

The Ideals of Social Reformers

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THE IDEALS OF SOCIAL REFORMERS.¹

ONE of the special tasks of our generation is the work of wedding Christianity and the social movement. They are divorced now. The bulk of our church members is either ignorant and indifferent in regard to the social movement, or else suspicious of it. The majority of social-reform workers, at least if we include Europe, fluctuates somewhere between contempt and avowed hostility toward the church and spiritual religion. We of "The Brotherhood of the Kingdom" believe that such a separation is unnecessary, unwise, and undesirable, detrimental to the full success of both parties concerned, and perilous to the future of humanity.

We believe in the spiritual life, in the fact of sin and corruption, in the need and possibility of salvation, in holiness and eternal life. We have no desire to see evangelical Christianity bled to death; to see the church of Christ turned into a reform club; to see the hidden life of the believer toned down to a mild and sapless altruism; and to have Christian theology changed into a modern gnosticism, into a system of evolutionary philosophy, with a place for Christ as one of the evolutionary forces. On the contrary, we find fault with modern Christianity because it is not Christian enough. We desire a completer surrender to the Spirit of God, a fuller life of trust, and a more ardent zeal for all missionary work, and for the universal reign of King Jesus. But, on the other hand, we also believe in the social movement of the nineteenth century. We refuse to regard it as a red-hot lava eruption from the crater of hell. We hold that it is a river flowing from the throne of God, sent by the Ruler of history for the purification of the nations. We see God's hand in it; we see Christ's blood in it; we see the creative ener-

¹The author is corresponding secretary of "The Brotherhood of the Kingdom," and this paper is written from the view point of that organization.—ED.

gies of the Spirit in it, bringing out of its chaos the beauties of a new world.

We have this two-sided faith. But our faith is not yet supported on all sides by knowledge. The two chemical elements have not yet completed their union in us. A long and earnest process of thought is necessary. We must overhaul all the departments of our thought and work out that social Christianity which will be immeasurably more powerful and more valuable to the world than either an unsocial Christianity or an unchristian socialism. After the process of union is in a measure completed in ourselves, we can become mediators for others, breaking down the middle wall of partition between Christianity and the social movement, bringing them into their just and natural relation to each other, infusing the exalted fervor and power of religion into the social movement, and helping religion to find its ethical outcome in the transformation of social conditions.

In examining the ideals of social reformers I shall try to take up the great ideals that are common to the whole social movement, rather than isolated schemes and measures. I shall first set forth the elements and tendencies in which we can heartily concur, and then the points where the dangers of the social movement seem to me to lie.

The starting point of the social movement is the conviction of the inherent worth of a human being. Its goal is to secure the recognition of that worth in all departments of life. The mention of a few facts will help us to realize that this feeling, that human life is a precious thing, is the hydraulic force in the social uplift.

We view with pity and indignation single concrete cases of suffering or wrong. Last summer the case of Maria Barberi agitated the people of New York. The pity may have been foolishly bestowed in this case; I pass no judgment on that; but the pity was there; thousands of people took thought for it that a single human life, one among two millions, was to be ended. Remember also the public resentment when wrongs done to a whole class are brought to light. Remember how the common

people of Brooklyn sympathized with the trolley strikers, in spite of the discomfort the strike inflicted on the city. Think how we are aroused by news of oppression even in foreign countries. The indignation aroused by the Bulgarian atrocities, by the Armenian outrages, by George Kennan's accounts of the Russian prisoners, are cases known to all. Of course, those who espouse a movement of that sort feel that the public conscience is very sluggish and easily goes to sleep again, and that is true, too. But, after all, is it not a remarkable thing that in this great crowded globe, where men are suffering and dying every second, and where most of us need all our strength to provide bread for our own stomachs and to fight off others who are trying to step on us, there should be any interest at all in a lot of foreigners whom none of us has ever seen? Remember, too, how we winced, when the heathen at the Parliament of Religions pointed out the poverty in our own cities. All this pity, indignation, and shame are based on the sense of humanity. They are human beings who suffer, and human beings are too good to suffer thus. The argument of the political economist who says that this is the struggle for existence, and that this suffering works out the greatest good in the end; the pious sigh of the Christian Pharisee who assures us that we shall have the poor with us always and that things can't be changed till Christ comes; and the shrug of selfish over-culture which assures us that these people are very low and sordid and desire nothing better; they are all swept away like chaff before the feeling that a man's a man for all that, and the knowledge that human tears are scalding hot and hurt when they fall on our hearts.

Another evidence of the power which this sense of humanity has already acquired over us may be found in the attitude taken by the artistic interpreters of our thoughts. Consider the change which has come over literature since Horace wrote his

"Odi profanum vulgus et arceo."

What modern poet would care to write like that? Compare with that the lesson of Sir Launfal's search for the Holy Grail, or these lines of Lowell:

" In a hovel rude,
 With naught to fence the weather from his head,
 The King I sought for, meekly stood ;
 A naked, hungry child
 Clung round his gracious knee,
 And a poor hunted slave looked up and smiled
 To bless the smile that set him free ;
 New miracles I saw his presence do, . . .
 No more I knew the hovel bare and poor,
 The gathered chips into a wood-pile grew,
 The broken morsel swelled to goodly store ;
 I knelt and wept : my Christ no more I seek,
 His throne is with the outcast and the weak."

While not all of our modern poets are such prophets of Christian democracy as Lowell, yet with singular unanimity the greatest novelists of the Christian nations are full of reverence for plain suffering humanity, and full of scorn for the polished selfishness of the upper classes who used to absorb the attention of older novelists. In religious literature we look almost in vain for any honest dealing with the text about the camel and the needle's eye ; but one can find quite wonderful expositions of it in Tolstoi's *War and Peace*, Bourget's *Cosmopolis*, Charles Dudley Warner's *A Little Journey in the World*, Franzos' *Ein Kampf ums Recht*, and many others.

In pictorial art it is the same. Compare Watteau's well-finished pictures of well-clipped parks, full of well-dressed ladies exchanging compliments with well-behaved gentlemen, with Uhde's pictures of the Christ in the village school, or Christ at the peasant's table, and feel the difference of spirit, and the sense of the sacredness of life in its lowliest forms, which glorifies the latter. At the International Art Exhibition at Berlin I saw among the statuary the figure of an old man sitting on the ground, his clothes ragged, his shoulders bent, his face dull and weary, a broken potsherd of humanity. Underneath was the simple legend : "*Proximus tuus.*" Modern art is full of such prophetic sermons in oil and marble ; but where do we see anything like it in older periods of art? In one of the most popu-

lar paintings of our time, Millet's "Angelus," the artist has simply tried to show us the beauty and dignity of the humblest life and labor, by surrounding it with the halo of God's sunset and glory of piety.

I have tried with a few touches to bring before our recollection and imagination the strength of that humane sentiment which pervades Christian civilization in spite of its mammonism and greed of pleasure. That sentiment is the nerve of the social movement; the rest is muscle. If that nerve were dead or paralyzed there would be no social movement. There is, in fact, no social movement outside of the Christian nations.

Now that sentiment seeks embodiment. It seeks to stop that which offends it; it seeks to create conditions which it can accept. It has already sought to give even the children of the poor their share in our intellectual heritage by providing universal elementary education, guarding the intellectual rights of the child even against its parents by some measure of compulsion. It has provided night schools, free lectures, free libraries and museums, and many aids to secure even a higher education for those who desire it. In the political domain it has gone a long way toward endowing the lower classes with a voice, by the extension of the suffrage, and is constantly laboring to secure that right against bribery or intimidation by devising better methods of voting, and to make the will of the people act more surely on legislation by planning systems of minority representation and direct legislation. It has abolished many remnants of feudal privileges and made men more equal before the law. It has compelled the state in the face of traditional political economy, to assume a certain guardianship over women and children and to limit their exploitation in industry. It has granted woman very nearly all that she has really been serious in asking. In religious life there has been a decline of priestly prerogative, a growing recognition of the universal priesthood of believers, an increase of lay activity fostered especially in the young people's movement, and a reaching forward to save the lost classes. The Salvation Army is penetrated with the social spirit

Here then we have a great movement actuated by the conviction that a human life is precious, and seeking to give every man an opportunity to live his life worthily. What attitude shall the Christian disciple take to this movement? Who ever felt the worth of a soul more deeply than Jesus? Who felt intenser pity for bodily disablement than he who touched the leper and quieted the demoniac's stormy soul? Who had more of the spirit of real democracy than he who shared the fisherman's food, rebuked with dignity the haughty Pharisee who had failed in the common duties of hospitality, exalted the mite of the widow, and made his royal entry into the city of David on the back of a donkey, with boughs scattered by peasants as a carpet on the way? Whose eye was ever quicker to detect the divine glory of a human heart beneath the rust and foulness of sin and social ostracism, than his who made friends with the publicans, and championed the repentant harlot at a dinner table of gentlemen who were his social superiors? We cannot help feeling that the social movement was in Christ, and that Christ is now in the social movement. The disciple of Jesus must follow his master, and he cannot follow him unless he goes in the same direction. By their attitude to this movement, more than by assent to formulated truths, will the men of our generation be judged before God.

"Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
 In the strife 'twixt truth and falsehood, for the good or evil side;
 Some great cause, God's new Messiah, deals to each the bloom or blight,
 Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right,
 And the choice goes by forever 'twixt that darkness and that light."

I have spoken mainly of the effort to secure for the poor and oppressed of our own nation the chance to live a worthy life. But the sense of humanity works horizontally sideways, as well as perpendicularly downwards. It quickens the feeling of interest and kinship between nations and races. The student of history knows what barriers the difference of nationality and religion has drawn between man and man in the past. In Latin the word for stranger and the word for enemy were the same.

The barrier is still broad. Of course the increase of commerce and travel has worn away many prejudices, but it has not produced much love as yet. Commerce with uncivilized nations is ruthless and often almost devilish in selfishness and cruelty. I know of only two forces that are really making for international fellowship with fairly unselfish motives. The one is the social movement. It is international in its tendencies. Karl Marx taught European workingmen the cry: "Proletarians of all nations, unite." The tendency to international solidarity is as yet but rudimentary, but it has been strong enough to send many thousands of dollars across the seas to aid in social struggles. It has been powerful enough to alarm thoroughly the governments whose interests lie in an exclusive patriotism. The other force making in the same direction is foreign missions. Foreign missions have come in for many hard blows from humanitarians, but after all has been said, they are the only case of anybody expending capital on uncivilized peoples without expecting to get anything back. No one has ever charged Christian missionary societies with trying to make more money out of the natives than they spend for them. Scientists go among savages to bring back knowledge; merchants to bring back wealth; explorers to bring back fame and trophies; but the missionary is the only one that makes even a pretense of going for the sake of the people.

Here again we see the confluence of the two streams. The social movement has developed international tendencies and promoted the fraternization of the nations engaged in it. Christianity from the very outset has been international in its character; it has been remiss in fulfilling its missionary obligations, but it has never repudiated its international character, and has always boasted of whatever broadness it could prove.

A second great ideal at work in the social movement lies in the principle of association. Suppose men are politically free and starting in life with equal opportunities; it still remains to be seen what they will do with their freedom and equality. Will they fight or unite? The development since the French Revo-

lution, or rather since the Protestant Reformation, has been toward the enfranchisement of the individual. The victory of personal liberty as a principle is complete in the leading nations; the practical application of the principle is also nearing its completion. The next great word, as Mazzini says, is *association*.

The process of enfranchisement has unfettered immense forces, but it has also resulted in disorganizing society. The old feudal bonds have been dissolved, but new bonds have not taken their place. The peasants of Europe are no longer bound to the soil or to its lord. They are free to go where they like. As a result many of them are torn loose from the sheltering and restraining ties of kinship and neighborhood and are swept like human flotsam and jetsam into the great cities where none knows them or cares for them. Is it a clear gain to them? The same process comes close home to us in the negro population of the South. They are free now, under nobody's ownership, but also under nobody's care. It is probably fair to say that the benefits resulting from their emancipation have not been as great as had been hoped. In Germany improved agriculture has shortened the harvest season; as a result large bodies of men and women migrate from place to place, hiring out as laborers; they move like the tide, and one section is swept bare of its youthful population, while other sections are inundated with a crowd of strangers. It is easy to imagine that this migratory life does not tend to stable habits, family affection, or clean morals.

With the city population things are similar. The guilds are gone. The relation of master, journeyman and apprentice has given place to that of employers and hands. The human interest and relation between them has dwindled away; the money relation is the sole bond. The old feudal relations were often unjust and dwarfing, but they gave a certain security and a definite place in which a man could live and move. Now men are free, but it is often the freedom of grains of sand that are whirled up in a cloud and then dropped in a heap, but neither cloud nor sand-heap have any coherence. This condition is not a final one. New forms of association must be created. Our dis-

organized competitive life must pass into an organic coöperative life. We all know that this is one of the great ideas of the social movement. The socializing tendency is the dominating tendency in sociological thought and is bound to become the dominating tendency in economic life too. Men may differ about the extent to which the socializing process ought to go, and about the chemical formula according to which the two ingredients of individualism and socialism are to be mixed, but the new ingredient will have to go in. It takes no prophet to foretell that.

What then shall the attitude of Christian disciples be to this great ideal of social reformers? I feel that it will have to be friendly. The law of *laissez faire*, if untempered by any force of loyalty and association, would have found little grace in the sight of Old Testament lawgivers and prophets, and still less in the sight of Jesus. One of the deepest principles of the New Testament is the principle of *κοινωνία*, of fellowship, of association. One of the two ordinances of the church is a meal of fellowship. The early church made a bold attempt to realize this principle of fellowship in regard to property also, and the attempt has been repeated again and again in the face of overwhelming obstacles, wherever a serious effort has been made to live according to Christ's law of life. The power of association and cohesion was implanted by the Spirit of God; its theory was formulated by Paul in his illustration of the body and its members, an illustration so true, that men like Schäffle and Dr. G. D. Boardman, in developing a theory of a true social life, could do no better than to unfold that illustration in detail. True Christianity emphasizes to the utmost the value of the individual and has been the real motive power back of the efforts to secure personal liberty. But it contains more than individualism; it also contains the principle of association, and implants the trustworthiness, love and unselfishness which cement men together and make association a workable idea. In so far, therefore, as socialism is the effort to translate into facts of political economy the Christian tendency to association, in so far it has a right to claim our approval.

It will be my task now to criticise the ideals of social reformers by mentioning the dangers to which they seem to me liable. Of course not all are liable to the same mistakes. Considering the space at my disposal I can only sketch in a broad way the dangers to which large sections of men devoted to social progress seem to tend.

First, there is a real menace to individual liberty in the schemes of socialism. For working purposes I am myself a socialist. We want more socialism than we have at present, anyway. Our present individualism is no real individualism. It is a race between men on horseback and men on foot. As long as public functions are in the hands of private corporations and they can tax the public, individualism means tyranny. So I am in favor of at least enough socialism to take natural monopolies out of private management. But when we consider the socialistic programme that lies beyond that practical necessity, we cannot escape the impression that it is full of danger to personal liberty. When the entire nation is organized as a colossal machine, and every cog is dependent on its connection with the machine for its chance to work, will there be freedom enough to make life tolerable? If a man is harried by a tyrannous foreman or a spiteful fellow-workman now, he can quit his job and try elsewhere. He may be out of a job for a while, but there are at least other employers to try. In the socialistic state there is to be only one employer, the state. If a man there quits his job, he cannot even employ himself. All the instruments of production are to be owned by the state. He cannot escape the bullying foreman or spiteful mate, except by setting the official machine in motion and securing a transfer.

Only those who have lived where liberty is scarce know its sweetness. As a young man I spent four years in Germany. On my return to my native country, I was conscious, not only of the thrill of a young patriot, but also of an invigorating ease and freedom in dealing with men. I studied the cause of the sensation and concluded that it was due to the larger freedom accorded here by everybody to everybody. Later I crossed the sea again

with a number of Germans of the middle classes and heard with astonishment how little love they had for their fatherland and how ready they were to transfer their allegiance to their new home. Outwardly New York cannot compare with Berlin. Our streets are dirty and ill-paved, our tenements squalid, and the opportunities for easy and pleasant recreation and for the enjoyment of music and art are much fewer. Yet it seems that there is something in New York life that makes it more attractive than Berlin. I know no other cause than the greater freedom.

Freedom gives the real zest to life. Freedom is also necessary to develop a nation of vigorous characters. A high level of culture and ability can be produced without freedom, as we can see from the educational work of the Jesuits. But it will be the commonplace usefulness of barnyard fowl, assiduously laying eggs, but without wing enough to fly over the fence. The Jesuits have developed no new thoughts; no Jesuit has ever led humanity onward into the unexplored country of the future. If socialism takes away our freedom, it stifles the future leaders of humanity before their birth.

On the other hand it is well for the advocates of personal liberty who urge this objection against socialism, to remember that liberty is today the possession of a favored few. Few boys in New York really choose their profession. A job is the great arbiter of their destinies. Would a boy like to become an engineer? But his father gets a job for him in a butcher-shop, and a butcher he becomes. Can the tyranny of socialism be much worse than that which locks the door on factory operatives now at the stroke of a bell, as if they were convicts, and docks them an hour's wages if a passing train makes them five minutes late in the morning?

A second danger in social-reform tendencies threatens the stability and importance of family life. This danger is often exaggerated by conservatives who are in need of a bugaboo. An aged brother once assured me that the application of the Single Tax would inevitably lead to a communism of wives. Communism of nonsense! Yet I think there is a considerable inclina-

tion among social reformers to loosen the rigor of the family bond. The wrongs of women are preached to us by determined voices, voices that are often painfully vibrant with the memory of personal wrongs. And because to such the walls of the house were a fiery square of torture, they ask to see the walls torn down, forgetting that these same walls to innumerable others are the breakwaters of God's most blessed haven.

Socialists also frequently aim at an easing of the marriage bond, because they recognize in the family the great bulwark of individualism. They see men absorbed in securing a competence for their families, and in pushing their children one degree higher up in the social scale, and there is no interest left for the elevation of their city. Most men would sell out their interest in social questions to secure \$5000 a year for their families. But how is the interest in the general welfare, which the socialist state will demand, ever to be secured if it has to work against this family selfishness? So it is that in the socialist pictures of the future, the state is more and the family less; the public buildings are opulent, but the family lives in narrow quarters; the children are less the property of the parents and more the property of the state. I recently read a book by Solomon Shindler giving the autobiography of Young West, the son of Mr. Julian West and Edith Leete, of *Looking Backward* fame. Young West's earliest recollections are of the public kindergarten in which he, like all other children, was brought up. He was very fond of one of his teachers. A lady came to see him once a week, and he was told that this was his mother, but he didn't know what that might mean. As he grows older he occasionally goes to see Dr. Leete and his mother and her second or third husband, but these visits are about as warm as if a boy of our times paid a visit of respect to his second cousin's uncle. Generally the boy and his companions act like young prigs and Philistines, which is no wonder, seeing they were brought up in a succession of model orphan asylums. Later, when Young West marries, he has a child and is very fond of it, but he and his wife love it too well to keep it long under their own ignorant

care, so they pass it on to a public institution where trained professionals are sure to do much better by it.

Is it not a curious and solemn Nemesis that has come upon us? We have housed the working people in tenements, worked them in factories, raised their children in institutions, and sent them to homes and almshouses to die. And of these ingredients glorified the working classes have built their ideal of the New Jerusalem: a vast industrial army in ideal factories with plenty of wages promptly paid; great asylums as educational institutions, splendid public pleasure resorts, and little dwarfed homes.

It is true that marriage is often an instrument of torture today. But the remedy does not lie in making marriage a pleasurable friendship to be dissolved at will, or a pædotrophic partnership; that would twist the sexual relation into a scourge to lash us all. It lies rather in securing such a diffusion of fair prosperity and such a stability of economic conditions that the money motive will be practically eliminated from marriage, and that the worry and stress will be eased which now create nervous exhaustion, irritability, and discord. It is true, also, that the exclusive love of family is a real hindrance to social progress. But here too the remedy does not lie in paring down the family, but in preaching the civic as well as the domestic virtues, the Kingdom of God as well as individual religion, and in getting women interested in something outside their own families and churches.

Let us ward off any social ideals that impair the stability and scope of the family and home. There is no need of impairing them. Even with a socialist system of industry there is ample room for a private home. If it were not so, if there were no place there whither a man could withdraw from the press of the world to the restful society of a beloved woman and his own children, it is a question if any gain in external comforts purchased by the change would be worth so great a price.

In the third place certain tendencies of social reformers contain a danger to national life. We have spoken of the inclina-

tion to international union among workingmen. This inclination has been planted and watered by the jingoism and commercialism of bourgeois politics. The national flags have so often had to serve as a cover for lust of conquest, in which the people furnished food for the cannon, that a hatred has grown up against nationality and its symbol, and the red flag of socialism has been substituted, not to denote bloodshed, as some think, but the common blood of humanity. In Germany national history and pride have been so much used to prop the monarchy and existing institutions that socialists are now creating a new historical literature which reverses the old verdicts, calls the national heroes intriguers and butchers, and pours contempt on the great events of the nation's past. This is deplorable. Nationality is a good and holy fact. As the individual has a right to his individuality, so the nation has a right to its nationality. And as human life is infinitely enriched by the differences in individuality, so the life of the race has been enriched by the differences of nationality, and this is destined to be far more the case as increasing inter-communication brings the nations face to face and introduces them.

The internationalism of the working classes is nobly right in protesting against a narrow and warlike patriotism, but we must never lose our loyalty to our own country, nor our reverence for her past, her heroes, and her flag. As the new social enthusiasm must contain in itself the old love of family, so the new love of humanity must contain the old love of the fatherland.

In the fourth place many social reformers more or less openly look forward to a revolutionary break of development by force. It is not unnatural that they do. Progress is so slow and resistance so stubborn and subtle; it is so hard to get remedial legislation enacted and so much harder yet to get it enforced, that men naturally get impatient, especially if they are themselves the grist that is being ground. Especially men whose only strength lies in their brawn are bewildered and enraged to find a just cause bound hand and foot by a smiling lawyer with a bit of red tape, and they feel that if they could only close in a death-

grapple for once, there might be some chance for them. The wonder is that force is so seldom used.

Yet those who are dissuading workingmen from efforts for a gradual change, and urging them to try the way of force, are playing fast and loose with the future, and will, in the long run, probably retard social progress. There is a recoil after the use of violence which carries a cause almost back to the line from which it was shot by the explosion. Remember the almost universal jubilation of Europe when the French Revolution began; but remember also how the smoke of blood rose from the guillotine and obscured the judgment of men, so that it took two generations or more for the great ideals of that tremendous uprising to shine out in their first brightness again. If ever there was a grand and holy revolution it was the Puritan revolution under Cromwell. But a certain Charles Stuart, a perfidious traitor, was beheaded; a reaction followed; and today the English Prayer Book still contains prayers for a day of humiliation and fasting for the martyrdom of his blessed majesty, beseeching God not to punish England for his death. Remember the confusion engendered by our Civil War and the bitter hatred left for these thirty years to poison the springs of our national life.

I do not say that force is never to be used. It is certainly useful as a rod to hang on the wall, and there are bad boys in these United States more alive to the swish of that rod than to all moral suasion. I am only contending that force is not as effective as it looks. The period of agitation and development which has been cut short by it simply comes in afterwards in another form. Not only the violence, but also the suddenness is dangerous. The slow conflict of opposing forces is God's method of educating a nation. He maketh even the stubbornness of conservatives to praise him, though he sometimes does not appear to turn the remainder of it aside. In the peaceful conflict crude schemes are melted down and refined; ideas are elaborated; the public mind is permeated; old fogies die; a young generation grows up with the new ideals bred in their bones; and when the change comes, it has a backing in the people. While if it were

forced on an indifferent or hostile majority by a determined minority, there would be a reaction, a repeal, and a great and wise measure would go down to the record of posterity discredited and abolished after trial. Therefore let us counsel patience, not for the sake of the people who might get hurt in a scrimmage, but for the sake of the cause and its ultimate success. Steady progress, measure by measure, is best, feeling our way from step to step with sure-footed Anglo-Saxon caution, keeping our feet on the ground, and not going off in a French balloon of abstract principles and logical schemes.

Right here is a sphere of influence for members of the Brotherhood and others of their kind. We are mostly members of the classes that have money, culture, and power, and have inside influence with those classes. By our influence we can weaken their selfish resistance to the progress of justice, induce them to make piecemeal concessions, and so work off in steady progress the steam which, if accumulated, would burst the boiler.

Fifthly, lastly and chiefly, many social reformers are practical materialists. In Germany and other continental countries socialists are mostly avowedly materialists. Socialist political economy and materialistic philosophy are there like the two sides of the same cloth. Christian people in Germany seem to regard it as a demonstrated certainty that a Christian workman will shipwreck his faith if he becomes a socialist. Things are not so bad in this country, but of practical materialism we have enough. We see it in the disproportionate emphasis on the economic side of sociology. Many social reformers do not seem to be aware that there is anything in sociology except taxation, finance, and monopolies. They regard the social body as one of those humble creatures that have no organ except an alimentary canal. How to increase and regulate the production of material goods is the main question with them.

Now it is desirable that men acquire refined tastes and habits, and these presuppose an abundant production of economic goods. It is still more desirable that the goods produced be justly distributed. But the main thing is not more goods, but more

justice and equality; not a more luxurious life, but a saner, nobler life. A nation's wealth might grow from \$300 per capita to \$1000 and people might grow unhappier all the time. Scotland and Scandinavia have been poor in goods, but rich in noble hearts and vigorous minds. Greater average luxury may only lead to greater average lasciviousness. "Jerusalem waxed fat and kicked." Jesus parted company with the social reformers of his day on this very point. They wanted material prosperity. He did too, but he wanted first the kingdom of God and God's justice, and prosperity as the natural outcome of that; without that basis prosperity may be a curse. It is true for nations as well as individuals, that the great thing is not the quantity or quality of meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; that is, a just, peaceable, and glad life in the Holy Spirit.

This practical materialism is shown not only in picturing the aim of social improvement, but also in planning the means. They put their trust in improved arrangements, voting machines, asphalt pavements, patent street-sweepers, cheaper car-fares and telephone rates, etc. Now these things are highly desirable, and I would gladly put in a good shift of work to secure any of them, but any or all of these things will not save a nation. We might have streets as smooth and clean as a Paris boulevard, and the people on it might yet be a libidinous lot, working out their own destruction. If any man says: "Get men converted and never mind how the streets look;" I say, "Not a bit of it; as long as children play on them, it matters a lot to me how they look." If another man says: "Let us have ideal streets, and we shall have ideal men," I say, "That is falser yet. You cannot load human cussedness into Col. Waring's ash-carts and dump it into New York Bay, nor smother the devil under a patent pavement." Material improvements are important, but social reformers must not forget to look deeper than that.

I have tried to sketch the noble desires for personal liberty, equal opportunity, and fraternal association, which furnish the material for the ideals of social reformers.

I have also tried to point out the dangers to the liberty of the individual, the integrity of the home, and the just pride of nationality to which some of them are prone; also how they may frustrate the realization of their own hopes by revolutionary methods and the fostering of a materialistic covetousness and trust in material improvements.

I have made similar criticisms before to audiences of socialists, but never to a religious audience, because religious people are inclined to accept such criticisms as ground to excuse themselves from participation in the movement. I hope that will not be the effect of this paper upon Christian readers. We ought to join in it exactly to avert these dangers. For my part, at least, I am a social reformer, though with feeble strength and sad cowardice. I am also a Christian disciple, and in this double quality I have tried to hold the balance even.

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