

# PRESENT-DAY PAPERS.

CONTRIBUTED BY THE SOCIOLOGICAL GROUP.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

THE paper now published will be followed by two others to complete the first series as projected by the original members of the Group, whose names have appeared at the head of the papers which have already been published.

The Group has, however, lately invited the coöperation of others in the further prosecution of their inquiries; and, as now enlarged, it will consist of these names:

CHARLES W. SHIELDS.  
HENRY C. POTTER.  
THEODORE T. MUNGER.  
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It is understood that each writer has had the benefit of suggestions from the Group, but is himself alone responsible for opinions expressed in a paper to which his name is subscribed.

## THE SOCIAL PROBLEM OF CHURCH UNITY.

REPORT OF BISHOP POTTER AND PROFESSOR SHIELDS.



“HOW were Christians employed,” said Voltaire, “whilst the Saracens were ravaging the fairest portion of Christendom? Disputing whether Christ had one will or two!” The sneer was shallow enough; but it seems almost deserved when we weigh the forgotten Monothelite controversy against that Christian civilization which was in peril until after the Crusades. Perhaps, too, we may find history repeating itself in our own time.

The situation of the Christian denominations in modern society is not unlike that of a wrangling army among invading foes. It is no petty quarrel before the onset, but a bitter feud in mid-battle. The contending factions have become so absorbed that they do not even see the hosts mustering around them and the ranks closing in upon them. Worst of all, they have neither organization nor leadership in their hour of peril.

Meanwhile, too, may still be heard the old Voltairian sneer with modern variations: “You Christians are disputing whether the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father as well as the Son, whilst multitudes have not even heard if there be a Holy Ghost; whether any infants have been elected from eternity, whilst myriads of infants are growing up in vice and sin; whether the heathen on the other side of the globe will hereafter be saved, whilst the heathen at your own doors are already lost.

You are splitting hairs of theology, with society falling to pieces around you. If this be Christianity, we want none of it. Settle your useless disputes and unite vigorously in improving the world that now is, and then we will listen to your promises of a better world to come.”

The writer would be no alarmist in his view of the social necessities for church unity. But surely, if social ills are fast coming to a crisis, it is folly to ignore them; and if organized Christianity is their only perfect remedy, it is madness to withhold that remedy. The Church would simply be a conspicuous failure did it not thus become the light of the world and the salt of the earth. To instruct and preserve society is at least one design, if not the chief design, of the Christian religion as organized in the Church. Whatever other great purposes it may serve as a training-school of individuals for heaven, it has also this high social mission here upon earth. And with this social mission of Christianity we, in our collective capacity, have mainly to do.

It should be remembered that our social troubles are not wholly economic or political in their nature. The problems of marriage, temperance, education, property involve moral elements. Even the so-called conflict between labor and capital is no mere play of impersonal forces, but also a fierce struggle of human passions and prejudices, and the actors in it cannot be manipulated like so many chessmen in the game of politics. In fact, our wisest statesmanship already stands baffled before these problems. They have passed beyond

the control of parties, the machinery of legislation, and the devices of political economy. It is becoming plain that they are not to be solved by divorce statutes, prohibitory amendments, conspiracy laws against strikes and boycotts; much less by improved police systems and new barricade tactics. If solved at all, the solution must be largely moral and even religious, striking at the roots of social corruption in ignorance and vice; imparting integrity to all classes; binding together laborer and capitalist in bonds of charity as well as interest; and ever nobly diffusing culture with wealth, virtue with intelligence, religion with knowledge, Christianity with civilization.

From this high point of view the Christian religion has an imperious claim upon the patriot and the statesman. Even that citizen who does not accept it must recognize it as at least part of our national life and a potent force in public affairs. If he should choose to view it simply as a moralizing agent, aside from all religious doctrines, it would still have an immense political value. Compared with other religions, it would afford the best political morality that the world has ever known. As a matter of fact, however, we are neither an infidel nor a heathen people. Our whole civilization is essentially Christian. Our institutions and laws have their roots in Christian ethics. The very seat of our sovereignty is in a Christian citizenship. The most unscrupulous politician dare not defy the Christian sentiment of the nation. The most philosophic statesman cannot afford to ignore it. And the time may not be far off when the organization of the Christian denominations against menacing social evils—in other words, church unity—shall have become a social as well as an ecclesiastical question, and a question belonging to the domain of practical rather than mere sentimental politics. This will be seen more clearly as we proceed to trace the relations of socialism with Christianity to their present critical stage in this country.

#### EARLY CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.

SOCIALISM originated in Christianity. It was born in the golden age of the Church on the day of Pentecost, when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. . . . Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." That

brief, brilliant dream of social perfection has lingered ever since in the Christian consciousness as an ideal of prayer and effort. Countless attempts have been made to realize it, many of them crude and grotesque, but some of them noble and hopeful. The monastic communities of the early Church, both Greek and Roman, the great religious orders of the Middle Ages, the Benedictines, the Dominicans, the Franciscans, with their various branches, were only so many socialistic organizations based upon the renunciation of property, marriage, and citizenship. Communistic sects were born of the pentecostal zeal of the Reformation; some of them, like the German Anabaptists, and English Fifth Monarchists, assailing both church and state with revolutionary violence, whilst others, like the Shakers and Harmonists, sought an asylum in the New World and founded peaceful retreats of piety and virtue. Besides these imported forms of Christian socialism we have had our own indigenous growths, such as the Unitarian association of Transcendentalists at Brook Farm and the Orthodox community of Perfectionists at Oneida. And now, as mild types of the same spirit, we have in some of our churches revived brotherhoods and sisterhoods with voluntary vows of poverty, celibacy, and chastity.

Not only has socialism prevailed within the Church, but its offshoots have flourished like the wild olive beyond the pale, if not as direct fruits of Christianity, yet as products of a Christian civilization. The various eleemosynary institutions for the relief of social ills—hospitals, asylums, reformatories, penitentiaries—were once managed by the clergy alone, and may all be traced back to the example and doctrine of that divine Philanthropist who taught the parable of the Good Samaritan and wrought miracles of healing upon the bodies as well as souls of men. The numerous friendly and beneficiary societies for mutual help in sickness and misfortune, such as the Free Masons, the Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias, etc., are only remote descendants of the Christian guild and often born of the Christian spirit, even when not baptized with a Christian name. Propagandist orders, like the Sons of Temperance and the Brethren of the White Cross, aim directly at Christian virtues. Many of the modern schemes of social regeneration have simply borrowed the Christian ideas of liberty, equality, fraternity, charity. Saint-Simon styled his socialistic treatise "New Christianity." It is often claimed that industrial fraternities are doing the work of a practical Christianity. To Christianity indeed the working classes owe their enfranchisement and their organization. The pagan world knew nothing of the dignity of free labor. In no heathen

land has the toiler ceased to be a slave, or a serf, or a mere drudge and outcast. In Christian nations alone have associations of workmen for their own improvement and elevation, such as trades unions and Knights of Labor, become possible. Even the anarchist owes to a Christian state the free arm with which he is now blindly striking back at the mother which nourished him.

It would be interesting to trace historically the process by which such socialism has become alienated from the Church and even from Christianity itself, and to survey its existing forms in different European countries, such as French communism, German social democracy, Russian nihilism, and international anarchism.<sup>1</sup> At present, however, we need only take into view the amalgamated product as we find it in our own country. No easy task will it be to sift the confused materials of American socialism and trace their proper relations to the Christianity coexisting with them. They involve such a mixture of truth and error, right and wrong, good and evil, that it is difficult even to state fairly both sides of the question. At the same time, any overstatement or understatement alike might prove misleading and hurtful. Trusting that the reader will judge the argument as a whole rather than in detached parts, I venture now to speak of the several kinds and grades of socialism which confront the American churches and with which they must soon come to an understanding.

#### ANTICHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.

THE first is a thoroughly antichristian socialism, which is loud and forward, but not formidable in numbers or influence. It is found chiefly among the French, German, Russian, Polish, and Hebrew refugees known as "Internationalists," though it gains some strange recruits on our own soil. It means revolution as it waves the black and red flags, which have become so portentous emblems of violence and bloodshed. Avowedly, through all its organs, it aims to annihilate the Christian institutions of the church, the state, and the family, and to bring in pure anarchy, either as essential to the freedom of the individual or as a condition precedent to some reconstruction of society on industrial principles for the good of the workingman. By whatever subtle reasonings it vindicates to itself such ends, there can be no mistaking its means and methods. These are not arguments nor even ballots, but the torch

<sup>1</sup> The reader is referred to the two valuable treatises by Professor Richard T. Ely, Ph. D., "French and German Socialism in Modern Times," and "The Labor Movement in America."

and the bomb as soon as they shall become practicable. Its incendiary journals plainly advocate arson, pillage, assassination, and hail the discovery of dynamite as a timely boon to the anarchist. Through its chief manifesto at Pittsburg it has declared that "the Church seeks to make complete idiots out of the mass by leading them to forego the paradise on earth for a fictitious heaven"; has advised workmen to the policy of "revolutionary conspiracy"; and has warned their oppressors that just before them are dawning "the scarlet and sable colors of the Judgment Day."

At first sight it would seem that Christianity could make no terms with such socialism, but must simply leave it in the grasp of the outraged law as an enemy of civilization no less than religion. Certainly men with arms in their hands are not open to reason, and dynamite cannot be met with argument. Nor will the issue be doubtful should anarchism ever rouse the great law-abiding mass of the people. But this is not precisely the most Christian mood in which to watch the struggle. Rather may such fanatics become the objects of pity and sorrow than of hatred. It should not be forgotten that the French anarchist and the Russian nihilist are the offspring of corrupt hierarchies and despotic governments; that generations of wrong and outrage are rankling in their blood; and that these hereditary strains are not to be checked at once even by an environment of free institutions. In their view the policeman, the capitalist, the clergyman, are only old oppressors in new guises. It is not necessary to persecute them, but only to make their existence unreasonable. If the churches cannot reach them with religious teaching and consolation, they may hope at least to arrest the growth of such madness in a free Christian land.

#### SPURIOUS CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.

THERE is, secondly, a spurious Christian socialism, which falsely claims for itself religious doctrines and motives. It is a more American product than anarchism, though a remarkable form of it has been imported among us in the writings of the Russian Count Tolstoi. It expresses itself variously, not only in communistic associations which plead a scriptural warrant, but in labor fraternities which seek to indoctrinate as well as to organize the working masses. Its assumption is that Christ, as a workingman himself, founded industrial socialism; that he came to abolish poverty and other class distinctions; and that he now sides with the great labor movement in all its aims and effort. Consistently it speaks of "Jesus the communistic Anarchist," sings hymns to "the carpenter Christ," and applies the para-

able of Lazarus and Dives to the impoverished laborer and pampered capitalist.

The charge is sometimes made that this bastard form of Christian socialism has been misbegotten of the Church itself through its own neglect and sin. Workingmen, it is said, having been long treated as social outcasts by the respectable denominations, have learned to discriminate between the Church as corrupted with wealth and worldliness and a plain Christianity retained by them as it came from the hands of its Author. Rashly seconding such views, the priest has left the altar and the minister his pulpit to lead a new crusade against the rich and preach another gospel to the poor. Some self-sacrificing clergymen, under vows of poverty, have openly joined the ranks of the poor as a class to share their hardships and espouse their cause; whilst others from the pulpit and the platform are eloquently denouncing our luxurious, pewed churches as mere religious club-houses, and laying at their doors all the want, crime, and wretchedness which disgrace our civilization.

Such charges ought not to be lightly brought nor lightly tossed aside. If they seem to have little applicability to the rural districts, they can find only too much justification in our large cities, where vast accumulations of wealth, through the fashion and culture which wealth brings, tend to widen the breach between the social extremes and render even their religious intercourse uncongenial, if not impracticable. There is danger of exaggeration on both sides. Without extenuating the faults of wealthy congregations we should not forget their costly missions and personal efforts in the slums and at the frontiers. Without belittling the grievances of laboring men we must remember that they are not the only class alienated from Christianity, but may be merely sharing in a general worldliness which rages outside of the churches far more fiercely than within them. After all that may be said there will remain the plain duty of distinguishing the true from a false Christian socialism. No one, high or low, rich or poor, can be interested in having evangelical truths caricatured and perverted.

#### CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF SOCIAL DISTINCTIONS.

As to the right Christian estimate of social distinctions, for example nothing will ever be gained by telling only half the truth because the other half may be unpopular. It is simply a degradation of Holy Scripture, well meant, but thoughtless and mischievous, to dwell upon the incidents that our Saviour was the son of a carpenter, that some of his apostles were fishermen and his disciples taken largely

from the common people, and then throw his glorious doctrine into the opposite scale as a mere makeweight for the want of social culture. It is bartering with the world upon its own terms, and no marvel if it be accepted as but the homage of envy. Besides, it is not founded on facts. The authors of such writings as the Gospels and Epistles could not have been wholly illiterate and rude. The truth is, that many of the distinctions of modern society did not exist among the ancient Hebrews. The prejudice against manual labor was little known, and avocations which are now simply respectable were then even honorable, associated with rank and learning. Every well-educated Jewish youth was taught some handicraft, and would have been disgraced without it. If St. Paul plied his trade of tent-making at Corinth, did he not show the culture of a scholar among the philosophers of Athens, the breeding of a gentleman at the court of Festus, and the patrician spirit of a Roman citizen before the magistrates of Philippi? Even that divine Son of a carpenter himself, as his human genealogy shows, came of a lineage older than the Pharaohs or the Cæsars and purer than Castilian or Norman blood. At least a few high-born women and honorable personages were among his followers and stood by him when the crowd deserted him. Though he was meek and lowly in heart, his life was ever gentle and noble. A man of sorrows, yet at a wedding-feast he converted water into another beverage with exhilarating properties. A Saviour of harlots and lepers, yet in his perfect wisdom he became an honored guest at the banquets of the rich and worldly, while the Pharisees sneered at him as a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber. In the sorrowful moment of parting from his disciples, with infinite graciousness he took that cup which is the pledge of friendship the world over and taught them how to drink it to his memory. All through his insulted anguish, from the garden to the cross, he bore himself with unspeakable dignity, forbearance, and gentleness. At length Jewish austerity, Grecian culture, and Roman valor alike did him homage. And ever since among his followers the highest as well as the lowest ranks have been represented—kings and queens, scholars and soldiers, artists, poets, philosophers; not many wise, not many noble, but at least enough to show that Christianity is of no class or condition, and may as little become a boast of ignorance and vulgarity as a haughty claim of rank and culture.

#### CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF POVERTY.

It is important also to discriminate sound Christian teaching as to the respective con-

ditions of poverty and wealth. On this point scarcely can the merest truisms be uttered without danger of misapprehension. If there be sometimes a clerical sycophancy which pays court to the rich as patrons of religion, yet there is also a pulpit demagogism which flatters the poor as favorites of Heaven. To neither abuse do the Scriptures give the least countenance. The man with a gold ring and goodly apparel is not to have the highest place in the synagogue, nor yet are the needy masses to follow Christ merely for the loaves and fishes. On the one hand, no virtue or grace is ever attributed to simple poverty itself. Not the poor in this world, but the poor in spirit, the souls consciously needing truth and goodness, shall inherit the kingdom of heaven. Not mere physical penury, the being cold and hungry and naked, is most to be pitied, but that dire moral destitution which thinks itself rich when it is in need of all spiritual knowledge and grace and virtue. On the other hand, mere wealth is never stigmatized as a sin or a crime. Not money itself, but the love of money, is the root of all evil. Not riches in themselves, but the making haste to get them and the setting the heart upon them, are to be deprecated. Moreover, neither extreme poverty nor extreme wealth is accounted favorable to piety and virtue. The poor amid their cares and sorrows are tenderly entreated to take no thought for food or raiment, but to trust in a heavenly Father who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field. The rich amid their luxuries and pleasures are solemnly admonished that they may fall into temptation and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. If the poor man in his wretchedness and despair is sometimes tempted to curse God and die, yet the rich man in his glory and pride finds it proverbially hard to enter into the kingdom of God.

#### CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PROPERTY.

MOST of all has it become needful at this time to distinguish and re-assert the true Christian doctrine of property. We seem fast nearing a crisis in the strife between labor and capital. On the one side are the great national leagues of tradesmen and workmen organizing universal strikes and boycotts and broaching the most revolutionary theories as to the origin and distribution of wealth; while on the other side are the vast, overgrown fortunes which represent no just earnings of their owners, the oppressive corporations which are pressing wages down to the point of starvation, and the imperial monopolies which are controlling our elections and legislatures. Between these

two mustered forces the voice of Divine wisdom speaks with no uncertain sound. For the capitalist it has some timely lessons. It charges them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, and warns them that by the passion for money-getting some have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. It teaches the millionaire that his wealth is not absolute property, but a sacred trust from the sovereign Creator for the good of his fellow-creatures, and if that trust be neglected or perverted the unfaithful steward shall lose even that which he seemeth to have. It requires of masters or employers that they use not their neighbor's service without just wages, nor let the sun go down upon his hire unpaid, nor cause him to do any work on the seventh day of rest. It denounces the usurer who has increased his substance by unjust gain, built his house with unrighteousness, and filled his chambers with the spoil of the poor. By prophet and evangelist it foretells that Jehovah will be a swift witness against all that oppress the hiring in his wages, and calls upon rich men to weep and howl for the miseries that are to come upon them in the day when the cries of laborers whose hire is kept back by fraud have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. For the laborer also it has some needed counsels. It tells the working masses what Christ himself told them, that he came to preach the gospel to the poor, not that he came to abolish poverty, and urges them to seek first the kingdom of God, and food and raiment and all good things shall be added to them. It exhorts all that are in service or at labor that they be faithful and diligent, treating their masters or employers as brethren, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing God, and having his blessing when they suffer wrongfully. The vagabond and the idler are warned that if any man will not work neither shall he eat, and that he that neglects to provide for his own household is worse than an infidel. The socialist agitator may learn that although Jesus told the rich young ruler to sell all he had and give to the poor, yet he did not tell either him or them that he was depriving the poor of their rights. The communist will find that the disciples at Pentecost did not deny the right of property in land or goods, but merely offered in charity that which was their own freely to give or to withhold, and afterwards themselves became objects of the same charity in the churches. To the anarchist in his blind mood of vengeance the learned pulpit, the artistic ritual, the cathedral spire, may seem wasteful as the alabaster box with which Mary worshiped her Lord, but only another Judas could mur-

mur that all this might be sold for much and given to the poor. Finally, for both laborer and capitalist there are those great perennial lessons of Christian brotherhood, sympathy, forbearance, charity which alone can insure the moral concord of capital and labor, and at length reconcile and unite the poor and the rich as members of the one body of Christ and inmates of the temple whose maker is God.

Without adding more instances of such Christian teaching, we now have enough before us to show that the pseudo-Christian socialism consists not so much of positive errors as of partial truths, or truths forced out of their due proportions and relations in the general system of social doctrine. As the churches come in contact with such socialism—and some contact if not conflict is inevitable—they will have the important task of sifting truth from error, in order to throw themselves heartily into sympathy with the toiling masses along the line of their just grievances and sufferings. Of this enlightened sympathy we have already had noble examples in philanthropists, like Howard, Wilberforce, Raikes, Shaftesbury, Peabody, who have cared for prisoners, slaves, outcast women, homeless children, and houseless laborers; in zealous evangelists, like Wesley and Whitefield, who have preached to the neglected poor outside of the established churches; as well as in earnest churchmen, like Chalmers, Maurice, Kingsley, Toynbee, who have conducted industrial reforms not inconsistent with their churchmanship. Of such sympathy, too, we now have cheering expressions in church dignitaries like Cardinal Gibbons, the House of Bishops and other clerical assemblies, who are issuing timely counsels on the mutual rights and duties of laborers and employers; in faithful pastors and devoted laymen, who are maintaining chapels, schools, reading-rooms for employees in their hours of rest and recreation; and, above all, in that intelligent body of Christian workingmen who have not thought it necessary to break away from their respective churches because they have joined labor organizations in efforts to relieve and elevate their fellow-laborers.

#### NON-CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.

WE come lastly to a non-Christian socialism, which is secular in its spirit and wholly economic in its aims. It is sometimes said that the mass of European socialists are secularists or atheists, whose religion consists in worshiping man as God and making our earth their only heaven. The leaders of the socialistic labor party are monists or materialists. Without bringing such charges against

our new nationalistic socialism, we may say that it has at least a lack of Christian elements, and consequently that such moral elements as it retains are somewhat perverted or defective. At the same time we shall find that it has no sympathy with anarchical or revolutionary socialism, since it expects to see society reformed and transformed peacefully and gradually by means of public opinion, and through existing modes of political action at the polls and in the legislature. Its spirit may best be shown by two popular treatises which are now selling by the hundred thousand copies.

The work of Mr. Henry George, entitled "Progress and Poverty," is written in so clear a style, depicts so boldly the wrongs and sufferings of laboring people, and is so full of humane sentiments and pathetic appeals in their behalf, that it would be much pleasanter to dwell upon its truths than upon its errors. It is to be hoped that the latter will not neutralize the former. As we have left far behind us the age when obnoxious books were ordered to be burned by the hangman, every fair-minded citizen must approve a recent judicial decision legalizing the circulation of this volume. But many will not adopt one of the opinions upon which that decision was based—that there can be no immoral tendency in a work which teaches that it would be morally right for the people to seize all landed estates without paying anything for them or for the cost of maintaining them. Had Mr. George presented his scheme of nationalizing land or confiscating rent simply as an economic measure, to be effected with due regard to acquired rights and existing interests, it would have been at least debatable, and perhaps something might have been said in favor of it. But, unhappily, he has mixed with it ethical teachings which the Christian conscience cannot accept, and suggested popular movements which might prove as revolutionary as the general land robbery of the dark ages.

In that pleasant social romance styled "Looking Backward" Mr. Edward Bellamy has brought Utopia as near to us as the next century, and thrown over it a color of probability by tracing its growth out of our own industrial system through the process of nationalizing railways, telegraphs, manufactures, all forms of business and modes of life. As we turn the fascinating pages there rises before us the image of our national government as a vast complex automaton, marshaling its millions of puppet-like citizens through their countless pursuits, under self-executing laws, with all the order and grace of the most faultless mechanism. But on looking a little more closely we are ready to smile as grimly as the genial Dr. Leete himself when we find that

somehow our old human depravity has disappeared in the process. Men have been made virtuous and happy by act of Congress; and the preacher of the twentieth century is informing his myriad hearers through the telephone that "the Ten Commandments have become well-nigh obsolete," and with them all the crimes and miseries of former ages.

Of the political socialism represented by both of these works it should be said gladly that its bearing towards Christianity is not unfriendly, though too silent and inappreciative. Mr. George, while he is wiser than some clerical recruits who are citing chapter and verse for his bad ethics, is always reverent in his few religious allusions. Mr. Bellamy even claims his perfect commonwealth to be a Christian ideal, but depicts it as having been achieved under the natural laws of social progress, through mere industrial and political expedients, not only without miraculous or providential agencies, but without the moral and religious means of social regeneration. These grave defects of nationalism are beginning to be felt in minds having no religious or sectarian bias. Mr. Frederic Harrison draws from the London strikes the lesson that "industry must be moralized by education, by morality, by religion—not recast by the state." Prince Bismarck, as the leader of political socialism in Germany, has been endeavoring to effect an alliance with Catholic socialism in favor of his scheme of national insurance for the laboring classes. As yet such measures have not become practical or practicable in our own politics. But it is safe to say that the genius of a Christian people will never allow its Christianity to be wholly divorced from its social reforms. And the emerging problem now is how to effect this coöperation consistently with our traditional theory of an absolute separation of church and state.

#### CHURCH AND STATE SOCIALISM.

ON the first view it would seem that our state-socialism and church-socialism, if such terms may be used, might come to a cordial understanding at least as to their common aims, and largely as to their methods of attaining them. Since the church includes while it transcends the state in its scope, their spheres become coincident in respect to the whole physical and moral improvement of society. Such improvement, from the most religious point of view, is good as far as it goes; comes first in the order of nature, of opportunity, and of urgency; and is only part of the Christian conception of a more general improvement, embracing the spiritual with the material interests of humanity. In this common sphere have

gradually arisen many practical questions in which all philanthropic citizens, both in and out of the churches, are interested, such as the relief of the poor and unemployed, the sanitary safety of their dwellings and workshops, the security of their Sundays, holidays, and daily hours of rest from labor; the rescue of young children from premature toil and vicious training, their education physical, intellectual, moral, and industrial; the repression of the social vices of licentiousness, intemperance, gambling, and vagrancy; reform of the primary meeting, the caucus, the ballot, and suppression of bribery in elections and legislatures; civil service reform; scientific legislation on social questions. As to all these and many other like objects the religious and the political socialist are already substantially agreed; but as to the best methods of reaching these objects they do not proceed far together before they begin to diverge along opposite lines of action. The Christian socialist of the old-fashioned school looks upon the state as a wholly worldly institution; limits its educational functions to such schools as may qualify the citizen for voting; cares little even for the Bible as obligatory in such schools; would not legislate beyond the public conscience on moral questions; and, in a word, would reserve for the churches all the higher education and humane effort, as likely to be spurious or injurious if not surcharged with evangelical doctrines and motives. On the other hand, the Christian socialist of the new nationalistic school looks upon the state as itself an educational and moral agency; claims for it the right to give the people the highest schools that they may desire for industrial and even professional training; advocates prohibitory laws against social vices; would nationalize all industries as fast as they become monopolistic; and in the end would render the government as humane and even Christian as the churches can make it. Fortunately, these differences as yet are more theoretical than practical, and the church-socialist and state-socialist may find large common ground where they can work together without collision or conflict.

It is important, however, to clear this common ground of some popular fallacies which are found in many forms of socialism of the non-Christian or secular type. Some of these fallacies have been inherited or imported from European states of society, but others are due to crude notions in economic science or to an abuse of our democratic institutions. They should be clearly and fearlessly exposed in order to distinguish social grievances which are slight and imaginary from those which are real and urgent and the only proper object of a true Christian philanthropy.

## THE MASSES AND THE CLASSES.

ONE very common fallacy is the false issue of the "masses against the classes." The phrase has more rhyme than reason. In one view the masses simply compose the classes. Even the so-called working masses have the class element in their trades unions, and express it in the very title of their "Noble Order of the Knights of Labor." Their most intelligent champions, such as Hendrik Ibsen and Powderly, have urged that they may oppose a genuine aristocracy of character and moral worth to the old aristocracies of birth, of wealth, and of learning. The more of such a class spirit we can get the better will it be for all classes. The fact would seem to be that our socialistic friends often use the word "class" when they mean "caste." In aristocratic countries, like England and Germany, where classes have long since hardened into castes with impassable barriers between them, the most radical socialism might have a plea and a mission; but not in a democratic country like ours, where the prizes of life are open to all classes, the lowest as well as the highest. With no law of primogeniture to keep wealth and power in the same families, every other generation is likely to be at the bottom of the wheel of fortune. Our millionaires, with few exceptions, were laboring men, who did not inherit but made their money; and their menacing accumulations will soon become divided and squandered among their descendants, or perpetuated only in great beneficiary bequests, the ambition to found a college or library having taken the place of the old ambition to found a family and gain a title. In our politics, too, laboring men become the idols and rulers of the people, whilst trained statesmen take second places in their cabinets. One of our presidents was a rail-splitter, another a tailor, another a boatman; and bootblacks, shoemakers, and blacksmiths have become potent in our highest legislatures. Our science and literature, also, are largely recruited from the ranks of toil, or pursued by men who can work with their brains only because their kindred before them have worked with their hands. Even in the most conspicuous circles of fashion the children or grandchildren of workingmen are seen gracefully entertaining aristocratic visitors from the Old World, whilst descendants of our colonial gentry may be found living in poverty and obscurity. Good breeding thus becomes diffused with the wealth which fostered it, and workmen and tradesmen inherit the instincts of gentlemen. How absurd to talk of class tyranny in such a state of society! How futile any war against such classes! And how dismal would life be without them! Let us not confound political equality with social

equality. We have abolished castes with all their hereditary powers and privileges, but we can never abolish those classes which are rooted in the original diversities of human nature. Nor would any of us be quite ready for a socialism that should march through society cutting off every man's head that is an inch higher than his neighbor's.

## CAPITALISTIC LABORING CLASSES.

ANOTHER fallacy is the false division of society into only the two classes, "the laborers and the capitalists." The classification, as often made, is crude, and easily becomes vague and misleading. There is no capitalistic class as opposed to a laboring class. Not only are the laborer and the capitalist always changing places through the vicissitudes of trade, but they are everywhere combined in the same persons and in the same classes. Many laborers are also capitalists. The workman who toils by the day saves out of his earnings enough capital to be invested in a homestead. The artisan, the engineer, the inventor, whose toil is even congenial, have a capital in their skill which may yield them larger returns than the salaries paid in the learned professions. The tradesman, the merchant, whose toil is almost luxurious, retire with the fortune of a millionaire. In like manner many capitalists are also laborers. The farmer, whose capital is in land and implements, works harder and longer than many a mechanic. The lawyer, the doctor, the clergyman, whose capital is in knowledge, often die of sheer exhaustion as brain-workers. The manufacturer or the railway king, whose capital is in machinery or bonds, is sometimes more overworked than any of his employees or dependents. In fact, with the exception of a few idlers at both extremes of the social scale, the great mass of the American people, whether as capitalists or as laborers, are, in one way or another, working for their living. It is, therefore, scarcely possible to take sides either with labor or with capital. Every citizen is interested in their just cohesion, and in any so-called conflict between them might be found fighting against himself as well as against his neighbor.

## DERANGEMENT OF SOCIAL CLASSES.

By far the most serious fallacy now current is a false predominance claimed for the laboring class over all other classes. It is a predominance not justified by the importance of any single class in the social system, and a predominance sometimes asserted against the peace and order of whole communities. We have seen the commerce of half a dozen



Western States deranged and the traffic of our largest city hindered for days whilst a few workmen, at the call of one master workman, were parleying with their employers for better terms of employment. Such indifference or obliviousness to all other social interests is intelligible and excusable enough in men who for the time are absorbed in their own sufferings and intent only on getting their rights. But it makes a different impression in the formal manifesto and calm treatise. According to its platform the Socialistic Labor party would exalt the manual laborer as the sole producer and owner of all existing wealth, and hope for some complete inversion or depression of the social classes in his behalf. Mr. Bellamy, in his ideal republic, would force all classes alike through long apprenticeships of manual toil before they can even be admitted to the higher forms of mental labor. This is trying to make the pyramid of society revolve from its apex to its base. Its material interests must ever remain subordinate to its moral and spiritual interests. A legislative rule of the laboring class, if established, could not be long maintained without Christian knowledge and virtue. Nor are we ready in this country to have any class dominant: not the wealthy class; not the learned class; not even the clerical class; still less that laboring class, least fitted for leadership in all the higher spheres of civilization, such as education, science, art, and religion.

Having thus touched upon some of the socialistic fallacies of the day, we can now make them throw into stronger relief the real wrongs and sufferings of our laboring people. These will still assert themselves after all the abatements that have been made. Whilst it may be true, as we have seen, that the avenues to wealth and power are open to the lowest ranks, yet it is also true that only one person in sixty millions can become president; very few will win any of the other prizes for which so many are contending; and the great mass must remain hewers of wood and drawers of water as effectually as if they were serfs and bondmen, and therefore as truly the objects of Christian kindness and care. Whilst it may be true that capital and labor are not antagonistic, yet labor is not now getting its full share of their joint product, owing to changed industrial conditions. Although spiritual interests are ever superior, yet material wants are still fundamental and first to be satisfied. American laborers, too, acquire more luxurious tastes than the European, and share more largely the average intelligence of the community. Becoming keensighted as to their interests, they are raising problems of which political economists had not dreamed, and forcing issues which our statecraft knows not how to meet. Let us remem-

ber that the brain-worker and the hand-worker are fellow-laborers and members of the same body politic. To make them also members of the same body of Christ has become the most difficult and momentous task ever laid upon the American churches.

#### SOCIAL NEED OF CHURCH UNITY.

If we now survey the social phenomena which the whole discussion has brought before us, we shall find our introductory statement more than justified. Within the limits of the same political system known as the United States we behold a confused mass of social organizations, detached from one another and from the government which overshadows and protects them. In the midst of them appears a great cluster of churches and denominations, differing endlessly in doctrine, polity, and worship, held apart by hereditary feuds, and inflamed with sectarian jealousy and pride. Around these Christian bodies, like a beleaguering army intrenched upon the very ground once belonging to them as their natural domain, are countless other social bodies without a Christian name or even a Christian spirit. To the right are the secularized charities for the poor, the blind, the deaf, the maimed, the fallen, and the outcast, on whom Christ lavished his miracles of love and power, and whom he bequeathed to the tender care of his followers through all time. To the left are the unchurched fraternities making a religion of masonry, fellowship, insurance, or practicing the Christian virtues of brotherhood, temperance, charity, under heathen names and with pagan rites. In front are the mustering hosts of insurgent labor, no longer asking Christian charity but demanding natural justice — gaining recruits from the Christian ministry itself, and already threatening revolution, violence, and anarchy. At the rear are the retreating bands of rationalism, materialism, agnosticism, infidelity, turning Christian liberty into license and recoiling with random fire upon the ranks which they have deserted. Meanwhile the churches themselves, although thus outflanked on each side, desperately assailed in front and treacherously weakened in the rear, still stand asunder, without union, without discipline, without enthusiasm, against their common foes. Add to all this that just now, at the very height of these encompassing perils, they are engaging in fresh disputes over their respective creeds and forms, and we have the actual situation of the Christian denominations in American society at the present time.

Upon this situation I remark in general that mere Christian unity, the so-called unity of the invisible church, does not meet the social

exigency of the churches. The simple fact that they are all Christian sects, composed largely of true Christians loyal to Christ, means no more to the point than that they are like so many wrangling masses of patriots before a disciplined army of invaders and traitors. The invisible unity of the denominations must become visible, potent, and aggressive. They can never rout their common foes by sallying among them single-handed or in scattered bands. They can never cope with the social perils around them until they have some outward agreement, some concentrated leadership, some concerted action; in a word, some organic unity.

In the first place, without organic unity the Church cannot fulfil its mission as the great moral teacher of society. If it is to become the light of the world it must illuminate the social relations and duties of men as members of the family and of the state no less than of the Church itself. But in order thus to instruct the multitudes still outside the denominations mere denominational teaching is not needed. Such teaching, in fact, has proved a hindrance and a failure. The missionary abroad sends back to us word that he cannot preach a sectarian gospel to the heathen; and the missionary at home tells us the same tale. The untaught masses think they do not want a sectarian Christianity, and they are right. How can the denominations teach them Christian brotherhood when they do not themselves treat one another as brethren? How can they teach Christian spirituality when they are scrambling together for worldly place and power? How can they teach the plainest Christian doctrines and duties when they are ever visibly subordinating them to sectarian dogmas and sectarian aggrandizement? If each of the fifty sects could accomplish its aim and plant an endowed church in every frontier village and in every city mission, what a Babel of religious teaching they would make, and how the objects of such teaching would laugh them to scorn! Yet something like this is passing before their eyes. Moreover, at a time when the wildest notions are abroad in respect to the social problems of the day it becomes imperative that the denominations as one church should utter forth one accordant voice in the name of their common Head and Lord.

In the second place, without organic unity the Church cannot perform its whole duty as the conservator of society. That it may act as the salt of the earth it must purge the divine institutions of the family and state, as well as the Church itself, from the corrupting influences and revolutionary assaults to which they are now exposed. But in thus concentrating its purifying influences upon the social masses mere denominational evangelism will not alone

suffice. It does not reach the physical and moral degradation which prevent them from even appreciating spiritual truths and influences. To attempt first to indoctrinate them, or even to evangelize them, is to begin at the end. They feel that they do not want church or gospel so much as fire, food, raiment, and shelter; and they cannot get the former until they have the latter. If the American Evangelical Alliance should accomplish its noble work, and by systematic visitation gather back all the scattered sheep of Christ into their proper folds, it will not have touched directly a single one of the social problems now pressing for solution. Not the mere indoctrination of the toiling masses, were it possible, is first and most needed; not alone their evangelization as now attempted; but their moralization, the practical application of Christian ethics among them, as Christ himself practiced them, in care for their bodies as well as their souls, in eleemosynary, sanitary, and educational reforms. And for all such works of charity how wasteful, as well as absurd, are denominational divisions and sectarian efforts! It seems but a truism to say that in order to preserve the family in safe dwellings and pure homes among all classes, in order to preserve the state by means of honest politics at the polls and in legislatures, in order to preserve the Church itself amid the manifold perils which now menace it—the denominations cannot act apart, but if possible must act together as one united Church.

In the third place, without organic unity the Church cannot accomplish its destiny as the regenerator of society. Being itself a new social organism with new organizing forces, it must yet include and transform the organisms of the family and the state as but smaller spheres within its own grander sphere, which is as wide as humanity itself. But in approaching this promised ideal a mere coöperation or confederation of denominations falls far short of the mark. Such a league may be a first step, but it cannot be the last. It would not exhibit the Church to the world as in itself a regenerate society, and it would not embrace surrounding society in its regenerative influence. It would be a cluster of class churches, not one church of all classes. It would still subordinate church unity to mere denominationalism, not denominationalism to true church unity. And it would soon prove to have been a mere makeshift of worldly expediency rather than the perfect bond of Christian charity. Like the Confederate States, which could not exist long either before or after the United States, such confederate churches could only suggest and require some more perfect union of denominations as one catholic Church.

In the fourth place, such a true church unity

is becoming intelligible and practicable in American society. While the Christian denominations, as they appear in the Old World, still exist as established churches and dissenting bodies incapable of unification, the same denominations as transferred to the New World, and brought under democratic influences, have been sifted together for a hundred years and assimilated until now they differ less in things than in names. Such differences are fast disappearing from public view. The long-lost ideal of one Catholic Church is seizing the popular mind like a passion and melting away all prejudices before it. Already it is emerging from the utopian stage in which great social movements often first appear to the generation originating them. It may have been utopian to look for a dogmatic agreement of different denominations, or even for a dogmatic agreement in any one denomination. This never existed in the church of the apostles, and could only exist in the church of the millennium, if it ever exist at all. But it is no longer utopian to look for an ecclesiastical unity which shall embrace dogmatic differences and allow them due scope and action. Such a unity once prevailed. In the New Testament church there were no Episcopalian, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist denominations, but only congregational, presbyterial, and episcopal principles and institutions as duly combined in one organization. That Catholic and Apostolic Church might now return if our congregations would associate in free presbyteries, our presbyteries commit their episcopal functions to bishops, and our bishops become conjoined in the same historic succession, whatever views might be held as to the need or value of that succession. The most extreme degrees of churchmanship, as well as the most varied forms of denominationalism, would be retained and satisfied in such an ecclesiastical system. If this be utopian, then is Christianity itself utopian. Can that unity be impracticable in religious society which has already

become actual in political society? We have lived to see the most diverse climates, north, south, east, and west; the most diverse races, European, African, American, Asiatic; the most diverse institutions, social, civil, political, religious; the most varied nationalities, English, French, German, with the most embittered factions, all merged in the United States; and are we never to see the so-called Christian denominations combining as united churches in one American Catholic Church?

Finally, a true church unity is becoming urgent, if not imminent. That we are on the eve of great social changes is a growing feeling. Our democratic institutions are passing under a strain such as they have never before known. According to historical analogy, one sign of revolution is the very blindness and recklessness of those who should be the first to perceive and avert it. Among the polemic divines now mustering to fight their battles over again this appeal for unity may sound like a shepherd's flute amid the din of arms. But communities, like individuals, are sometimes driven by their very passions and interests into the paths of truth and righteousness. The pressure of surrounding perils may soon hasten the tardy impulses of Christian duty. The churches may yet be melted together in the furnace of affliction. When the events so often threatened begin to happen; when our railways and telegraphs have been paralyzed by national strikes; when workmen and soldiers are fighting or fraternizing in the streets of our cities; when our hoarded capital is outvoted by leagued labor; when our servile legislatures are discussing the very measures first broached in the Assembly of the French Revolution; when science and literature and art are at the mercy of ignorance and rudeness, and virtue and piety have been scared back to our homes and altars — then, at least, will it have become plain that the problems of American society, if solved at all, can only be solved by one united church of the United States.

*Charles W. Shields.*

## LOIS BENSON'S LOVE STORY.



"**V**HAT do ye s'pose has come over yer girl Lois, Miss Benson? I never see sech a change in any one in my life. If I did n't know better, I 'd say she 's in love. Have n't noticed it? Waal, 'pears to me parents is awful blind! Lois has allus been quiet like, but lately, since a month or so, she seems differ-

ent — brighter seeming; ye 'd almost say younger."

The speaker rested her water-pail on the steps of the low, rambling house, which wind and rain had painted a dull gray. She stood talking to a woman of her own age sitting inside at the open window. Her calico sun-bonnet concealed her face, but her rasping voice and strong, knotted hands betrayed a hard-working woman — one of the carriers of water.