them for their good. This rôle of heaven-sent custodian to the world he does not assume from any sense of pride or boastfulness but with a solemn sense of responsibility, almost with a sense of divine vocation. The British race is called by God to lead the world and as a conservative and in all humility he wants to be true to his calling.

He believes that as it is with races so it is with individuals. There are some who are born to govern, and some who are born to serve. By their superiority of birth, by their sheltered lives and by their education, there are those who are best fitted to be our legislators and our lawmakers. It is a specialised task, and it is contrary to his sense of the fitness of things for a man who is a pitman or an engine driver to aspire to Parliament, just as it would be for a University professor to aspire to the foot-plate of a locomotive.

The enlightened Conservative to-day might not be inclined to go so far as to quote with approval our childhood's hymn—

The rich man in his castle,
The poor man at his gate,
God made them high and lowly,
And ordered their estate,

But he would still assert that the old Catechism of the Established Church is true, and that we ought to be content in that station of life to which it has pleased God to call us.

NECESSARY EVILS

Such a point of view implies the acceptance of certain necessary evils. Police courts, prisons, poor-law institutions and lunatic asylums are unfortunately rendered necessary because first our national Church has not yet made everybody moral, nor secondly has our industrial system made everybody realise the importance of hard work, nor thirdly our medical profession everybody sane. Our present system, therefore, good though it is, must mean that there are poor to be provided for, criminals to be punished, and lunatics to be isolated. The Conservative believes that a large amount of poverty could be avoided if men were not so lazy, and that crime could eventually be checked if our penal law were only rigorous enough. Our workhouses therefore, must not be made too comfortable or there would be a sudden rush on them, our prisons must be made thoroughly uncomfortable, and our hangings even more uncomfortable still so that in the end laziness, crime and murder will just die out.

What is necessary within the state is also necessary among the nations. Conservatism implies a strong army and navy, primarily for the defence of this realm from attack, but also to enforce our British will upon those undeveloped nations, who need at times to be coerced into accepting what is good for them. The Conservative will tell you that he is all for peace. His only purpose in maintaining a strong army and navy is to have it ready in case of need, and the more efficient it is, the shorter and the sharper will be the conflict, should it ever come. The best way to ensure peace is to prepare thoroughly for war, and then no nation will ever want to make war on us and backward races can be kept in order.

The Conservative is not quite sure whether war can eventually be abolished. He hopes so, and to this end works in his spare time for the League of Nations, but human nature being what it is (a preliminary to most conservative arguments) he is rather dubious about the final abolition of war. He is quite sure it is not contrary to the Christian religion. The Bible is full of wars, horrible ones, but in case there may still be doubt he has made assurance doubly sure by settling the matter in the Thirty-nine Articles which says that it is lawful for Christians to bear arms for the defence of the realm.

In order to be fair to the Conservative Party it ought to be made clear that of recent years a small group has arisen in the Party who urge a much more emphatic emphasis upon improving social conditions. They are anxious to see the worker better housed, anxious to see better conditions in the workshops, and anxious to increase educational facilities for the workers' children, they believe, however, that all these reforms can take place within the present system, which only needs slight adjustment here and there in order to produce happiness all round.

What is the Christian conclusion with regard to the Conservative Party? How can we best judge her policy and point of view? It is surely fair to suggest that Conservatism ought to be judged by results. We have only to look around to behold the monument of its achievements. More than any other party she is responsible for the state of the country to-day.

As Christians, also, we cannot be satisfied with a generalised judgment. We shall have to look at individuals, because it is by its effect upon individuals that the Christian must judge any political policy.

“ BY THEIR FRUITS ”

Look then, on the fruits of Conservatism. A lad has just left school at fourteen years old, and he is just beginning to wake to the wonder and mystery of life. But now, at a single step his youth is over. He exchanges his schoolboy knickers for trousers and dungerees. He is not allowed to choose, but is thrust into our industrial system. Beauty, colour, adventure is what he demands, because he is just a normal healthy boy. But what does he get? Deafening noise, grime and dust, drabness and monotony. He begins with individuality but that is soon stamped out. He “ clocks off ” from one job only to “ clock on ” for the next. He soon becomes a cog in the ever-whirring wheel of industrialism. At night comes freedom and a natural reaction. Lurid and sentimental films, melodrama, jazz, dancing, anything which has colour, romance, sensuousness, passion or excitement is demanded. In a few short years this glorious boy—God's Son—bright-eyed, rosy cheeked, full of ambition, becomes a worker,

dull-eyed, grey-complexioned, sallow and low spirited. He cannot escape, the factory, the machine, holds him in its clutch, and throws him off when it has used every ounce of his strength *

And what about the girls? They, alas, are there too, held in the grip of industrialism, fainting by the side of the machine, becoming frail and bloodless whilst the life oozes out of them

Look again on the fruits of Conservatism. An older man this time, married, in one room, with two babies. There is no need for him to spend his hours in the factory—he wishes he could—but the factory at the moment does not need him. He is just an out-of-work, an inevitable product of Conservatism. Day after day he tramps round looking for a job. Tired and exhausted he rests on the stones in Trafalgar Square, where his rulers have built pill-boxes for machine guns to keep him in order. He is compelled to go to the Guardians for relief and is there told that he is lazy, that there is work if he will only look, but he has been looking day after day, and his spirit is broken and he dare not reply.

Look again at the fruits of Conservatism. The battle is over, the charge has been made, and the enemy have been driven back, but there on the barbed wire caught and entangled and lacerated, is a young lad—a British soldier—with his shapely body, once so white and sweet, a ghastly mess, hideously shattered. The sun burns him, as he waits for death there, trussed up on the wire. He curses God, curses man, prays madly for a stray shot to hit him, and then, with joy, remembers that his rifle holds one spare bullet, and so he ends his misery.

These are the victims of Conservatism. It is easy enough to turn from them and argue about economic facts, easy enough as our rulers do, to call this "sob-stuff", easy enough to pour scorn upon the Sermon on the Mount. If, however, we are going to judge our present system and the political faith which upholds it, it is to these victims we must turn, and by their pains and torture, judge the system. That judgment, if it is free from prejudice, can only declare one thing. A system which defiles the souls and bodies of youths and maidens, which dishonours the image of God in man, and for its maintenance turns the world into a charnel-house—is not merely non-Christian, but pagan. Nay, it is worse than pagan, for paganism was at least more beautiful than this.

THE CHRISTIAN ANSWER.

From Conservatism we turn to Catholicism—not the false Catholicism which finds only joy in sensuous worship—but the

*See "the Triumphant Machine" by R. M. Fox (Hogarth Press 5s.) for a vivid development of this picture by one who has thus suffered.

Catholicism which goes right back to the true nature of man, which believes in the Incarnation. Catholicism is really the true Conservatism. Our quarrel with Conservatism is that it is not conservative enough, it does not go back far enough. It goes back to man's body but does not reach his soul. It wallows on the surface of things, thinks in terms of property and profit, economics and efficiency—it never gets down to the real thing, which is humanity. It only goes back to the 19th century. It forgets that there was a time when there were no machines, a time when there were green fields instead of slag-heaps and pits belching out poison. It forgets that wealth did not always mean money, but originally the well-being of all humanity, and if that glorious humanity is defiled and robbed of its heritage, God is dishonoured and Christianity denied.

The Church must be prepared to say quite emphatically that she can never be satisfied with Conservatism as a political ideal. Its theories, somewhere, have taken a wrong turn. Its policy stands condemned by its products in suffering humanity. It may be right in looking back to the past, but that backward look must stretch, not merely over two centuries but over twenty. There it will see a Babe, resting on a woman's arms, and looking upon that fair Madonna and her Child, will have learned something about every Babe and every Mother. Looking back over those long centuries it will see a Boy, working in a carpenter's shop, joyous, young, free, growing in wisdom and stature, and looking on that picture will have learnt something about youth and industry. Over the centuries it will see a grown Man wandering workless through Palestine, jibed at as a vagabond and wine-bibber, and even under the form of the workless victim in Trafalgar Square, it will see the face of that Man of Sorrows. Across the years it will see the naked body of a shackled Victim, led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as He is nailed, unresisting, to His Cross, it will learn something about war, and will see in the torn body of every soldier, of every nation, the broken flesh of the Son of God.

If you want to be conservative look back—back to Jesus—and then you will rise from the vision, with anger flashing in your eyes, and determination in heart and brain, to end for ever, the injustice, the cruelty and the madness which dares to assert its sovereignty over our nation, and in its place you will set up a new Sign and a new Hope—the sign of self-sacrificing Love, and the Hope of a new world, where every child of God shall live in freedom beneath the smile of His Love.

2. SOCIALISM AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Socialism, like Christianity, is a word which has become exceedingly elastic in its meaning. The majority of people would be deeply offended if they were accused of not being Christian, even although they make no definite profession of religious belief, and at times assert themselves that they are not Christian. It is rather different when other people say it. Christianity has come to mean any sort of average morality which keeps you out of the hands of the police and makes you fit to mingle with respectable society.

As with the word "Christian," so with the word "Socialist." Nearly every Socialist has a different definition. Some of them mean that they are profoundly dissatisfied with things as they are, and want to see them altered, although just how they are not prepared to say. Some of them are quite convinced that Socialism means the violent overthrow, by force of arms, of all existing forms of government, and the setting up of workers' committees to govern the country. Yet others are convinced that all that is required to establish Socialism is to increase the number of co-operative societies, and municipal trading schemes, whilst others, again, do not believe in municipal trading at all, and want the State alone to become the one and only trader.

So confusing and even contradictory are the politics and definitions of the people who call themselves Socialists that quite recently, when their leaders met to formulate a programme for the next General Election, it was urged that the wisest thing to do was to have a programme of principles, and not of definite schemes. The term Socialist seems to include everything from the mild Social Reformer to the violent Anarchist, and it is difficult to know quite where we are.

Confusion has been made even worse confounded by the attempt of the enemies of Socialism to attach to it certain obnoxious and quite wrong ideas which do not find and never have found a place in the policy or ideals of those who are Socialists. It has been declared that Socialism means atheism, that it is a deliberate attempt to break up home life and the family, that it is only sexual immorality in disguise, that it is antichrist and a subtle attempt of that strange personality to overthrow the Catholic Church. These, and even worse statements have been deliberately encouraged by the enemies of Socialism in order to create prejudice in the minds of thoughtless people.

Before ever we can form a clear judgment of the teachings and tenets of Socialism, therefore, it is necessary for us to dis-

abuse our minds, and to get a clear idea of what Socialism really is

Socialism is a political theory, in which it is asserted that the common people would be happier, both mentally and physically, if the means of production and the control of industry were in the hands of society itself, and not in private hands. This would involve first of all the transference of all land, of mines, railways, banks and factories to the community, either in small groups, or in the complete group, the State.

Hilaire Belloc argues that this is the only original idea in Socialism, and he further maintains that a Socialistic State need be neither less democratic nor more democratic than our present state, that as soon as all the means of production are owned by the Government, that is Socialism. In this contention he is manifestly wrong, for every theory of Socialism also includes a means whereby the whole of the people shall have control of those whom they put in control, and this means democracy. Socialism means the control of the means of life by the people for the people.

Socialism does not mean, as it is so often foolishly asserted, that everything should be pooled and divided out equally. Neither does Socialism mean the abolition of private property. In the Socialistic state man would be allowed to own quite a considerable amount of private property, for his own amusement and happiness. He would be allowed to own a house, or a horse, or jewellery or anything else he desired, so long as that possession were not something commonly used or useable as a means of production. He would not be allowed to own land, or to share in the ownership of a factory or a railroad, except in so far as he shared in the communal ownership of these things.

This proposal, obviously, means the complete overthrow of our present system of society. It is difficult to be certain of the exact figures, but it is as near to the truth as we can get to say that a quarter of our means of production to-day is in the hands of about two hundred families. About ninety per cent of the population of these islands are wage-earners, and will never be anything else, and are directly under the control of the owning classes. Just as the final word in control even of the smallest society is in the hands of the man who holds the money, so the final control of this country to-day is in the hands of the financiers and bankers, who are not the common people nor even the representatives of the people, but a very small group of big business men, to whom everybody is compelled to listen.

A direct corollary which follows from the establishment of communal ownership is the abolition of competition which William Morris asserted to be a law of death, and its replacement by co-operation which in all things is a law of life.

Our screeching hoardings, with their everlasting appeals to buy this, that and the other because it is so much better than other brands, is only one of the minor horrors of competition. The ousting and inevitable ruin of the small shopkeeper by the large store is a greater horror, especially when viewed from the purely human point of view. As we see his business gradually disappearing, as we watch him struggling against poverty for the sake of his children, as we see him taking risks and becoming a bankrupt, we begin to learn what William Morris meant when he called competition a law of death.

Under Socialism, co-operation for the common good would replace competition for individual gain. Henry Brailsford has pointed out that even the supporters of our present system are beginning to learn that co-operation is much more profitable than unrestricted competition. Whereas they used to extol competition, they are now busy forming combines and trusts and syndicates, which are actually strong arguments for the Socialist theory of co-operation. The curse of these modern developments is that they are private ventures in Socialism, for private profit, and the exploitation of the worker, and not for the common good.

Having taken possession of the means of production and of life for the common good, the Socialist then asserts another great principle—production for use and not for profit. If a fruit farmer to-day has a very plentiful supply of fruit, and he discovers that he cannot sell them at a profit because the market is glutted, he lets his fruit rot on the tree. If the agriculturist has produced a good crop of sprouts and cannot see a fair profit ahead, he will not harvest his sprouts, but plough them in, even although people are hungry. Such a course is inevitable to-day because we produce for profit, and not for use. This leads to all the absurdities of over-production, and deliberate under-production with its resultant evil of unemployment, profit is the great barometer of our labours to-day, not the needs of humanity.

All this, says the Socialist, will be different when the people are the producers. Only sufficient boots and shoes will be made for the common need, with a small surplus for export, and the bootmakers will work regularly and humanly, not spasmodically, and by mass production, as they do to-day.

SOCIALISM AND WAR.

The final argument of the Socialist is that under this scheme war with all its attendant horrors will ultimately be abolished. Wars are created, not by the peoples, but by financiers and business men. Wars are caused not so much by national or political differences, but by the struggle of the capitalist classes for new markets. "War," says the Socialist, "will only end when

capitalism ends " The Socialist does not condemn war on any moral basis, indeed, some go so far as to suggest that the Socialist state will maintain a citizen army for national defence, in which everybody should fight. The Socialist condemnation of war is that it is a direct outcome of our present system of society, and an exceedingly useful weapon in the hands of the ruling classes

WHY SOCIALISM IS HELD BACK

The growth of Socialism in England, although it has been rapid and remarkable, has been held back for three causes —

(1) *The human factor* The Socialist Gospel naturally attracts men who are discontented. Those who have been held back through lack of education and bad environment in the struggle of life turn naturally to the Socialist movement with its vigorous condemnation of present evils, and find in that movement a means of expression and of protest. Although the Labour movement is now beginning to attract to itself men of brains and education, the rank and file of the Socialist movement in England are men who themselves have been victims of our present system

From one point of view this is good. When they speak, they speak from the heart, they speak that which they do know, and their appeals for righteousness have brought a new spirit of reality and of humanity into our council chambers

But on the other hand this very thing has created a difficulty. A man's heart may be on fire with social indignation, but that is not going to take him very far in the every-day matters of organisation. Tub-thumping is a very poor substitute for hard thinking. The Socialist movement has suffered much at the hands of its friends, the tub-thumpers. The man of heart, but not of brain, has taken control of local Labour organisations. He has shown himself quite keenly against the evils of the day, but apart from a few platitudes, he doesn't know very definitely how to put things right. He is a man of talk, but not of action, a man of negations but not of construction. Even the most ardent Socialist has been known to turn against Socialism when he has served for a year on a local Labour committee

The result of this is that the Labour Movement is always in danger of splitting up into a thousand fragments. Its leaders are easily ruffled, and are inclined to be dominated by suspicion and jealousy. Knowing this through personal experience, many who cannot help but share the ideals of the Labour Movement look wistfully at it, but feel that they cannot work happily within it

(2) *The ignorance and apathy of the workers* This is easily understood. The drudgery and monotony of modern industrialism,

its soul-destroying specialisation under which one man spends all his days making only a part of a finished article, has had a deadening effect upon the workers. Go into Hyde Park any evening and look at them. They stand there with faces upturned, with that heavy half-believing gaze of the British crowd, and then they turn away and forget. The drabness of their lives has taken such a grip upon mind and brain that they cannot think, and cannot even believe that the world can be made better. It will take something more than the Socialist agitator to rouse them.

(3) *The financial factor.* The purse has always proved to be the sinews of war. The ruling classes of this country, although they may not have the majority of the people behind them, have the bankers behind them, the Press behind them, and the organisation behind them. The Socialist gospel not only lacks the dynamic to stir the common people, it lacks also the means of propagating its message among the people, and because of this, loses, time and again in the struggle.

(4) *Its attitude to religion.* Socialists as a body are strangely suspicious of organised religion, particularly of the Catholic Church. This may be due to a short-sighted reading of history and of the perverted sort of religion so many churches have presented. But even where religious people do feel moved to support the Labour Party in its ideals, they are treated with suspicion, and are often led to believe that their religious beliefs are merely tolerated.

The attitude of the Labour Party in the recent Prayer Book debate is a remarkable case in point. One would have thought that a party which stands for freedom of expression and the rights of bodies to govern themselves, would have unitedly supported the right of the Church of England to choose for itself what kind of prayers it wanted to say. It was chiefly the opposition of the Labour members in their speeches and their votes which denied to the Church of England its right to manage its own affairs. That was due to the fact that so many people in the Labour Movement have an anti-religious complex, and a fear that the introduction of religion is going to work the destruction of Socialism.

A MATERIALIST THEORY.

It may be that this suspicion is grounded in an important fact which must now definitely be stated. Socialism, just as much as Conservatism, is a material theory, and bases its conclusions upon the assumption that if you put material things right, everybody will be happy. John Ruskin, condemning political economy, said that if you take the skeleton out of a man and then roll him up into a pellet, the re-insertion of the skeleton will present you with certain rather obvious difficulties. This criticism is equally

true of the Socialist theory. The Socialist forgets that man is a soul. Spiritual things must surely come first. When Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God," He was stating a great principle of political economy, it was largely because the mediævalists, within certain limits, worked upon this principle, that they were not troubled with problems of riches and poverty like we are. Unlike modern Socialists, Jesus began, not with a study of man's relation to his environment, but with man's relation to God, confident in the assurance that if man believed in and worshipped the things of the spirit, he would not find the ordering of his economic life an insuperable difficulty.*

In Socialist theory and propaganda spiritual values, if they are referred to at all, come as an after-thought, a skeleton somewhat difficult to insert, because it is not a skeleton at all, but the very source of life. According to the Socialist, every individual is to be at liberty to live just as he likes, and to do whatever takes his fancy, and to follow out any principles of morals that may appeal to him so long as they do not interfere with the happiness of others. According to Socialist theory religion or no religion is a purely personal thing, and it doesn't really matter whether there is a God or not, so long as this earth is made a paradise.

Jesus thought differently. He did not look upon life as a series of separate problems, in watertight compartments, but rather as one problem with many aspects. That one problem was to make it possible for all men not only to be able to know God, but to want to know Him; and as He set God before the workers of Palestine, they did begin to want Him, and as they found Him, other things began to right themselves. Because they wanted God, they wanted all men to want God, and they began to take an interest in all men, which made them suddenly discover that the Jew was not the only man on the face of the globe, not the only creature God cared for, and so their false barriers were broken down.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Gospel of the Kingdom of God is the great answer of the Church to the dream of the Socialists. We do not say that the Socialists are wrong. We say that they are as near to right as any of the political parties to-day. What we do say is that they are beginning at the wrong end, lacking in the spiritual dynamic. It is indeed a tragedy that a movement of such spiritual potentiality should rest upon material values. There can be no doubt, however, that this fallacy is the root of Labour's failure, and the cause of all its quarrels and dissensions. There is nothing to hold the movement together, nothing big enough for inspiration, and in every crisis Labour becomes a house divided against itself.

*See Pentz "Towards a Christian Sociology"

By the Kingdom of God Jesus meant a new social order which it is God's purpose should be established here on earth* The phrase has long been familiar to his hearers. It was the vision of a national ideal which every Jew cherished, when Israel should be free and prosperous. Jesus took it and filled it with a new spiritual content, made it glow with life, so that men left everything to preach it. They saw it not merely as a scheme of man's devising, but as something extending beyond this world to the next, and at the centre and circumference of it was the father-heart of God.

If it can be affirmed that Jesus wanted to establish this new society here upon earth, it can also be affirmed that so His disciples understood Him. Their first attempt was in communism, in a life that not only meant a change of heart, but a change of outward circumstance, for which they were prepared to give up everything.

Is it not possible for the Church to call men back to this idea? Will not the Church use its best brains, and its most devoted zeal, to work out for this generation the details of God's Kingdom, and the practical way of its establishment?

We must begin by insisting on a reconciliation of material and spiritual. This separation between material and spiritual has proceeded so far that our politics and our industry have become corrupt, and it seems almost impossible at times to bring any moral influence to bear upon them. We are caught in the toils of the system, and we are all its slaves.

But the way of escape is not in exalting the Church as a sanctuary of safety, a refuge to enable men to escape the world. We must recall the Church to its original purpose, as an instrument for the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

If we could only begin by convincing the workers and the toiling masses that they are really God's children, wouldn't that rouse them much more than by telling them they are brothers? If we could show them all the treasures of the Father's House, symbolically in our worship, and practically in our sympathy and love, would not that put a new light in their lack-lustre eyes? Would they not then want to leave the husks of drudgery, and claim for themselves the rights and the privileges of the Kingdom of God? *Wouldn't that lead to revolution sooner than all the Socialist theories? And what a revolution that would be! Picture a down-tools movement, not for more wages, but for more time for prayer! Imagine every workman refusing to go to work on Sunday until he had been to Mass? Contemplate the Church organising the workers of this country to demand with dignity and heaven-inspired power the right of every man, woman and child to a life of freedom and simplicity and true religion.

It may be only a dream, but it is a dream much more likely of fulfilment than the utopias of the Socialists. It is a dream first seen by Jesus, and that is enough for us

“ Dreamer of dreams? We take the taunt with gladness,
Knowing that God beyond the years we see
Hath wrought the dreams, which count to you as madness,
Into the substance of the life to be ”

3 COMMUNISM and the COMMUNION of SAINTS

Communism is a political theory based chiefly upon the works of Karl Marx, which most communists have never read. That, however, is understandable for Marx is an extremely difficult writer to read, his works being both heavy and involved in style. It must not be imagined, however, that Communism is bound up with Karl Marx. The ideals of the Communists have developed since Marx's death, and the party itself is not irreconcilably committed to his views in every detail.

Communism suffers even more than Socialism from misrepresentation. Theft, robbery with violence, incendiarism, immorality, hooliganism, murder, and every vice and crime in the Newgate calendar have been associated with Communism. Indeed, the very mention of the word “ Communism ” seems to be enough to make people conceive of everything diabolical.

Nothing is more calculated to encourage the growth of a movement than to cover it with contumely. Human nature has a strange perversity which leads it to probe deep into things that are either suspicious or banned. Advise young persons not to read a particular book or see a particular play because it is demoralising or dangerous, and you can be quite sure they will.

There seems very little doubt that the growth of Communism in this country, small though it is, has been largely due to the fact that respectable people have dressed it up into a fearsome horror and warned mankind against it.

The only reasonable way in which to demonstrate the rights or wrongs of Communism is to state quite definitely what it stands for, and people will then be able to discover for themselves either its truth or its falsity.

We have to state then as simply as we can what is meant by the Communist theory, and in order to do that it is fair to rely upon what the British Communist Party themselves declare.

The basis of Communist theory is what the Communists call the “ theory of historical materialism ”. This theory asserts that man's soul depends entirely for its ideas and hopes upon his material environment. According to the Communist, man's

"soul," man's "spirit," man's "consciousness" are simply different names for the one thing, and this one thing, the unseen part of man, from which springs all his ideas, ideals and hopes, depends entirely upon the conditions of his material existence. Change the material mode of man's existence, and you change his soul

The Communist makes no attempt to defend this theory of historical materialism along philosophical lines. He will not be drawn into any sort of argument which involves theological or psychological assertions. This basic theory, the theory of historical materialism, is accepted straight from the lips of Karl Marx. Marx recognised that such a theory revolutionises the whole historical outlook of humanity, but that does not seriously worry the Communist,—he is quite at home among revolutions.

"Man's material environment from the earliest times" says the Communist "has been a constant warfare, a perpetual class struggle, a pitched battle between those who serve and those who command. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebian, master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an interrupted fight, now hidden, now open, but a fight that each time ended either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."

That struggle, according to the Communist, is in a full and active state to-day. The opposing ranks are the wage-earners on one side, and the capitalists on the other. The Communist has renamed the contending armies in this struggle, and in order to understand the Communist point of view, it is necessary to be expert in the use of these new names, originating with Karl Marx. The capitalist class are the "bourgeoisie" and the wage-earners the "proletariat." Much depends in Communist propaganda upon the skilful use of these two names, "bourgeoisie" and "proletariat," which seem to have a peculiar hypnotic effect upon the mind of the Communist. He has given a very simple thing a very high-sounding name, and by doing that, has passed through a subtle mental change towards those around him. Everybody is either proletarian or bourgeois, and heaven help you if you happen to be the latter.

At the moment, the army of the bourgeoisie are in control and on top. The Communist maintains that the bourgeoisie, or ruling class, depend entirely upon a dictatorship for their supremacy. The Communist is convinced that the ruling class has no faith whatever in anything except force. He pays lip tribute to democracy and even allows a certain amount of liberty to his slaves but it is only so much sand thrown into the eyes of the workers and in a crisis the Capitalist army immediately flies to its great source of supremacy, which is physical force.

The State is the embodiment of this mighty arm which keeps the bourgeoisie victorious in the struggle. Army, navy, police force, parliament, laws, law-courts, public schools and universities, and even the Churches, are the weapons the victorious army uses to maintain its strangle-hold upon the proletariat.

"This dictatorship," Marx exclaimed, "can only be broken by raising the proletariat to the position of ruling-class, by substituting for the employers' dictatorship, the dictatorship of the workers. The proletariat will use its political supremacy, to wrest by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the State, that is, of the proletariat organised as the ruling class, and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible.

"When the workers' dictatorship has destroyed the last vestiges of capitalism, and the old capitalist class, then class distinction will finally disappear, and in place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."

The Communist examination of present-day economy is based upon Karl Marx's theory of surplus value. That theory is quite easy to understand, for it simply means that the actual value of the work produced by the worker does not return to the worker in the form of wages. There is a surplus value which goes to the capitalist, and which is used to strengthen the hold which the capitalist has upon the worker. When industrialism began, this surplus value was small, but with the increased use of machinery, the economies of mass production and the development of imperialism this surplus value is maintained in ever larger proportions, and the death grip upon the workers is tightened.

THE COMMUNIST WAY OUT.

The Communist offers only one solution for this state of affairs. That solution will work itself out along three lines — revolution, the setting up of a proletarian dictatorship and finally the establishment of the worker's Government. Chief interest and chief emphasis rests upon the first of these steps towards freedom,—the revolution.

There is nothing secret about the Communist's preparations for revolution. Strange stories of underground military preparations, of gun-running, and the laying-in of stores of ammunition are the mysterious stories of the opponents of Communism. The actual method set forward by the Communists is much more simple, and much more open than that. No steps towards armed revolt will be made until the Communist Party is confident that all the

workers are behind them. They would then wait until the moment when the capitalist government is at its weakest through prevailing discontent, and then they would strike. No attempt is made by the Communist Party to train secret armies. Their theory is that when the right moment to strike has come, the army itself, now compelled to obey the bourgeois leaders, will become the army of the proletariat, and will use the apparatus of warfare, chemicals, bombs and all, against the capitalists, for the defence of the workers.

The war on the capitalists would be pursued with no mercy. As Lenin says, "We shall carry off all the bread and boots of the capitalists. We shall leave them nothing but crumbs, we shall give them nothing but clogs." If there were any question of starvation they would be the first to go without their crumbs and clogs.

The Communists make no apology for their reliance upon Russia. "We could rely," they say, "upon the Red Fleet to keep our seas open, and upon the enthusiastic support of the Russian people to feed our revolution. The nation which fed the miners in 1926 would not desert the British workers in their hours of triumph."

After the revolution will come the setting up of the dictatorship of the proletariat. No attempt will be made immediately to establish either a Socialistic state, or a democracy. A workers' Cromwell will arise, who will dominate the workers and gradually prepare them for their responsibilities of government. He will exercise an iron discipline, he will use every possible means to attain his end, means sanguinary and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative, against the forces and traditions of the old society. No king or conqueror will ever act so autocratically, so unscrupulously, so violently as he. What will redeem his actions will be the great goal he will keep in view—the establishment of the Workers' Committees into the great United Committee of the Workers, which will take the place of the British nation. The end will justify the means, and there will appear in due course the ideal nation, ruled, governed and controlled by the proletariat, in which everybody will be happy, and every worker will enjoy the full fruits of his labours.

This, then, is the Communist programme. It is presented without prejudice, and is based upon a careful examination of the popular tracts of the British Communist Party. It is there, for any who will, to examine, and the only just and honest way of forming an unbiased opinion of the ideals of Communism is to judge it thus, according to what Communists themselves set forward.

COMMUNISM AND COMMON SENSE

It ought to be clear from such an examination that there is no need for the violent suppression of the tenets of Communism. The best way to "suppress" Communism is to set it forth clearly as Communists themselves do, and it will then automatically suppress itself. It must be quite clear to the thinker that the Communist ideal contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

To begin with, Communism is built up upon a philosophical theory which is not only superficial and uninstructed, but manifestly false. The theory begins by jumbling together in a strange bunch everything in man which is not material and visible, and calling the jumbled mass man's "soul." His mind and his spirit, his ideals and his dreams, his emotions and his feelings, his thoughts, his will, his inspirations all go to make up his soul. This is not only the negation of psychology, it is also the negation of common sense. It is an attempt to treat of a complex organism as if it were something which could be understood at a glance. It is as if the scientist gathered together all the text-books and specimens of botanical research, wrapped them up in a big parcel, and labelled them "flowers," and then discarded them.

Bad though it may be, this is not the worst of the Communist's fundamental error. He goes on to take his parcel labelled "soul," and says that everything contained within it is absolutely dependent upon material environment. Has the Communist overlooked the fact that the consequence of such a theory is surely that those who live in ideal surroundings ought to have the most beautiful souls? Undoubtedly those who are able to live in the most beautiful surroundings are the despised bourgeoisie. The Communist himself is most vigorous in his contention that these are not the most desirable people. The facts of history and experience go to show that the finest souls frequently emerge from the most unpromising material surroundings, it is also a fact, as the Communist recognises, that souls are unchanged and untouched by their material conditions. So self-evident are these statements that one almost feels like apologising for stating them, but when a whole political theory is built up upon their denial, it is necessary to state even the most obvious truth.

Secondly, it does not seem to be a correct analysis to say that the present state of society is a state of constant warfare. We are ready to admit the truth of the Communist indictment against modern conditions of life. It is true that the workers are crushed, that they do not receive the full fruits of their labours, true that they are compelled to live under wretched conditions, and live monotonous and dreary lives. It is equally true that the ruling classes often tyrannise over their subordinates, that they extract the utmost from them, and that they are prepared to use force

for the achievement of their mercenary ends We admit the greater proportion of Communist criticism But surely it does not help to make things better, by making them out to be worse than they are To stir up the blood with wild talk of revolution, to kindle the imagination with pictures of warfare, to urge the workers to be merciless when the time comes, to tell them to smash not only capitalism, but the capitalists, is to play with fire which even the most vigorous dictator will find hard to keep under control

Thirdly, Communism fails when it attempts to turn to a constructive policy To smash things by a revolution, and then to set up a dictator to work for the building up of Workers' Committees all over the country, sounds a simple method of reform It is too simple to be acceptable Those who have had experience of committees of any sort know very well how troublesome they can be One is almost tempted to say, "If you don't want a thing done set up a committee to do it" To call a committee a soviet isn't going to alter it, and those who have had any experience of workers on committees are not likely to be any the more enamoured to the Communist plans

A dictator can be even more dangerous than a committee The trouble with committees is that they don't do things, the trouble with the dictator is that he frequently does too much What guarantee have we that the proletarian dictator is going to be any better than the bourgeois brand? We have a shrewd suspicion that the Socialists once called Mussolini "comrade" History certainly does prove that the worst kind of dictator is the one who has risen from the ranks Ask the soldier whom he prefers, the commissioned officer or the bullying sergeant-major

THE CHURCH'S ANSWER.

These are arguments of a purely secular nature The Church, however, has something much more definite and much more damning to say to the Communist "We are the Party," say the Communists, "of working-class common sense That is why we start neither with moral principles nor with fancy reforms, but with the facts" One of the strongest facts in the whole of life is that there exists in the consciousness of man a moral law from which he can never escape If the Communist wants to begin with facts, let him begin with that fact To throw over moral principles and to boast about beginning with the facts is only to reveal an amazingly undeveloped state of mind The Church declares (and in this nearly everybody is behind the Church) that if society is going to persist at all, we must recognise the moral law There is such a thing as right and wrong Sometimes right is called wrong, and sometimes wrong is made out to be right, but man's instinct has always driven him to feel that somewhere or other there is an Absolute Right All his endeavours

to reach happiness and all his struggles for social justice are but expressions of this constant search

Imagine what would happen if all moral restraints were removed, could such a thing happen. A capitalist tyranny with the veneer of goodness to restrain it is bad enough, but a working-class tyranny, with an open defiance of all moral principles, might be infinitely worse

It is obvious that the Communists have no scruples with regard to war. They declare quite openly that they are out to destroy the capitalists. However bad the capitalist may be, he is a man with human ties and human sympathies, and his destruction is just as much condemned by the Church as the destruction of the workers in capitalist warfare. War is no more beautiful, no more justifiable, no more Christian when it is waged for the emancipation of peoples, than when it is waged for the opening up of new markets. War will always remain that horrible and devilish thing which we know it to be, and which it is more and more becoming, and the world will never be happy until war itself is finally slain and its weapons utterly destroyed. The Christian ethic can only be consistent when it deliberately takes its stand on the assertion that ALL warfare is contrary to the spirit and teaching of Christ, and can NEVER under any circumstances be justified

Finally, it must be obvious to the Communist that his very elementary plan of revolution and dictatorship can work both ways. What about a bourgeois revolution against the Communists and a bourgeois dictator keeping the Communists in order? Surely this is exactly what has happened in Italy, where the Fascists have deliberately taken over this part of the Communist programme for the defeat of Socialism. Perhaps the Communist will remember that it was once said by One who was a very shrewd judge of human nature that those who play with swords often perish at the point of the sword

CHRISTIAN COMMUNISM.

The Christian answer to the Communist ideal is the Catholic doctrine of the Communion of Saints. This is no other-world theory, but the most democratic and the most communistic that has ever been put forward. The saints are not people who have died, nor people who belong to one class. They are not the good people nor the poor people nor the rich people, but the baptised of the Church's wide family, which includes the living and the departed. They are held together by the most slender of ties, and yet a tie which can never be broken, their common love for their common Lord

The Christian ideal is of a commune held together by love. The basis of Christian communism is a belief in the spiritual

nature of man We do not say that all men are of equal value, we go farther than that and say that all men are of infinite value, because they are God's children We do not say that man is moulded by his material environment We say that man himself moulds his environment, and that at a last resort he is independent of it

In order to establish the Christian commune we boldly take over the Communist programme, and declare that we are going to achieve it by revolution, and by the setting up of a dictatorship The Christian revolution will begin within ourselves, by the overthrowing of self, and if need be by the shedding of our own blood, and the nailing of ourself upon the Cross of Christ

But the Christian revolution will extend beyond ourselves to the world It will begin as a revolution in values The things which men esteem will become of no attraction to us, and the things which the world despises will attract us We shall then destroy the forces of evil, and set up in their place new ideals—love instead of hatred, sympathy instead of suspicion, faith instead of fear We shall look upon the world as a battlefield, where our antagonists are not men and women, but evil principles, false ideals, and unjust tyrannies We are out to smash all that, and one weapon alone is of any use, the sword of the Cross

Then, when the revolution within ourselves and in the world has commenced we shall set up our dictator He deliberately seeks that position and asks for our loyalty "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light "

But although He is meek and lowly in heart, His will be an iron discipline He demands nothing unless He can have all, and He will not share the throne of our hearts with anyone else He must be lord of all if He is to be lord at all

This is the Christian commune, and the Christian method of establishing it From the confusion of the world there will arise a new and free society, new, because war and hatred and injustice shall be done away, and free, because all men will be the bond-servants of the Supreme Dictator, Jesus Christ

4 IS THERE A CHRISTIAN SOCIOLOGY ?

We have tried, justly, we hope, to ask the question whether the policies of the chief political parties coincide, or come near to the Christian ideal. Without going into details we have outlined the policy of these parties according to what they themselves say they believe. We have then tried with an open mind to criticise their policies first from the point of view of reason, and then from the point of view of the Christian ideal.

Perhaps we owe an apology to the erstwhile great Liberal Party. It would merely be repetition, however, to outline and criticise their ideals, for fundamentally they only differ from the Conservative Party in that they are somewhat less closely tied to existing institutions. Their position in the country, apart from one or two centres where their hold still persists, clearly reveals the attitude of the people towards them.

It will be well to review swiftly the conclusions to which we have come. Our review of Conservatism led us to say that while it is good and desirable to conserve all that is best in the past, it is not true to say that Conservatism is merely this. Many modern views and ideas, with very few roots in the past, and very little to justify them in the present, are inextricably mixed up with Conservatism. The party itself, together with the Liberal Party, cannot object to being judged by the state of things in our country to-day. The monument of the two older parties has been erected all around us in the lives of our citizens. The degradation of our workers, the impoverishment and sacrifice of our youth, and the imminent danger of our continent being turned into a human slaughter-house (perhaps more truly a vast lethal chamber for the destruction of human life) is surely enough to lead us to say that the Conservative and Liberal policy has made a complete confusion of Western Europe.

Our examination of Socialism led us to commend its advocates for their manifest interest and love for humanity, for the loftiness of their ideals and for their determination if possible to alter modern conditions. Our criticism of the Socialist doctrine was that it began at the wrong end, and took no knowledge of the fact that although man has a body, he IS a soul. Consequently, Labour seems to have little sympathy for those institutions which exist primarily for the development of man's inner life.

Communism commended itself to us because of its heroic desire to risk all for the achievement of its ideals and its determination to throw every ounce of its strength into the struggle for the emancipation of the workers. We criticised it because of its complete disregard for moral standards leading to its advocacy of violence to achieve its end. Also its lack of any clear construc-

tive policy when modern conditions are overthrown made us dubious of its ultimate success

Over against these three political parties we set up three great principles of the Catholic Church, and we affirm that these ideals not only meet the need of modern human life, but go down to fundamentals, and satisfy human aspirations more than any political ideals can do. Over against Conservatism we set the ideal of the Catholic Church itself, which is truly conservative in that it goes back much farther than the Conservative Party—back to Jesus, who is Himself the Source of Reality, and the only hope for the redemption of society. Over against Socialism we set the ideal of the Kingdom of God, an ideal much more beautiful, much more complete, and much more fundamental than any of the dreams of the Utopians. It is an ideal based upon the essential spiritual nature of man as a child of God.

Over against Communism we set the Communion of Saints with its great centre in Holy Communion. This ideal takes the word "communism" and sanctifies it. It points mankind to the true source of fellowship. It reveals the secret whereby class distinctions, as well as class antipathies can be finally destroyed without resort to the force of arms.

The great wide gospel of Him who is Saviour of the World and who knows what is in man is big enough and broad enough and powerful enough to outstrip all the policies of all the political parties and to fulfil their truest aspirations. "They will not come unto Me," said Jesus, "that they might have life, yet I came that they might have life in abundance."

LOOKING AHEAD

It is interesting to look ahead and to venture a prophecy with regard to the politics of this country. Politically, English people can only think of two parties at the same time. The machinery of our political life begins to creak, threatening a breakdown, when more than two political parties appear. Our comrades on the Continent may be differently constituted, but such is undoubtedly the English outlook. It is not without reason that there are only two sides provided for in the House of Commons. When more than two sides appear, it either means that they will have to fuse and form two sides, or the two strongest will force the rest out.

Everything was clear when there were only Liberals and Conservatives. At the moment things seem to be somewhat definite when the choice is between the Labour Party and the United Constitutional Party, including the Liberals and Conservatives. With the emergence of a third and even of a fourth Party in the Communists and the Fascists, confusion is likely to arise.

at a very early date. Things will fuse up again, however, and we venture to prophesy that within ten years there will be two well-marked and clearly-defined political groups, and no more. One will represent the older groups, including the Conservatives, the Liberals and the right wing Labour group, who will put forward a policy for the gradual reform of our present system, without any fundamental changes in our constitution. The other group will represent those who are definitely Socialist, and the extreme left wing of the present Labour Party, and the Communists, who will probably dominate the group, whose policy will be to press for a complete change in our social system and our method of government, and who will rely upon some sort of revolution before that change can be brought about.

Those who can see the future most clearly tell us that a revolution in this country is tolerably certain. The most sagacious of our rulers not only recognise this, but are preparing for it. The unobservant visitor to Trafalgar Square may perhaps notice the substitution of "pill boxes" for the old massive lamp posts at the corner of the square, he will not, however, observe at the top of Whitehall what looks like a huge ammunition dump below the ground, with a massive lamp-post above it, the base of which is studded with holes, set to control every entrance to the Square as well as the Square itself. Will our rulers tell us whether our observations are right or wrong?

It is impossible to prophesy what form this revolution will take, or what will be the outcome of it. It seems as likely as not that it will be the prelude to a world war in which the antagonists will not be nations, but political groups, cutting clean across all the nations. In such a conflict England is likely to suffer the most, for we shall not be definitely on one side or the other, and the division will be very equally balanced. It may even be that the crash will threaten the cohesion of the British Empire itself, which may be split from top to bottom.

It may be argued that this is a very black outlook, based upon mere pessimism. The best way to face the possibility of disaster, however, is to be armed for the worst, and even if the worst does not come the conflict will then be easier.

In any case the political situation to-day comes as a challenge to the Church. We see the world as we know it breaking up before our very eyes, old distinctions are having no meaning, and old loyalties are being challenged. This is a call to the Church to point the world to the way of life.

THE CHURCH'S DUTY

What ought the Church to do? Three different solutions are put forward. Some urge us to confine our work to the

conversion of individuals, and hope for the best politically. It is pointed out that Jesus began by inaugurating a mass movement for the achievement of the Kingdom of God, but He finished up by putting His faith more upon individual effort. He began with great open-air meetings on the hillside and by the lake, He finished by preaching to two on a country road, and a weeping woman in a garden. He began by organising a spectacular preaching tour, to rouse the world, He finished by spending much time with a woman at a well and a Pharisee on a house-top at midnight. When He founded His Church He chose twelve men, and counted on them to tell others till the Gospel should spread and grow like the ripples round a stone thrown into a lake.

The Church's best contribution, many people say, is to reach the hearts of individuals, to save souls, and not to meddle with politics. If people's hearts are right, their politics are sure to be right.

Unfortunately, good though it may sound, this principle does not work. Many souls who are undoubtedly saved are very shady in their political views and practices. Many who were keen for the redemption of the world are not quite so keen for the reform of their own factories, or business or workshops. The world always tends to keep religion and politics in watertight compartments, and it is surely the Church's duty to break down this false distinction.

There are others who suggest that the Church should identify itself with that political party which comes nearest to its ideals. This has largely been done in the past by the Church of England for example, where the vicar of the parish was frequently the chairman of the Primrose League. It was also done to some extent by the Nonconformist Churches when the Liberal Party was at its zenith. As soon as this is done it is obvious that a large number of people are alienated from the Church, and it becomes questionable whether such a method can be justified.

Some have even gone so far as to say that the Church itself should become a political party, run parliamentary candidates, and expose the falsity of the other political parties in the usual political way. It can readily be seen how dangerous this might become. Political parties always have to face the possibility of defeat at some time or other, and it would surely discredit the Church if she were in that position. The Church can surely best exercise its influence outside the political arena.

This, many say, is the real solution. We must cut the Gordian knot, and leave politics strictly alone. Let the preachers preach the Gospel, let the people give themselves to prayer, and let the Churches organise for the achievement of spiritual ideals. The

needs of the age ought to drive the Church more ardently to prayer, and when the revolution comes, if it does, we ought to pray all the harder and tend the wounded

This attitude was very much the attitude of the Churches in the past. But where has it led? People say that we are out of touch with the true facts of life, that we are not interested in the conditions under which they live, that we think more of the Prayer Book than the Rent Book, and that we are not anxious to alter the injustices of the world. Such a criticism has its basis in truth. Prayer without work is surely as dead in the twentieth century as it was in the first. It is no good praying for a better society unless we are trying to build it up. The arrows of desire are not much good without the bow of burning gold, prayers must be interpreted by practical efforts, and we must not merely dream, we must help to lay the bricks of the new Jerusalem.

"Show us some practical way, then," is the natural cry. There must be scores who feel as we do about the situation of our country to-day, whose hearts ache at the agonies of others, and the wrongs of civilisation, who can see nothing ahead but conditions much worse than those of the present. But what are we to do? Is there nothing practical that can be suggested? It is because many regard the problem as hopeless that they are only concerned about the building up of their own spiritual lives and the fulfilment of social ideals within their own limited circle. This is necessary and desirable, but surely it ought to be possible to suggest some corporate method in which the Church can tackle this great problem.

A PRACTICAL SUGGESTION

We venture, then, to suggest a definite scheme. Let us begin with the conviction that Christianity has something vital to say to the world to-day. Let us assume that there is a Christian Sociology. Then let us mobilise the best brains and the keenest spirits within the Church to the task of applying Christian principles to modern needs. This is a task which must of necessity take some years of persistent and diligent research. It is similar to the work already undertaken by Copec, and the Anglo-Catholic School of Sociology, but it is to be feared that these groups are too heterogenous and unwieldy to accomplish much. It requires a much smaller group working much more regularly and united in essentials, and in the determination to allow no political bias nor religious prejudice to interfere with genuine research.

By the time the crash came the Church would then be able to offer the world, not vague principles, but a practical scheme for the restoration of society. If the Socialists dream their dreams,

why should not we? If the Communists prepare their programmes, why should not the Church? We are called to seek first the Kingdom of God, it would be a tragedy if in the hour of need we cannot tell the world what it is

We can be sure of this when the crash does come, with its inevitable chaos, the world will be looking round for some suggestion of hope, and will be prepared to try anything which promises salvation. If we are not ready to meet the world in that its hour of need, the world will turn again to useless political theories and purposeless materialist nostrums

Let us define broadly the lines upon which this research would go. Take that generally-recognised principle of our Lord's teaching, which emphasises the supreme value of man as a child of God. Our group will apply that principle first to conditions of labour. Is any system justifiable which allows God's children to go hungry or starve? Is production of more importance than human personality? Is property more important than human souls? Is it necessary for a boy who has just left school to make cocoa tins all day by turning a handle? Is it right that men should be unemployed or idle, and is there a remedy to set against it? These are all questions upon which Christianity should have something definite to say, and upon which Christians with hearts and brains could come to an agreement

And what about housing? Can we not apply this great principle to that problem? Can we imagine what it means to have to live in one room—to be born in one room, eat in one room, and die in one room, to know no other place but those four walls as home? If the Socialists can hurl their rhetoric at this modern scandal, surely we as Christians can hurl more than rhetoric against it, we can say that it is not necessary, and we can discover how it can be put right

With this great principle before us, of the supreme value of man as a child of God, how long are we going to be contented to let the world go on preparing for war? The arrival of each summer display of the R A F. makes it more and more evident that modern discoveries are being pressed primarily into purposes of destruction. The Church must speak with no uncertain voice about this question of war. We must make it perfectly clear that no sort of war, either for defence or for attack, either for capitalists or for the proletariat, can ever be justified by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Such a declaration used to be a voice in the wilderness. It is getting to be recognised more and more to-day, but still the Churches hesitate. It is time they spoke out, for it is no use waiting for the next war, or for the revolution, to declare it

Take another great principle set forth by our Lord—the

supremacy of the spiritual over the material. Would it not be possible for our group to apply that principle to modern social problems? Could we not demand more leisure to be given to the workers for prayer? What has this principle to say about the Poor Law, and the care of the aged? What has it to say about the treatment of those who are mentally diseased? Surely this principle could be applied with very wide implications to the question of education? Here is a whole field of research open to men and women with heart and brain, and if as much energy were put into such work as is put into other branches of Christian work where the need is not so great, it would not be an insuperable task to convince the world that Christianity has something very vital to offer as a solution to social problems

Would it not also be possible in these days of diversities in the matter of government for the Church to devise a scheme of government which would be Christian? The method by which the Church itself is governed, through its threefold ministry, its synods and its parochial organisation, is the most marvellous of any method of government. It could be applied with certain changes to secular government, and even applied to international government

It may be declared in criticism that these things are outside the province of the Church. Whatever is beyond the province of the Church or is treated as such, will very quickly become the province of the devil. Everything which touches man's life, which affects his material or spiritual happiness, is surely within the province of the Church

Do not imagine, however, that this scheme is to be merely a group of people engaged in an academic study. It ought to do its research at a suitable spot in the East End of London, with the smells, and the grime and the dirt. Here is a test of Christian heroism, and a proof of the reality of the ideals of those who are considering these human problems. They will see how people live. They will often leave their research to carry hope to the despairing, help to the needy, and comfort to the sad. They will not neglect the souls of those among whom and for whom they are working, for the centre of their home of study will be the altar to which they and those around them will come for fellowship. Here where men are suffering and dying as a result of our sinful social conditions, this little group of heroes will be able to hurl their thunder with a divinely inspired power against the powers that be and against those who would keep things as they are

It need not stop in the East End. Imagine that same group inspiring others to work in the West End. The problems of life are just as tragic in the West End as in the East End—perhaps even more so. They are seen there from a different angle, but

the luxury and extravagance of Oxford Street are just as effective for the kindling of social indignation, and burning wrath, as the squalor and poverty of Commercial Road

'The Church is so often taunted with the criticism that she will not come down to practical facts or workable schemes. Here is an ideal which is not vague, a dream that is not a mere castle in the air. It is an ideal and a dream grand enough, glorious enough, and at the same time practical enough to inspire the youth of the Church in the most necessary work of the redemption of the nation

Some of us have been urging these ideals for a long time, and they have produced very little response. It is little wonder that we are tempted at times to despair of the Church ever doing anything. Many things have been tried, but have failed. Like the prophet of old we are tempted to give up the task in the belief that we alone see the need or realise the desperateness of the situation. It seems that the world is hopeless, and we are alone. But give us the youth of the Church, let them see this vision of the world's need and the Church's chance, let them bring their zeal and their youthful hopes to the task, and our flagging hearts will be stirred again, we shall go forth again together, and to-morrow we shall win

Nothing is big enough to save the world to-day except Christianity. Hidden within the Gospel of Jesus Christ there is not only the satisfaction of all our hopes, but the solution of all our problems. Given hearts aflame with love for humanity, and minds inspired by the Holy Spirit, those treasures can be uncovered, and we can lead a lost world along the old paths to the city of God

It is recorded that Cellini, the Florentine sculptor, beheld one day in a vision a mighty figure, divine in stature, majestic in mien. He was seized with a great desire to embody the vision in bronze. He built a huge furnace in the courtyard of his house, laid in immense stores of wood and ingots of metal. He modelled the figure in clay, and then prepared a mould. The work of melting the bronze was a long slow task, and the heat required was tremendous. Presently the metal began to grow soft, and the sculptor feverishly fed the fire, whilst his store of wood rapidly diminished. He gazed at the metal, and to his horror discovered that the heat was not sufficient, that the metal, rather than growing softer, was actually hardening. There was no more wood. He rushed into the house, seized a hatchet and broke up the furniture. Still the metal would not flow. In a frenzy he tore up the floorboards and hurled them on to the furnace fire. But still the metal would not flow. Hatchet in hand, and with face all blackened by the burning, he rushed into the street crying,

“ Wood, wood, give me wood,” and when the people saw him they laughed and said “ He is mad, Cellini is mad ”

But was he mad? He had reached a crisis of his career, he had spent his all upon that one task, and everything depended upon the flowing of the metal. It is like that with the world to-day. The Church is challenged to an immense task. Shall we take our chance, or allow the opportunity to slip by? If we miss our chance the world will harden into unbelief, and the Church's opportunity will be lost for ever. It is a challenge not only from the world, but from the Lord of the Church Himself—

The Master whisper'd
“ Follow The Gleam ”

There on the border
Of boundless Ocean,
And all but in Heaven
Hovers The Gleam

O young Mariner,
Down to the haven,
Call your companions,
Launch your vessel
And crowd your canvas,
And, ere it vanishes
Over the margin,
After it, follow it
Follow The Gleam,