

THE HOUR

A MAGAZINE OF CRITICISM

ANGLICAN
CATHOLIC
LEFT

VOLUME 1
ST MARY THE VIRGIN
2020



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TO THE SOURCES

a study in anglican socialism

One of the downsides of an MDiv program allowing a surfeit of electives is that it indicates a school doesn't have a clear idea of what kind of intellectual and spiritual formation it desires to produce. But the upside is that I have been able to organize some independent studies for myself on topics of my own choosing. This last semester I managed to find an instructor who was willing to supervise me for a study in Anglican socialism. So I went about constructing a schedule of reading.

I'll never forget something the Pentecostal scholar Gordon Fee once wrote about how he approached commentary writing. He spent all of his time in the first months focused exclusively on primary sources, even cautioning that the BDAG (the preeminent New Testament Greek lexicon) is a secondary source. When you're familiar with primary sources you'll be better able to engage critically with the secondary ones. This is the approach I have taken to my own studies ever since and it guided how I structured this class.

It was to be a reading-intensive class. Rather than produce a paper, I would create an annotated bibliography on which I could draw for future study. Additionally it would give me the bones necessary to construct a syllabus for teaching. Later I could fill in the historical gaps with the literature, better prepared to contest their readings where necessary - historians so often being plagued by a tin ear for theology.

Little by little I amassed a gigantic reading list. I was going to devour every work by every major actor in the genre from F. D. Maurice to Kenneth Leech. And little by little my supervisor, friends, and enemies suggested I whittle down the list to something more manageable. With deep regret I complied, and decided to cut bishop Westcott, reformist socialists, and anything after William Temple. This was just before a global pandemic shut down my access to the school library. With almost no warning we were forbidden to enter, and several of the books I had intended to read sat untouched in my

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carrel. My personal chapel of knowledge being consigned to dust collection for the foreseeable future, I applied myself to such works as I could gather over the internet. Unfortunately late-Victorian Anglican socialism is not a lively field of study and I was forced to supplement my digital archive with some works I had on hand at home. So a dash of Charles Gore was back on the menu, and I added an essay by Gerrard Winstanley to the mix as well (and how fortunate that I did!).

For the most part all I really wanted was an eagle's eye view of the field, but there was one little question that kept nagging at me: Why was it that, when it came specifically to Christian socialism, the majority of players were anglo-catholics? Does it not suggest some kind of connection? Broadly speaking Anglicans were not labor leaders. Secularists, methodists, and other non-conformists played a role in organizing as well. But mine wasn't a study, strictly speaking, in English socialism. If it were I would've included William Morris, the architect of arts and crafts communism. I had to constrict myself to narrower concerns. In order to answer this question I began the class with a study on relevant Tracts for the Times, hoping to discover something within their digital pages (It is outrageous there is not a proper edition of the Tracts in print). The Tracts did not surprise me with anything. I had read most of them

before anyway. But I saw their protest in a new light. The Tracts are not anti-institutional in any way. Several lament the loss of prestige and favor the Church of England had suffered in recent years. The key, as I see it, lies in their polemical furor over the encroaching reach of an increasingly non-Anglican state. Why should a non-believer, or worse - a presbyterian - have any say in how dioceses are organized? The church's authority is not derived from the political realm but directly from the apostles, they said. So while disestablishment would have been viewed as a catastrophe, their adamance about the priority and independence of episcopal authority set the Church of England against the government of England. This is a tactic that would be used by those who came after.

I chose not to do much with the slum ritualists. In my defense few wrote any significant works, and not many were quite the social advocates we remember them to be. Most of the ritualists were not in east London but in middle class suburbs, and those who were, while they did of course do social work in neighborhoods long neglected by the C of E, were not particularly radical in politics. For my study their significance lies in the fact that they continued the anglo-catholic penchant for protest; only in this case they protested their own bishops. In the ritualist

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controversy we see anglo-catholicism expand its willingness to question not only its political, but its ecclesial authority - ironic though it may be! To be anglo-catholic came to be seen as being unmanly, and unenglish. The anglo-catholic socialists, then, were quite used to being a beleaguered minority voice in their society and even in their own church. Without this antagonistic identity, it seems to me we cannot make full sense of the connection between their politics and their religion.

Not that all anglo-catholics were socialists. Indeed few were. The Church of England was willing to talk a big game at times for "social reforms," but by and large the establishment was quite happy to keep the establishment afloat. It moralized the poor and drew distinctions between "deserving" and "undeserving" members of the lower class. It judged working class entertainment. It weaponized the catechism against labor "overreach," believing everyone in society had a "place." One should not fight against one's betters. Social hierarchy is God-ordained, thus it is nearly sinful to battle against it.

Secularists exploited this to great effect. The state's religion clearly wanted to keep people oppressed. Anyone who allied with the Anglicans allied with drawing room bishops and capitalists. Anglican socialists therefore often found themselves on the

side of the atheists, which only further discredited them in the eyes of their ecclesiastical leaders. Stewart Headlam, for example, was denied a license by a series of London bishops and was never able to hold down a parish position for his association with the irreligious and with ballerinas.

Figures like Headlam, Percy Dearmer, and Conrad Noel often wrote apologies to both sides. To the secularists they said, Christianity is with you; the catholic faith, properly understood, demands christians become socialists. This was a position they had to make to their own church as well. If you're a christian, they said, you needed to be a socialist. Jesus, the apostles, and church history confirmed it.

They inherited this conviction from F. D. Maurice, a controversial figure from earlier in the 19th century. Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ* attempted to synthesize the primitive insights, as he saw them, of all the major protestant schools into a vision of a universal, spiritual kingdom. The Lutherans, the Calvinists; even Zwingli, the Quakers, and Unitarians were all "really" on the same page, but bad religion had crept in to dull the power of their initial revelations. Maurice argued in the book that bishops, liturgy, and the sacraments were necessary elements of this kingdom, but did not equate this "catholicism" with the Roman catholic church. In the early

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years of the Oxford Movement Maurice was a supporter. Eventually he came to hate their dogmatism, and the way some reveled in damnation and otherworldliness. Several of the anglo-catholic socialists got their understanding of catholicism as much from Maurice as from the Tractarians.

Maurice was a high-Tory paternalist whose christian socialism was just fine with inherited position and social hierarchy. He was influenced particularly by utopian socialists and prized “co-operation” over “competition.” I saw this framing run right through most of the people I read. As marxist socialism became more influential in England, some maurician disciples quietly adopted more radical politics but never repudiated their master. What socialism meant was hotly contested and fluid at the time, and our figures often alternated from preaching co-operatives, to a georgian land tax, to industry nationalisation.

I’m trying to avoid giving a mere history lesson. There are several books and essays that make for more complete reading than what I can offer here, and I will list some of them below. But I feel like what I’ve said helpfully contextualizes the bibliography I will be sharing. I’ve mentioned the Oxford Movement connection, the ritualist antagonism toward the bishops, the influence of

Maurice, and the relationship of our socialists to the secularists and to the state church. I make no claims to comprehension. It was with regret that I didn’t even make it to William Temple, let alone the mid-century resistance to South African apartheid and the emergence in Brittain of the Jubilee Group. The pre-19thC English radical tradition is absolutely worth exploring more. The history of Wat Tyler and John Ball could be added to political tracts by Tyndale, the Levelers, and Winstanley. I am keenly aware of the fact that Vida Scudder is the only woman to appear on the list. It’s not because women weren’t important in Anglican socialist work, only that I focused this course on what we might call “theorists.” A broader study would need to include more of those who labored on the lines.

Scudder is more often taught in American history courses than in seminaries, which is a shame because her socialist writing is perceptive and lovely. Another American, the eccentric Frederic Hastings Smyth, manages to lucidly and creatively synthesize marxism and thomism in unexpected ways. His great *Manhood Into God* is rather difficult to find, and the book is long enough and late enough that I didn’t have time to read it for this class. Over the summer I’ve spent more time with it and absolutely consider it worth reading. I managed to digitize a shorter

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book of his before the library shut down, but it would be nice to have even a pdf of *Manhood Into God*. Frances Perkins, labor secretary for FDR, was at least for a short while a socialist, and belongs to this American story as well. If I were doing the class over again I'd probably leave out Noel's *Life of Christ* entirely and add something by the guild socialist John Neville Figgis. I'd give more attention to Henry George and T.H. Green for their influence. There would need to be a section on Marx's reception, which was more sympathetic in America than in England for the most part. Ruskin is central to the figures of the time in a way I didn't realize and I should've spent some time in the letters of *Fors Clavigera*.

Not unlike the way Maurice was modified strongly by his disciples without coming in for explicit critique, I noticed Ruskin peeping in from beneath the covers of, say, R. H. Tawney's *The Acquisitive Society*. Yet without ever saying so, Tawney corrects him. Where Ruskin championed the captains of industry, social hierarchy, paternalism, inherited wealth & property, Tawney argues for their elimination, advocating for social equality, and self-rule for industry in a coalition of manager and laborer, with stringent limits on investment returns and brutal taxes on inheritance. Scudder too was a disciple of Ruskin, even producing an entire book on his thought. But in the

end she found him moralistic, anti-democratic, and inimical to socialism. To be fair, he'd probably say the same! But as recent work by Eugene McCarragher indicates, Ruskin can still be drawn on fruitfully for socialist thinking. I was often surprised in my reading, and encouraged. The Anglican socialists were violently anti-imperialist, and enthusiastically embraced the belief that capitalism and imperialism were fundamentally linked. Though they failed to make the connection of capitalism with slavery and race. But many called for disestablishment of the C of E, firmly believing that its official status only prevented it from taking the Gospel of liberation seriously.

Going in I had expected to encounter a great deal of naive nostalgia for the Middle Ages, but I'm convinced they are read wrongly in that respect. Figgis and Tawney broke important historical ground on the political and economic shifts of the late middle ages, and even someone as untrained as Noel looks to the period less as something to uncritically reinstate and more as precedent that Christianity and capitalism are not ontologically linked, as many of his peers in the Anglican church supposed. Noel preached carnival and picket lines, not masculinity and Latin masses.

I didn't create my study because I think Anglican socialism is the best socialism,

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or more important than the wider labor movement, or any of that. But renaissance is one of the primary motivating factors behind this magazine. There isn't any one position among them we have blindly to adopt. The point isn't to simply regurgitate the beliefs of our progenitors indiscriminately. It's to situate ourselves inside of an historical body to which we are accountable, and a tradition from which we can draw. We make no claims to be The Representatives of The Tradition. Christian socialism goes back much further than modern socialism and still has something to say to our current situation.

If you were looking for an essay-length introduction to our topic, I happen to know that the Anglican Theological Review is going to publish an essay by Gary Dorrien on it in the Fall 2020 issue. I've read it and it's typically energetic and informative. It is too bad the Americans aren't represented but I suppose he'll rectify that as soon as the next volume of his history of social democracy comes out.

Peter d'A. Jones' *The Christian Socialist Revival: 1877-1914* is an excellent book length treatment. It's incredibly well-organized and I think the way he frames the middle section around the Guild of St. Matthew, the Christian Social Union, and the Church Socialist League is fantastic.

Without claiming to have now become an expert, I close with a list of suggestions for people wanting to make an initial foray into the primary sources.

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PERCY DEARMER

PATRIOTISM

STEWART HEADLAM

THE SOCIALIST'S
CHURCH

F. D. MAURICE

TRACT (1) ON CHRISTIAN
SOCIALISM

CONRAD NOEL

SOCIALISM IN CHURCH
HISTORY
THE BATTLE OF THE
FLAGS

VIDA SCUDDER

SOCIALISM AND
CHARACTER
SOCIAL TEACHINGS OF
THE CHRISTIAN YEAR

F. H. SMYTH

MANHOOD INTO GOD

R. H. TAWNEY

THE ACQUISITIVE
SOCIETY
EQUALITY
RELIGION AND THE RISE
OF CAPITALISM

GERRARD WINSTANLEY

THE NEW LAW OF
RIGHTEOUSNESS

AN HOUR SPECIAL

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Renewing the Anglican Catholic Social Tradition

FRAGMENTS OF A MANIFESTO

Based on an address to the Society of Catholic Priests, Tucson, AZ, October 4th 2019



RENEWING THE ANGLICAN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TRADITION

THE PATHOS OF THE CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ORDER

To say that we live in challenging times is merely to state the obvious. They are challenging for the Church, as secularization takes form more quickly in North America than most of us can grasp, but more challenging still for populations here and globally that are dealing with the effects of late capitalism out of control, via climate change in the environment on the one hand, and gross income and wealth disparity even within the wealthiest societies.

While numerous Church groups are outspoken on a variety of these issues, few of these seem to be wholly aware that their political practice is based on premises that no longer hold; despite the much vaunted separation of Church and state in the US constitution, ecclesial statements about policy and social issues here often have the ring of Christendom about them.

This is a challenge for all of us, including those of us in the Catholic tradition of Anglicanism who inherit a rich social tradition, yet one based partly (not wholly) on assumptions that no longer hold, about the idea of a “Christian” society or social order. We do not yet know how to be Christians in a post-Christian society; we cling to influence that has already gone;

we need to find both old ways and new to answer God’s call for a just, participatory, and sustainable society.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM, NOT SOCIAL GOSPEL

While it is important to work with other citizens of all faiths and none and to find common cause where we can, based on how the Gospel tells us to view our humanity and theirs, it is important to distinguish between how we build alliances and how we form our own identity and social witness. It is a time to re-discover what Christians, and here specifically Christians of catholic commitment and formation, bring to the reality of a society groaning under the burdens of our time.

Baptism is of course as fundamental to us as shared humanity itself; it is more important than shared opinion. We are more inextricably bound to baptized Trumpians than we are to the unbaptized, even those whom we like and agree with. Yet we are also more different from some other Christians than we seem to realize. We need to work this out, not so as to separate ourselves, but so as to be effective allies in the broad coalitions needed for the present moment.

For this purpose, I want to distinguish Christian Socialism from the “Social

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Gospel,” not to divide us further, but to engage critically on what unites us, and to make a claim about how Christian belief and social action might be linked from within the Catholic tradition.

While people sometimes use the term “Social Gospel” fuzzily to refer to any engagement between Christianity and social action or policy, its historically-formed meaning involves deep connection with 19th and early 20th century liberalism. The “Social Gospel” more strictly is the movement associated with Walter Rauschenbusch, whose theology, like that of many of those good folk since, includes a modernizing rejection or de-emphasis of aspects of traditional doctrine such as personal sin or the need for atonement. Whether the idea of a “Social Gospel” is useful really stands or falls on whether the meaning of that term implies a missing part of the Gospel, or (as more often) a re-working of the Gospel, to produce a salvation primarily focused on the arrival of the Kingdom of God on earth via a utopian society. In this latter and prevailing sense, I contend the Social Gospel is not either as Christian, or (more shockingly) nearly as radical, as it imagines.

Christian Socialism has a quite different intellectual pedigree, even if it overlaps with that of the Social Gospel movement at some points. This is partly a continental

difference, admittedly; the Christian Social Union in the UK, from which the movement takes its name, was led and inspired by people like F. D. Maurice, who was himself not of the Catholic party in the Church of England, but was soon joined by such as Charles Gore and Percy Dearmer who were more clearly so. A Catholic form of Christian Socialism was thus a second-generation outgrowth of the Oxford Movement, just as ritualism was. While not all Christian Socialists were Anglo-Catholics this movement, in contrast with the Social Gospel, tended to be orthodox in its assumptions, and to see the lack of effective social witness and teaching as reflecting not so much a failure of traditional doctrine as a failure to understand and uphold traditional doctrine. There is the big difference, at least theologically.

If you balk at the use of “Socialism,” let me point out that many of the Anglicans who have identified with Christian Socialism were hesitant, or varied in their opinions, about “state ownership” or other specific forms of socialist organization, and that this not what socialism meant or means. As the origins of Christian Socialism in a “Christian Social Union” suggest, “socialism” simply means a view of society that emphasizes for the needs of the whole. Socialism here need not refer to nationalization of industry etc., but to a variety of policies and remedies

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intended to share the benefits of production equitably, to ensure full employment, minimum income, universal health care and education, and so forth. These are not outrageous ideas assuming authoritarian rule, but parts of what was mainstream policy under FDR, when it comes to specifics. Socialists will differ in the means they believe it necessary to use to further these aims, but socialism should be understood not just as an identity marker for self-proclaimed radicals, but as a way of thinking about the need for a robust civil society in which the needs of all, and especially of the most vulnerable, are met.

While both movements may support some of what I have called socialism, Christian Socialism and the Social Gospel are not the same thing. It makes all the difference in the world whether we think social improvement is somehow the real message of Christianity, or whether we think that the Gospel, and the relation into which it brings us with the triune God in the Church and through the sacraments, depicts and demands life lived according to the pattern of Christ and its fulfillment in all aspects of human life.

This means, among other things, that Christian Socialism is not a form of liberalism, even if it makes common cause with liberalism at various points. The difference between Christian Socialism,

which I take to be the natural and historic partner of the Catholic movement in the Church, and the Social Gospel movement is two-fold and both those parts have to do with liberalism and its weaknesses. "Liberalism" as a term is used in different ways in different English-speaking Christian traditions, admittedly; but here I mean the set of optimistic and progressive forces that span both theological and political movements in this country.

One of the struggles facing an American Christian Left, in broad terms, is that there was no moment such as that which Europe experienced in the Great War, when the accommodationist theologies of Ritschl and Harnack, the greatest minds of German liberal theology, were enrolled to defend German imperialism. Out of this catastrophe came Barth, and an end to the idea that a progressive Christianity could function by taking its bearings from social trends primarily from the wider world.

Of course should not expect American Christian socialists to adopt Continental or British theological pedigrees in order to make their theology or witness effective; to point to this difference of intellectual and historical pedigree is to warn of the potential consequences of the missing equivalent a self-critical moment in the American theological and social tradition. In fact American theology, like American

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socialism, does its own traditions on which to draw, but the place of liberalism and its accommodationist and optimistic tendencies must be criticized in that process. That process must also go on with a critical awareness, that is hardly much in evidence now, that the place of the USA in the global reality of the 21st century is itself hegemonic and oppressive, and that no view of a just society can possibly take its bearings from a US-centered perspective alone, even one that speaks from the point of view of the oppressed in this country. With that statement however I have moved to the next part of my topic.

DIVESTING FROM AMERICA

I think all of us need to function as responsible citizens of our countries, and to participate appropriately in their institutions. I think however that it would be timely for the Church - or let me say the Christian Left, to which not all of you necessarily feel you belong - to reexamine its coziness with the American political project. I am on eggshells here as a foreigner of course - and I do not mean to suggest that my own or any other country has some sort of exemption from parallel or comparable challenges - but I do feel that the curious and late arrival of secularism in the US has left many gasping and unprepared for a world in which the wider society does not care

what we think.

The Social Gospel is in fact inevitably, essentially, caught up in the American project; hence its primary outlet is in seeking to pressure the legislative and executive branches to be better, always to do better. Such advocacy is not a bad thing in itself, but it is a weakness not just in its unreflective optimism (and stultifying moralism), but insofar as it assumes that the relationship between Church and society ought to be cozy, and hence "protests" when it does not have its way. This may have been true of aspects of Christian Socialism within the established Church in the past too, by the way, but the differences are also significant.

The Social Gospel movement will in fact have little left to say, if the American project is taken away from it. Its optimistic and Pelagian aim is the American utopia, and while it has adjusted itself to the multi-faith aspect of that utopia, it has not really let go of the assumption that US Government and society should be and can be what the Social Gospel says they should be. This is why the Social Gospel's current advocates experience such dissonance at the Trump ascendancy.

The problem lies in that the society of which the USA is the hegemonic center is not, at heart, just a utopia in the making, but a dystopia whose real character is

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increasingly being revealed. Late capitalism is not merely a system in need of tweaking, so that if we got (e.g.) gun violence, or racism, and a few other things sorted, all would be well. Late capitalism is essentially the rule of the bourgeoisie, or of capital itself, and while its ideology always pretends to offer equal opportunity it never will, let alone real equality in which it has no interest. Meritocracy is the veil it draws across a system that tends to inequality, and more and more so. Identity politics are merely a new version of the same, drawing veneer of fake collectivism across quests for personal fulfilment that stymie real collective action more often than they support it. Beauty contest presidential elections are farces during whose performance the population is told that it has power that it does not, and directs their energies towards these rather than to the roots of injustice, whose origins and solutions both lie elsewhere. This does not mean elections are meaningless - but they do not mean what people are told they mean.

The Social Gospel movement often devolves into being a religious wing for one side of US politics, granted that is also the side I would choose, if I were voting. I know that Churches are usually careful about endorsing candidates at least for tax exemption reasons, but this is a sort of sleight of hand. I am not convinced that the Social Gospel

movement has an understanding of itself and of Christian faith that goes much deeper than the varied politics of American liberalism. Many of us are rightly appalled by the way some evangelicals like Robert Jeffords, Franklin Graham, and Jerry Falwell Jr have become sycophantic theological apologists for the crypto-fascism of Trump. Yet when Barack Obama was inaugurated in 2009, the then presiding bishop offered a prayer which was an explicit mashup of Lincoln's Second Inaugural address along with elements of Obama's campaign rhetoric, and no-one batted an eyelid. That is not so much outrageous as pathetic, in truth.

You may object that there is a great difference between Obama and Trump, and there is. But inequality in this country bounded ahead under Obama; detention and deportation bounded ahead under Obama. Obama was and is a person of almost infinitely greater appeal and deeper character than Trump - but this is not the point. The system over which they preside is the same. Both men need prayer as presidents, but the exhortation of the First Letter to Timothy to pray for those in authority can and must be understood at least in part as a version of Jesus' command to love enemies, and pray for those who persecute you. The advantage of a Trump is that his corruption and venality are

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transparent - he is the true face of late capitalism. The Obama inauguration prayer of course is actually a form of civil religion, not of Christianity. One of the mixed blessings of secularization is that we become freer to acknowledge this, but we do so slowly.

The same case also entails a dubious but rarely examined assumption, that the primary role of the Church in social change is that of collective advocacy as Church, as a lobby group in effect; and as a more pluralistic understanding of faith communities and traditions has appeared, or forced itself upon us, we simply move from being the religious conscience of the State to being the Episcopal branch of progressive civil religion. When our default mode of responding to issues of the day is either to pass a resolution, or to put stoles on and go to the march, we are betraying a latent dependence on our relationship to civil religion. I do not mean to say we should never do those things; perhaps sometimes tactically speaking it is worth squeezing the last drop of juice from this old lemon. But an old and passing mode of witness it is.

William Temple who as Archbishop of Canterbury was an avowed socialist, said in his influential *Christianity and Social Order*:

"At the end of this book I shall offer, in my capacity as a Christian citizen, certain proposals for definite action which would, in my private judgement, conduce to a more Christian ordering of society; but if any member of the Convocation of York should be so ill-advised as to table a resolution that these proposals be adopted as a political programme for the Church, I should in my capacity as Archbishop resist that proposal with all my force, and should probably, as President of the Convocation, rule it out of order."

(London: SCM Press, 1950), 24–25

Of course, this context was different; but it is striking how even in the established reality of the Church of England, Temple is considering not just the public witness of the Church as an institution, but the fact that the Church supports its members as citizens in the political realm. All this is worth considering, from someone who was also vigorously championing the needs of the poorest in public. Does it really make as much sense as people assume, to pass synodical resolutions as though this were the clearest form of ecclesial engagement with the issues of the day? And if it ever did, what now?

I suggest that while we do need to witness effectively, both that the conventional alliance that works via "public witness" is

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more damaging to Christian faith and identity than is being recognized, and that the assumption about Church as collective agent in the American project is flawed in other ways too.

The Church needs to remember, or discover, that being Church is actually much more radical than being a religiously-inspired faction of the Democratic Party. And surprisingly to many, while local organization and other forms of actual political praxis should play a role, an unflinchingly religious mission may really be the most important thing the Church can offer its members whose vocations and actions in the secular realm can and must include political action.

A GENUINE BAPTISMAL ECCLESIOLOGY

In recent decades “Baptismal Ecclesiology” has become a sort of weasel word, associated not so much with either baptism or ecclesiology, but with the polity of TEC. I assume, by the way, that while thinking about the polity of TEC should be informed by our ecclesiology, that it is not the same thing at all - your theory of your denominational structure is not “ecclesiology.”

Baptismal Ecclesiology has largely been related to the proper recognition that the laity have a fundamental place in TEC

polity, as in any aspect of Church life. However, the associated problems of this agenda are manifold, and some of them well beyond the scope of this talk. In brief, I think we have often messed this up, along with the bold claim that the laity are an “order” of ministry, by imagining this is fundamentally to do with ecclesiastical roles and concerns, rather than with the world of which lay and clergy and Church are all a part. I routinely hear “laity” now used as a short hand for “lay leaders” or “lay volunteers,” rather than meaning “the baptized” – so we have made this whole thing very introspective, and have been implying that the depth of a lay person’s vocation is typically to be correlated with their involvement in certain Church activities rather than in actions as citizens in workplace, home, and civic life. The “fourth order” part has also contributed to this mess, because of its implication that the other “orders” provided the model on which the fourth would be understood, rather than the proper understanding that the clergy need to be understood relative to the *laos*.

But my real point here is that if baptism really is the basis of ecclesiology - and it is - then your Vestry or parish program are not its main grounding point or locus, and the General Convention certainly is not. The world is its locus, and the ministry of all the baptized takes place wherever they are. A real baptismal ecclesiology would

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entail understanding how the members of the Church - not the institution, but the members - function as part of human society, and as participants in the wider creation.

So what about in Church? I note one of the common misuses of the Baptismal Ecclesiology language is its odd place relative to the movement towards so-called "open communion." For while the terms are often used by the same people, the movement to remove baptism as a necessary path to communion of course undermines the "baptismal" part of ecclesiology rather radically.

What this really involves, I suspect, is at least in part a characteristically bourgeois objection to any structure or condition that inhibits inherent privilege operating freely. The Church actually declares that baptism is radical inclusion, of the infant, the aged, the tentative, the fierce and faithful, all alike; it declares that God's apparently arbitrary choice is more powerful than your spiritual biography. Those who are supposedly excluded from communion by the existing canon are not, of course, typically the marginalized or the poor, but (like many of the rest of us) the bourgeois. They - or rather they, as imagined by their sponsors - are the educated nibblers at the spirituality banquet, who feel a hunger for on some given occasion without sitting down in community - without the wedding

garment, as Jesus puts it.

This is important beyond that issue of open communion, because it goes to the heart of what baptism is and what Church is. Baptism is the means by which the Church declares Jesus' utopia as transcending social location - it is not dependent on agreement or inclination, but on divine call. This is the only form of equality and inclusion that does more than hide privilege but abolishes it; "open communion" on the other hand is the claim of the religious bourgeoisie clamoring against traditional power structures that frustrate its veiled privilege, when the Church is actually called to work out how it can be with and feed the materially poor. All this also breezes past the fact that baptism binds us irrevocably to others, regardless of opinion or confession, in catholic perspective at least, instead of privileging opinion and experience and other factors constructed by social location.

THE EUCHARIST AND THE KINGDOM

This of course leads us to the Eucharist, which is at the heart of Christian social witness. One of the problems with some efforts at liturgical renewal at present is the assumption that liturgy is a sort of neutral vehicle, whose words need to be adapted to make clear the propositions held in mind by the revisers. I don't think we can or should exclude revision, and I think it is

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possible for the language of the liturgy (or forms of the liturgy) to evolve and come to reflect in more focused and contemporary ways the doctrines of the Church that are the basis of political engagement - the fact of Creation, Incarnation, Redemption. However in this audience I hope I don't have to work too hard to say that such efforts to solve liturgical conundrums by changing the words are in danger of missing the real point.

Every Eucharist is an act of subversion. This does not depend on how well understood that fact is, nor on whether the words used to frame the liturgy are the sharpest expression of that fact. For the Eucharist does not work primarily by words, even though words are essential to it. The Eucharist is a participation in the worship of the true God in the heavenly realm, as in the vision of Isaiah 6 or the Revelation to John. We are caught up into that realm, but it is also the irruption into human life of the divine order. This is the case, whether we do it well or badly; we celebrate solemn high mass with awe, because we are explicitly indicating that this is like handling high explosives; the power of the living God is not a trifle. Yet we can also celebrate with warmth and quiet conviviality, because the divine order is one of life and love and peace.

What the Eucharist is not, is a neutral vehicle for the carriage of other agendas.

The Eucharist is an agenda. Or rather its agenda is the reign of God, the God of Jesus Christ. Its agenda is not that worship is nice, or that ritual is meaningful, or that the transcendent is a thing, or that we are spiritual beings, or that community is valuable; its agenda is that casting down of the mighty from their thrones and exaltation of the lowly, the filling of the hungry with good things equally. In its symbolic meal and its equal proportions, given freely, it conveys the equal participation of all those called to the heavenly banquet. Its equality is a foretaste of the world in which all are fed.

The Eucharist will be those things, each time we celebrate, whether we manage to capture that fact in words or ritual, whether we manage to take its reality with us in our embodied selves adequately or not. It just is. That fact, not a different ritual, is the essence of a catholic doctrine of the Eucharist - that it is what it claims to be.

EUCCHARIST & SERVICE TO THE POOR

It may be objected - outside this room by liberal friends, if not here in it - that this Eucharistic radicalism is not obvious enough and hence needs to be made so, in words. We can keep working on the words, but I would rather say, after pointing out that obviousness is not the first issue, that the character of the Eucharist could be made even clearer in action.

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The ancient Church was renowned for its care for the poor, and this has been a mark of pride for the Catholic movement in Anglicanism. In early Christianity, the care of the poor was embedded in eucharistic celebration, initially by bringing food for the sharing of what was at the earliest point a substantial meal that, unlike many banquets of the time, did not reflect social locations in portions or comestibles. Later it did so by the taking away portions of what was a still substantial meal to the housebound and imprisoned, and then later still by bringing food offerings for our familiar symbolic meal, the excess of which was distributed to the poor as substantial food. Our transformation of freewill offerings into something supporting the Church as a whole requires some correction I think, even if we do need those too. What if we said though, that a Eucharist was not valid if it did not include some effort – even if symbolic, at the actual celebration – to feed the poor? The fact that outreach is supported by our money offerings may not be clear enough; bring a food basket, bring the packed lunches going out later in the day, bring signs of the feeding program next door, make the connection between the eucharistic food and the hunger of the world.

As an aside, let me say I confess to a little unease about the juggernaut of theologizing about “abundance” I hear

often; my concern or even cynicism is in response to the claim or assumption that American elites, who own most of the world's wealth, are rapacious because of anxious about a scarcity of resources despite their actual superabundance, and thus need to be assured with noises about how much stuff there really still is for everybody. For reasons which include the lack of sustainability and moderation in our consumption, I would prefer a theology of sufficiency.

For various reasons, the engagement of the Church with the poor and hungry has become variable at best; some of the most effective feeding programs seem to have lost an ecclesial dimension in the course of being professionalized. We seem more likely now to find a non-profit hiring space in the Church to feed people, and the tenancy arrangement coming up mostly amid talk of the Church leveraging its assets, than to find the wardens serving the soup. I am sure you can offer me good exceptions, and I am not wanting to cast stones; but where this is good, we should celebrate it, and where it is not happening I suggest we need to reverse that trend and to reclaim the sacramental character of charity itself as direct action.

I am aware of the dangers that may be connected to this, but I think they are worth entertaining. And if it is not obvious enough, let me make explicit the

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eucharistic connection. The Mass depicts and enacts a world in which all are fed and all have enough. If we refuse to live in that world when we have communicated, we are blaspheming the Eucharist. To paraphrase Bishop Frank Weston, “You cannot claim to worship Jesus at the communion rail and refuse to serve him in the soup kitchen.” [1]

This recognition, as well as the real answer to the “open communion dilemma,” entails understanding ourselves as just as much in need of grace and progress in holiness as those whom we serve and evangelize. This is not noblesse oblige; it is, as Sri Lankan Methodist theologian D. T. Niles put it, “one beggar telling another beggar where to get food.” [2]

THREE CONCLUDING WORDS: FRANK, JOHN, AND WOODY

These thoughts about baptism and Eucharist constitute an incomplete suggestion that I hope the Catholic wing of the Church can develop amid the ruins of civil religion. The problem with progressive Social Gospel Episcopalianism is not that it is too progressive, but rather that it is not genuinely radical enough. The Gospel makes radicals; and it is not the Church that will save our society if anything will, but God, presumably through people of all

faiths and none, but including Christians whose profound understanding of the Gospel enables them to act as citizens, workers, who claim what is theirs, and the rights and needs of all.

I alluded to Frank Weston’s rallying cry at the 1923 Anglo-Catholic Congress. This kind of insight about the connection between the Eucharist and justice is an ancient one. John Chrysostom notably said, in reference to the Eucharist and to charity for the poor:

You honor this altar, because it receives Christ’s body; but the person who is the actual body of Christ you treat with contempt.... That altar you can see lying in lanes and in market places, and you can sacrifice upon it every hour; for on that too sacrifice is performed. And as the priest stands invoking the Spirit, so you invoke the Spirit, not by speech, but by deeds (Homilies on 2 Cor., 20)

So strikingly John says the Christian engaging the needs of the poor is celebrating their own Eucharist too. One corrective John and the tradition thus might offer Bishop Frank is that they did not present action for the poor as “pity,” but as worship. John suggests his well-off Christian audience needs the beggar-altar, as much as the reverse.

So both these altars, that of the Eucharist

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and the bodies of the poor, are sacred places and places of social transformation. This is already the case, but we can make it plainer. Woody Guthrie's guitar was famously emblazoned with the words "this machine kills fascists" -- our chalices and monstrances and aspergilla and ciboria might all be engraved "this machine feeds the poor."

Andrew McGowan
New Haven, CT

[1] The original was of course "You cannot claim to worship Jesus in the Tabernacle, if you do not pity Jesus in the slum"; see Frank Weston, "Our Present Duty," n.d., <http://anglicanhistory.org/weston/weston2.html> Accessed April 20, 2020.

[2] Daniel Thambyrajah Niles, *That They May Have Life* (New York: Published in association with the Student Volunteer Movement for Christian Missions by Harper, 1951), 98.

TO ALL BISHOPS

struggling to name anti-black racism, specifically, as sin,

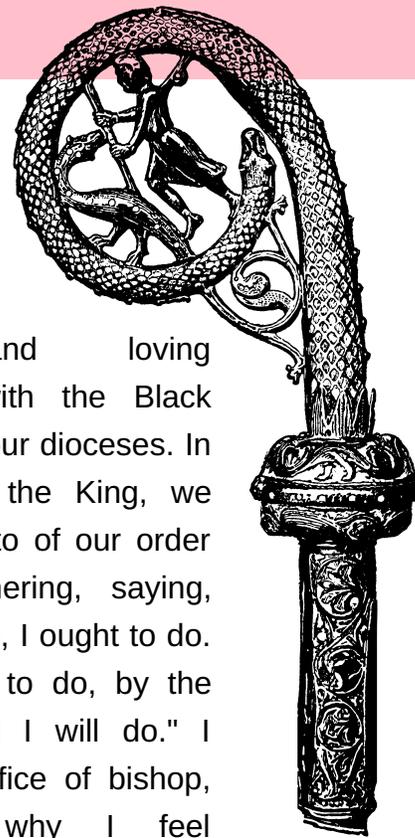
On Advent 1 of 2017, I walked into what is now my home parish, and for the first time since I was a child, I was in a mostly-Black church. I felt at home. I was surrounded by worshippers who looked like me, who smelled like my parents, and when I walked to the altar rail to take part in Eucharist, given to me by lay eucharistic ministers of all ages and races, I knew I'd make the Episcopal Church my spiritual home.

In January of 2018 we had a bishop's visit where a white woman (for a reason I'm still not sure of) told a room full of mostly working-class, Black and Latino parishioners, who just wanted to know why it was so hard to find a rector who might look like us, that there was no way a person could live in Austin being paid \$60,000 (not that it matters, but we were offering far more than \$60,000 a year). At the time, I made around \$9,750 a year before taxes. And I felt like, "oh no, maybe this isn't my home." But our parish showed me that we can call in those we want to be our allies. We forgave her misstep and we now have a spiritually fulfilling and loving relationship with our current rector.

So today, I'm writing in hopes of calling you in, offering forgiveness, and perhaps moving forward to a more spiritually

fulfilling and loving relationship with the Black members of your dioceses. In Daughters of the King, we recite the motto of our order at each gathering, saying, "What I can do, I ought to do. What I ought to do, by the grace of God I will do." I respect the office of bishop, and that's why I feel convicted by God to say this: All Episcopalians deserve more.

Recent official statements sent out by bishops have, to say the least, hurt me deeply. After reading my own bishops' statement once, I had to use the search function on my computer because clearly I had to be mistaken—there was no way, after a weekend of unrest due to the sins of anti-Blackness and white supremacy, that my bishops would release a statement without affirming that they believe Black lives matter. And yet, it didn't happen. The word "Black" in fact, is not included once. To acknowledge the sin of racism without noting that in its American context it is deeply rooted in



anti-Blackness, is specifically to make anti-racist conversations easier for white people. Especially troubling were the list of affirmations and condemnations. Not only were Black people placed under the umbrella of "people color"—and my diocese knows especially well that Black people have a specific relationship to whiteness that needs to be named (my own parish was founded because of that relationship)—the bishops stated their support exclusively for peaceful protests. Do you know who wasn't a peaceful protestor? Jesus. Do you know who also condemned the destruction of property? The white moderate and "progressive" clergy members of Alabama who called for "law and order," and who inspired Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. to compose his Letter from a Birmingham Jail where he wrote:

"the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Counciler or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait

for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection."

People do not riot who do not have a reason to riot. When our Lord turned over the tables in the temple, it was a reminder that things do not matter. We cannot take our things with us to heaven. Our property will bring us no closer to Christ. In the bishop's letter we were called to be our very best Christian selves, and yet were called to value property more than the pain of people who have destroyed that property.

You reminded us to pray, and then called us to act. And I agree—prayer, especially the Daily Office, has been such a balm to my spirit lately. When the church calendar moved us from Eastertide to the season after Pentecost and we once again began our services by confessing our sins against God and our neighbor, a relief washed over me. Before we pray for anything else, we confess. We all need to confess, but it feels disingenuous and frankly un-pastoral to not even mention that those who benefit from white supremacy need to repent and confess those sins. We cannot pray for peace or justice before we confess. Our prayer book shows us that. Our action needs to be rooted moving forward from that sin.

The church does have a responsibility to speak out when people are not protected, and part of that responsibility is naming the people, naming the sin: anti-Black racism, white privilege, white supremacy. These are not partisan political terms, they are sins. Why would you not call us to name them?

A specific statement put out by the Diocese of Texas quoted Archbishop Desmond Tutu in its appeal, saying, "He believed that nonviolence presupposes a minimum moral level of the state." The state has not, on multiple occasions, including the violent gassing of protestors near St. John's Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Washington, D.C., shown us that they are operating at any moral level. People do not get grabbed off the streets in unmarked vans in a moral state. There has to be morality for there to be non-violence. To say otherwise is to tell people to martyr themselves, and while I like St. Joan of Arc just fine, are you willing to martyr yourselves? Show us before condemning our righteous anger.

The sentiment that we must be the generation to end racism in all forms rings loudly in many pastoral letters I've read from bishops all over the country. Amen and amen. But, as I have stated, to end racism, we need to name the sin of white supremacy. Dear Bishops, have you done that? Or did you submit guidance claiming to be non-partisan, but was actually incredibly centrist, in order to keep the

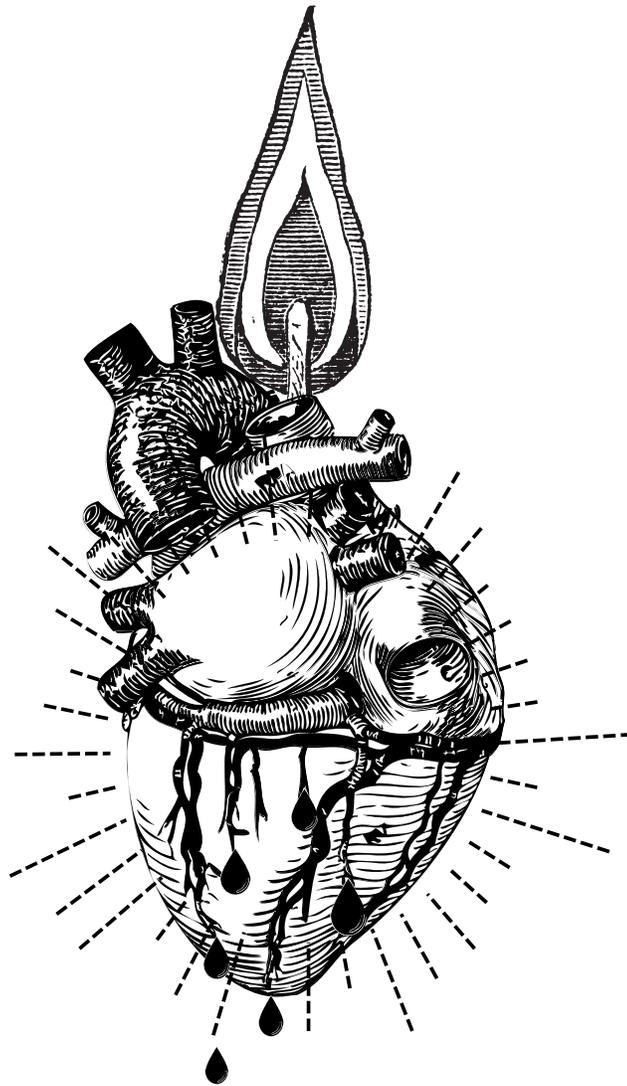
deans of your cathedrals and their major donors happy? We should be upsetting those in power. We cannot serve Christ and white supremacist notions of property rights. We must choose. When Jesus told us to take up our crosses and follow him, he did not intend for it to be something that made everyone around us comfortable. The cross of every Christian should be heavy with grief at the sin of the world, especially when said sin is done in Christ's name. As we drag them through the streets, people should stop and gawk and feel convicted to change. Have you offered guidance that keeps moderates happy? Or are you really seeking solidarity with those who most desperately need to hear Jesus' message?

Jesus spoke for the least of these. He said blessed are those who are poor in spirit, who mourn, who work for peace, and who are persecuted for righteousness sake. The Episcopal Church at large has so much work to do to become the Beloved Community. We have centuries of ties with America's imperialism and colonization, including our role as a slaveholding denomination. For us to move forward, we need to focus on those who we've harmed more than those who have always been in power. "You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste...it is no longer good for anything." Let us be salty. Let us be useful. Let us name and condemn sin loudly, and stand with those it might seem uncomfortable to stand with, even if they do end up

breaking a couple of our stained glass windows. Let us do better, in Jesus' name.

FOR HIS SAKE,

Ari L. Monts
Austin, TX



WITHOUT EXCUSE

THE CRITIQUE OF NATURE AND CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WITH BLACK LIVES MATTER

The demand for justice that issues from Black Lives Matter is a sufficient warrant unto itself to demand the full solidarity of Christians. What follows should not therefore be taken to suggest that a certain theological investigation -- especially one coming from a white man like myself -- is in any way "necessary" for Christian solidarity or that BLM's demand for justice is somehow deficient until it's "approved" by theology. In fact, it is precisely the opposite that is the case. However the scourge of racism appears to the eyes of faith, it is crucial that Christians keep in view the fact that racism is an entirely this-world problem, intelligible and therefore available for abolition on its own terms. Unfortunately, much of the overthinking and ambivalence that plagues the (white) Christian response to racism stems in part from a failure to recognize this fact; a fundamental misidentification of the kind of problem that racism is.

Excursus. It is a truism on the left that capitalism stands out for its remarkable ability to distort our perception of things. Furthermore, because it arises from within a Christian imagination, capitalism gains a

significant amount of its endurance and plausibility from the manner in which it reconfigures certain claims of Christianity.

For instance, consider how capitalism is predicated on the doctrine of the Fall. If liberal rationality presumed to understand things as they "really are," then the social relations as imposed by capitalism were likewise understood to simply be the "natural" relations of human beings. But this required a *conflation* of what Christian theology had at least traditionally kept separate. No matter how thoroughly pervasive the effects of the Fall were on the human race and the creation in which it lived, the Fall was nevertheless considered to be a defect of a prior integrity. However, capitalism makes this defect constitutive: the distinction between humanity as originally created and humanity as depraved by sin is effectively erased. Having collapsed the competitive impulses of an estranged and alienated humanity into the nature of things, capitalism constructs a new natural law, a new realm of neutrality. As a result, while moral judgments about those impulses are still permitted, they are limited merely to what are seen as the *deviations* --

whether of excess or deficiency -- of what is otherwise stable and natural (a standard of judgment that has incidentally proven most useful in the racial categorization of black people vis-a-vis white people). Morality is thus permitted to judge only the exceptions to the rule; and, as we learn from Augustine's idea of evil as a privation of the good, exceptions are neither inherent nor essential to their corresponding norms. Moral judgments of capitalism's sins thereby serve to reinforce the normativity of capitalist social relations and human conduct [1]. Because capitalist social relations are located in a public realm of facts -- and are therefore "natural" -- those relations *themselves* are necessarily exempted from moral judgment, since moral judgments are conversely located in the private realm of individual preference.

The irony, however, is that far from abolishing Christianity, this bifurcation offers it an enticing role to play in the liberal-capitalist order. Christianity will always have job security under capitalism because, as a private matter itself, religion is tasked with the moral regulation of individuals that disciplines them into proper capitalist subjects. Once confined to their properly private realm, both religion and moral judgments alike perform a vital function in the maintenance of capitalism. But religion doesn't merely perform this task as though it were an assignment sent down

from upper management. On the contrary, religion *internalizes* this task into its theological imagination. Our doctrine, our churches, even our account of "the Gospel" itself, are aligned with this task so as to produce a mutually reciprocal relationship between capitalism and religion.

I begin with this excursus on capitalism because it is essential for understanding the difficulty of (white) Christians to properly identify the kind of problem that racism is. After all, as the theory of "racial capitalism" as developed by Cedric Robinson suggests, it is doubtful that capitalism and racism were ever separate to begin with (see also Willie James Jennings on this point). So, the manner in which many Christians across the political spectrum attempt to address the problem of racism reveals that our theological imagination is coextensive with capitalist logic.

"Sin" is a theological category, even for progressive Christians who readily admit its "systemic" dimensions. But recall that, under capitalism, to identify something theologically is to categorically remove it from facts, from nature, from politics. It is to immediately frame it as something separate from the world and society, and therefore as something that is unintelligible apart from the "private" claims derived from divine revelation. So, to identify something as "sin" is to

transpose it into an otherworldly key, inadmissible to the world on its own terms. Granted, this theological account has a longstanding precedent in certain streams of the Christian tradition that are not reducible to capitalism. Indeed, not far beneath this whole discussion is the perennial question concerning the relationship between nature and grace. But the affinity between this theological account and the capitalist conception of nature is nevertheless significant, as the logic of capitalism maps the distinction between nature and grace onto the distinction between public and private. Consequently, if one accepts the configuration of religion as established by capitalism, then a theological category such as sin becomes an incredibly convenient tool with which to mystify capitalism's manifold injustices, racism included.

For American Christians, the claim that racism is a sin is hardly controversial. What is hotly contested is rather the kind of sin that racism represents; it is, in short, a dispute about whether racism is a "systemic" sin as opposed to a "personal" sin. And yet, our consensus about the sinfulness of racism leads inexorably to a further consensus about the kind of solution that Christianity proposes. Whether conservative or progressive, some account of "the Gospel" is what is nearly always put forward as what our society needs to overcome its affliction of

racism. And this makes sense for a religion that hopes for the redemption of a sinful world. But what this fails to examine is the nature of sin itself, as well as what we are saying when we identify the "sin" of racism. It too often takes for granted both the construction of nature under racial capitalism and the corresponding privatization of religious claims, having internalized both under the guise of theology.

What this looks like in practice is when Christians routinely assume that if racism is a sin, it must necessarily be some kind of ineffable evil that is ineradicable without the redemption offered by "the Gospel." Even if one grants the historical and structural conditions of racism, the moment that racism is identified as a sin, it effectively becomes a problem whose solution can only be seen with the eyes of faith -- a private vision. Note how often BLM is framed as something that has to be "related" to Christianity, as if from the outside, as opposed to something that may be already incumbent on us simply as human beings. And it's irrelevant whether it is related positively or negatively, because in either case, many Christians -- particularly those who are white -- remain unable to account for Black Lives Matter except from a position that is theologically detached from its politics: a detachment that presupposes the *racialized* exemption of white people from the demands of BLM even as it

strives to induce in them a *spiritualized* solidarity as white Christians. The attempt to build support for the cause of black liberation upon exclusively theological appeals -- such as to the "sinfulness" of racism -- can mask an unspoken admission that there are no other appeals that can be made. To put it in Ibram X. Kendi's terminology, even if Christians reject the "racist" belief that "problems are rooted in groups of people" -- as opposed to the "anti-racist" belief that "locates the roots of problems in power and policies" -- the problem is that sin *is* rooted, if not in select groups of people, at least in people generally [2]. Sin only pertains to "power and policies" to the extent that people implement or reinforce them (since power and policies are incapable of committing sin on their own), which is why the exclusive framing of racism along the lines of sin/redemption disqualifies it from being properly "anti-racist" as defined by Kendi. Without the necessary critique, the concept of "systemic sin" can get distracted by precisely the kind of individualistic moral conduct that it seeks to transcend. And this happens to play right into the hand of the conservative Christian reaction against BLM by needlessly entangling the *natural* imperative to abolish unjust structures with the *spiritual* drama of sin and redemption.

Now, I would be at risk of succumbing to the very bifurcation I've already critiqued if

I were to claim that Christianity has *nothing* to say about the problem of racism. To bracket our theological critique of sin from our solidarity with the politics of Black Lives Matter would simply be to hop on the opposite side of the capitalist partition that's imposed between religion and politics. So, perhaps it's more accurate to say that Christians are in need of *better* theology than a wholesale dismissal. Nevertheless, when it comes to the problem of racism, this better theology will be marked by a respect for the integrity of a thoroughly "natural" politics of abolition and the moral obligations that fall upon us as humans. And even if we register it as a "sin" (which we absolutely should), the effects of this sin will still be those whose abolition need not necessarily involve the gift of grace. The racist sins which induced the managers of white supremacy to implement its structural dimensions may in fact be so grave that only the power of God can redeem (or damn) them, but fortunately for us, those structural dimensions are not so ineradicable. Nor do we need stand by as we wait patiently for the piecemeal repentance of every white person's complicity, as though the structures of racism were the symptoms of individual sensibilities and not the other way around. That isn't to say that the personal sins of racism aren't formidable in their own right or that they can always be neatly detached from racism's structural dimensions -- there's certainly a reciprocal

relationship between the two. And within the church we should be most vigilant in disciplining any vestige of racism as a grievous sin. But even still, the appeal to Christians for the abolition of racism as a structure of injustice must begin not with “sin” or any particularly “theological” category at all, but with a critique of the concept of “nature” as established by racial capitalism -- a critique that is accordingly rooted *not* in theology, but in a rival political account of nature such as that put forward by Black Lives Matter. For it is the presumption that these structures represent the inviolable laws of nature that leads us to imagine that only a divine injection of an otherworldly grace can abolish, if not the structures themselves, at least the private sins of the individuals within them. In short, Christians access the politics of BLM first as humans, accountable to the demands of justice that are discernible within the natural order already -- we are indeed “without excuse” (Rom. 1:20) -- and only secondarily as Christians who are accountable to the even higher standard of discipleship.

Perhaps I’ve made my point already. That the response of so many white Christians to Black Lives Matter is one of cynicism and resignation reveals just how insignificant their inner dispositions are to the abolition of racism. However, notwithstanding the incredible capacity for reactionary violence that cynicism and resignation possess, this response is

ultimately one of disavowal: it is the only reaction left when the sheer artificiality of racism is exposed for all to see. Which is just one of the reasons why Christians should concede that, with regard to the abolitionist politics of Black Lives Matter, we aren’t induced to participate for any specifically “Christian” reasons. Far from impugning our theological vision or the redemptive potential of the Gospel, however, this concession witnesses to their radical clarity. The humanity of those fighting to dismantle white supremacy is as conspicuous as the structures that must be dismantled -- which is more than conspicuous enough. Our theology lends its greatest solidarity by refusing to obstruct the view.

Caleb Roberts

Ponca City, Oklahoma

[1] Mark Fisher. *Capitalist Realism*, 16.

[2] Ibram X. Kendi. *How to be an Anti-Racist*, 9.

SPECIFICITY

& MORAL IMAGINATION

Summer 2020 exploded into turbulence as the pressures of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the ongoing racist brutality of American police led to widespread and continuing protests. It is a moment of unrest and, perhaps, also a moment of renewal. As many have noted, the pressures of this year are functioning apocalyptically, revealing deep-seated inequities that have been invisible too long. As these inequities are revealed, how will we respond?

I am a prison abolitionist and a Christian. What I have learned from the organizers and activists who came before me is that systemic change will not necessarily develop from unrest unless we guide it, imagining what could be from clear discernment of the specifics of the current reality we fight. And what my faith teaches me is that the Christian story and the hope of the coming kingdom of God, made present in Word and Sacrament, offers a profound basis for such revolutionary work. But too often that potential is squandered as the church shies away from specifics in moral reasoning and

radical imagination in sacramental practice. In this moment of tumult, I call upon the church to respond in a way that only the church can: by using Word and Sacrament to witness to and practice a revolutionary specificity that will support and expand our moral imagination and our work of radical solidarity.

Abolition requires a new moral imagination. The reality of abolition is that it requires not only that we build power to dismantle unjust structures and develop alternatives, but that we cultivate an imagination expansive enough not to recreate the problems we are trying to solve. Organizer Mariame Kaba says that the cops are “in our heads and in our hearts” and we must remove them from our imagination of what’s possible before we can undo our reliance on policing, prisons, and carceral structures in our society. Dr. Ruth Wilson Gilmore puts it this way: “Abolition requires that we change only one thing, which is everything.” In my own abolitionist work, I have learned that the conceptual gap is as difficult to confront as the organized

resistance. I educate about abolition from a Christian standpoint for the church—and I am heartbroken every day by how far we have to go, and by the paucity of our imagination as a church when it comes to the matters of justice: Which is, as Cornel West says, “what love looks like in public.”

What do I mean by the paucity of our imagination? I mean that almost no churches are willing to make a pledge not to call the police. I mean that our response to unhoused people living on our property is too often to put up security cameras, to fear for our property over their lives, to prioritize the safety of other stakeholders who use our campuses through “official” channels over the dignity of the most marginalized. I mean that our responses to abuse and misconduct in the church rely heavily on mandated reporting to civil authorities and thereby on cooperation with the carceral state and its death-dealing powers. I mean that I have learned far more about accountability, including how I take accountability for doing harm myself, from secular practitioners of transformative justice than I have ever heard preached in church. I mean that our understanding of our community ministries is still bound up in outdated conceptions of “outreach” whereby we (presumed rich) provide for those who are “less fortunate,” rather than by understanding our work in the community as grounded in our mutual need for one another and building new

forms of mutual aid with ultimately revolutionary aim. I mean that we claim to be able to imagine the coming of the kingdom of God—but we don’t seem to be able to imagine that justice doesn’t have to involve punishment or that we have the capacity to care for one another without reliance on violent state systems.

The ethical role of the church is to develop moral imagination. The church exists as the first frontier of the kingdom of God, at the boundary between the coming kingdom and the world under the sway of the powers of death. As an outpost of the inbreaking reign of God, the Church’s role is to interpret to the world the new life of grace, the new way of being in freedom, the ultimate liberation of the cosmos. This has aspects beyond the ethical, but on the ethical level, this ultimacy of freedom looses our imagination for new possibilities. To do Christian ethics is precisely to do imaginative ethics, to let the newness and absurdity of the gospel break down the walls in our thinking and nourish new possibilities of love and divine freedom.

We develop and practice such imagination in our life together through Word and Sacrament.

The word of God, applied to our material circumstances, offers a radical resource for developing a revolutionary moral imagination. But for the word to do its

work of expanding our moral imagination requires specificity. Our imagination expands in the places where our values, put into action and applied to specific situations, challenge the status quo. The call to “love our neighbor as ourselves,” without specificity, is inspiring, but the call to apply it to our particular neighbors and to material systems of oppression is where we find growth in imagination.

What does the Great Commandment say about my responsibility to an unhoused person sleeping in the alley behind my house—not about the need to “find solutions to homelessness” in general, but about what I do in that moment for that individual, knowing that I am housed and they are not? What does it say about my responsibility to avoid calling the police on someone if that might risk their life? What does it say about my individual, personal responsibility to support systemic change through mass decarceration in a time of dangerous pandemic, remembering those in prison as if in prison with them (Heb. 13:3)?

The new life of the reign of God is constantly breaking into our reality in concrete and specific ways. To develop a new moral imagination through the word requires that we name those specifics prophetically and hopefully, identifying where the newness of God is already present in works of resistance and naming as deadly the specific ways of the status

quo that we have too long accepted. To learn such specificity requires that we look to the work of marginalized activists and follow the lead of those most directly affected by systems of oppression, building true relationships of proximity and mutuality (in the eloquent language of attorney Bryan Stevenson and Fr. Greg Boyle).

I believe there is a desire in the church for ethical specificity. Episcopalians famously, and frustratingly, tend to base all ethical reasoning on one vow from the baptismal vows in the Book of Common Prayer: “Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?” (p. 305). I say frustratingly, because on its own, this vow is not specific enough to guide every ethical decision—and yet, at the same time, the current Baptismal Covenant was written to expand, in specific terms, on the traditional vows to renounce the powers of evil and follow Christ as Lord and Savior. [1] Perhaps the reason the most modern of our baptismal vows is the most frequently-referenced one is that it meets a real felt need for specificity in ethical guidance.

And yet, continuing to develop such ethical specificity remains a struggle. We name the need to love our neighbor; we name the need to fight against racism; we name the need to resist mass incarceration, but we do not want to be so

explicit as to say, over and over, in every congregation, that fighting racism means defunding the police, because it requires following the lead of local activists who are most directly affected, and making the same radical demands they are making. Resisting mass incarceration, as followers of the one who came to set the prisoners free (Luke 4:18) means naming abolition as our goal—not naming vague “reform” in order to leave an out for those who want to maintain a retributive, carceral system for those it’s easiest to hate. We are willing to say with Jesus, that you cannot serve God and Mammon only because of the distance imposed by the archaic language, which provides safety in vagueness. We won’t go as far as to translate it into modern terms and modern material conditions, to say: “You cannot follow Jesus and support capitalism.”

Our lack of specificity means that our ethical witness grinds to a halt at the lowest common denominator, as we offer unobjectionable consensus statements in place of specific applications of the Word of God. And our specificity means that we are not pushing each other, in our lives together in the church, to expand and deepen and challenge our moral imagination. Broad stroke statements allow each of us to find a place of agreement within our current understanding; but removing the cops from our heads and our hearts, building a moral imagination that truly follows Jesus

on the “narrow way” that leads to life, requires that we name our goals, our values, and the radical way of love in specific, challenging, and controversial terms. “Whoever has two cloaks must give to one who has none.” What do we ever say today that is equally clear, equally specific, or equally difficult?

Specificity is also cultivated symbolically. Our sacramental life provides another locus for expanding and enacting our moral imagination as the new life in Christ collides with the present reality—but only if we let the specifics of material realities affect how we imagine our sacraments in life-giving ways.

At the same time as the pandemic has revealed the underlying inequities of our society in bright-line color, the necessity of social distancing threw our liturgical and sacramental symbols into question. As we are forced to rethink what our sacramental symbols look like, how can we take this opportunity to let our creative moral imagination—nurtured by specific calls to justice, and in specific contexts—reform our sacramental practice?

The beauty of sacraments is that they not only speak but also act directly through their form and practice. As William Cavanaugh writes, the Eucharist is not primarily a way of symbolizing political meanings but a counter-politics that makes us “engaged in a direct

confrontation with the politics of the world.” [2] The sacraments let us grope and fumble toward making real what we envision with our expanded moral imagination: what Gilmore calls “rehearsing the revolution” again and again. But for our sacraments to be an effective rehearsal of the revolution and an effective counter-politics requires that they be grounded in the imaginative ethics born out of specific contexts and commitments.

Remote distribution of communion during this pandemic—through (safe and socially-distanced) eucharistic visitation or other means—offers such a visible reimagining of sacramental practice, emphasizing as it does the ways in which absence is always inherent in a sacrament that presents Christ at the moment of his abandonment by God in solidarity with what Ignacio Ellacuría calls “the crucified peoples of the world.” As Jesus says right after instituting the Eucharist, “You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered’” (Mt. 26:31). Our dispersion, perhaps, brings us closer to Jesus and the earliest Eucharistic practice than our triumphant gatherings do, as it forces us to experience concrete solidarity with those absent because of inaccessibility or oppression. Communion-in-dispersion helps us to imagine our communities as transcending those able

to gather in worship, and shows us Christ’s body as he is really present in those marginalized and excluded to the same extent as in the bread and wine.

But for such a sacramental practice to form a meaningful counter-politics in our current context, it must also be grounded in acts of concrete solidarity with those who are marginalized and excluded. The specificity of the Word, calling us to radical ethical action, empowers our practice of the sacraments to enact a counter-politics of solidarity. The specifics of the context and the radical call to action in the wider community provide the foundation for the symbolic practice of sacraments.

Another example comes from disability theology. Nancy Eiesland writes that “the eucharistic practices of the church must make real our remembrance of the disabled God by making good on body practices of access and inclusion.”[3] Our practice of Eucharist in a time of pandemic requires us to first be open to such access and inclusion with (for those of us who are abled, new and too long in coming) fresh urgency. We must investigate and meet the access needs of those in our communities—both accessibility for disabled people, and access to the technology which mediates our current forms of worship. A Eucharist grounded in such specific practices of accessibility becomes a work of

imaginative solidarity. At this time of upheaval, then, the question posed to our preaching of the word is: how do we imagine, in the specific commitments we make to those around us, the inbreaking dawn of the reign of God in the midst of systems of oppression and death? The question posed to our practices of Sacraments is: having imagined the just kingdom to come, how do we begin to enact it? The work of the church is to let the specifics of concrete solidarity develop our moral imagination, and then let our creative imagination reshape our sacramental practice into an effective counter-politics, a first-fruits of radical action. We imagine, we rehearse—and so God brings about the revolution.

Hannah Bowman
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[1] See Ruth Meyers, *Continuing the Reformation: Re-Visioning Baptism in the Episcopal Church* (Church Publishing: 1997), 205.

[2] William Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist* (Blackwell: 1998), 12.

[3] Nancy Eiesland, *The Disabled God: Toward a Liberatory Theology of Disability* (Abingdon Press, 1994), 114.

THURSDAY, 4:30 A.M.

What kind of lavish God

have we

who makes even the dogs to dream?

Witness

At almost forty

I fear --
on behalf of others--
who I've become some days.

I hide the end table volumes with their tell-all bookmarks.
I shutter up tight the Pantocrator triptych

and disown for the duration of your visit
the call,
the chord,
the concordance.

Hook, Eyes, and Loops

Choose your salutation. This is a mandatory field.

The vandals weaponize their legs to level the dog-doo disposal station, my squeaky bike wheels their only hint of my witness. The south-facing guest room native plant greenhouse is now also a live-stream evening prayer production studio. I organize bubble mailers and put away snow pants again—not because they need to be done but because I need the doing and maybe less coffee. The robins are not social distancing. They overturn hoop skirts to copulate in otherwise useless streets. All we have is all we've ever had. Tell us a story, Governor Cuomo. My wristwatch stops. Replacing the lucky-find 377 battery doesn't revive it. Try turning forty in a lenten pandemic. yea, verily & forsooth. Actually, woodland faeries do not unload the dishwasher. But bars of soap are the thieves of our hourglass figures. Our toes and lungs likely will make it out of this okay. Our livers, on the other hand, not so much. cheers. In that Good Friday bath soaking along with me was the inescapable fact, as reported by *The Wall Street Journal*, of burying the dead on Hart Island.

No one has ever seen God.

It is after Easter now so we add the alleluias and the overnight snowfalls. Zoom exists only to remind you how often you touch your face. Gasoline, cheap as groundwater, powers go-kart soccer—gaming streets named after the housing developer's grandchildren. Stitching masks until fingertips are tender as allium shoots is filed into memory. We maintain the accidental diary, the underground currency of group text conversation. It barter in memes and ideas for toilet paper alternatives such as may apple, catalpa come June.

In Sickness

In sickness and in health but we never imagine all of humanity as sick when we say
I will,
never think that all these facing us from pews and witnessing vows will spend months
in masks, never think the sickness will lead to the murder of Breonna or George or
Rayshard, our siblings in Imago Dei.
Why didn't *The Americans*—covered over in Sharpie-doodled brown grocery sacks
and slammed into lockers with a quiz on Monday
—make bolded vocabulary words out of terms we need now:
The 1918 Flu Pandemic, Juneteenth, white privilege, Red Summer
in customized test questions useful enough to keep us from repeating
our bloody or asphyxiated horrors?
In sickness and in health but the sickness is
the acid romance of rain in your hair, in your glass, in your honeymoon infinity pool.

Anne-Marie Warner
Kalamazoo, Michigan
GrowChristians.org

VIDA DUTTON SCUDDER

A COMPANION
FOR
TODAY'S COMRADES



This magazine exists because of Vida Dutton Scudder (1861-1954)—Anglican churchwoman, socialist radical, and longtime English professor at Wellesley College. That’s her in profile on the cover of the first issue, and again, haloed in vaporwave pink, in *The Hour’s* Twitter pic. Her 1917 book *The Church and the Hour* not only lends this magazine its title, it also tells us what makes her a fitting companion for Christian Leftist comrades today: her insistence that the church speak against the injustice of the moment, and her confidence that the church has its own resources to contribute to the fight for social justice.

In 1884, Scudder became one of the first American women to study at Oxford University. There she heard some of John Ruskin’s final public lectures. Ruskin’s plea for beauty and justice against the aesthetic and moral ugliness of industrial capitalism helped to radicalize her and propelled her to volunteer, first with the Salvation Army, and then to help establish a settlement house in New York City.

From early on, Scudder joined *ora* with *labora* in her work for social justice, like the monastics she so admired. She joined the Society of the Companions of the Holy Cross, an Anglican women’s order devoted to intercessory prayer, in 1889. In 1890, she helped to launch the Episcopal Church of the Carpenter in Boston under Rev. W. D. P. Bliss.

This Christian Socialist church plant strove to bring together “all sorts and conditions” of people in worship of the God who became human as a homeless worker.

The essay re-published here, “Socialism and Spiritual Progress,” is from 1896. It contains in embryo the argument of her most important political statement, her 1910 book *Socialism and Character*. Both offer rejoinders to the conservative canard that socialism makes for lazy and entitled citizens—an attack still levelled against young socialists today. Scudder demonstrates that socialism, by removing unnecessary barriers to right action, can actually raise the ethical level of the populace. This polemically useful argument also embodies the most important gift that Christian Socialism can offer to the wider Left: its vision of morality and politics, the quest for holiness and the quest for the good society, as inseparable. Leftist movements that sever ethics and politics have, in the past, ceased reckoning what philosopher Alain Badiou calls “the singularity of human lives” to disastrous results.

But why did it take Scudder fourteen years—a period of time in which she published several other books—to work “Socialism and Spiritual Progress” up to full length? Part of the answer might lie in the personal and professional turmoil those years held.

In 1900, Scudder helped lead an ultimately unsuccessful protest against Wellesley's acceptance of a large donation of "tainted money" from the Rockefellers. Worn out and betrayed—she had thought women's colleges were a force for progress but now understood, for all the good they did, how deeply they were imbricated in the capitalist establishment—she had a neurasthenic breakdown. In her distress, she found strength in the writing and example of St. Catherine of Siena, publishing a translation of her letters, and of St. Francis of Assisi.

Equally important was the courage she drew from her "Comrade and Companion" Florence Converse (1871-1967), the socialist novelist and poet with whom she lived. Scudder dedicated *Socialism and Character* to Converse in a preface she composed at La Verna in Tuscany, where Francis had received the stigmata. The preface announced her bond with Converse to the world; it also declared that the two had stepped beyond churchly organizations of social action to join the Socialist Party of America. In their courageous solidarity and the boldness of their love, Scudder and Converse might offer particular companionship to LGBTQ+ comrades on today's Christian Left.

Jonathan McGregor
Irmo, SC

19

C. M. Healy

Christian

PUBLICATIONS

OF

THE CHURCH SOCIAL UNION.

ISSUED SEMI-MONTHLY.

Series A, No. 10. } JANUARY, 1, 1896. { PER ANNUM, \$1.00.
SINGLE NUMBERS, 10c.

SOCIALISM AND SPIRITUAL
PROGRESS,---
A SPECULATION.

BY

VIDA D. SCUDDER.

BOSTON :
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
THE DIOCESAN HOUSE,
1 JOY STREET.
1896.

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THE CHURCH SOCIAL UNION,

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SOCIALISM AND SPIRITUAL PROGRESS, —A SPECULATION.

WE are all talking about socialism to-day. We discuss its abstract principles. We question, emphatically, whether it is practicable with such beings as men, in a world like the present. Granting it to be practicable, we discuss methods of approach. Finally, we debate, *ad infinitum*, the machinery which, were socialism accomplished, would regulate human life. But there is just one thing we do not talk much about, and that is, supposing the socialistic state a fact, supposing we arrive, what sort of men and women shall we be when we get there?

Concerning this phase of the subject, even one of the uninitiated must be permitted to think. Though one dare not discuss the rights of capital or the future of trusts; though he avoid, with unspeakable devotion, all views of the single tax; though he keep a religious silence when contradictory definitions of wealth, value, utility, are hurled at his head,—he cannot shut out earnest speculations on the ethical and spiritual bearings of the socialistic ideal. And he has a right to think, and to speak his thought, though the world call him vague, popular, or sentimental.

For the issue between socialism and individualism is in essence not technical, but vital. Its ultimate sphere of discussion is the practical life of man. And, whether we will or no, whether we be radical or conservative, whether we derive our opinions from hearsay, from temperament, or from strenuous wrestling with truth, in this great science of human life we are perforce, by the very terms of existence, specialists each and all.

It is on great moral issues that the battles of the world are fought and won. The fate of such battles is not determined by the intellectual men, versed in technicalities, wise with the eternal policy of the expedient. It is determined by men who see truly because they see simply; who grasp

some great principle out of a seeming tangle of confusion; who glow with moral passion. Peter, not Thomas, is the leader of the early church; Luther, not Erasmus, the hero of the Reformation.

The issue between socialism and individualism is, I believe, the leading issue of this age-weary modern world. The men to come will envy us, as sharers in a battle greater than the antislavery struggle; greater than any phase in the eternal battle of the race for liberty since the convulsion of the Protestant Reformation set man free in the sphere of religion, as socialism promises to set him free in the sphere of economics. And it will be clear in retrospect, as it cannot be clear in experience, that the question which we are meeting is essentially broad, simple, ethical.

If this be so, it behooves us to question sharply the spiritual ideal inherent in socialism; for this ideal will really determine men's judgments. It is not sufficient to show that the socialistic state will rest on a truer basis than the present order: we must also show that it will develop a nobler personality. Even that form of socialism known as Christian has not shown us this. In common with much earnest thought, it holds the present order to be corrupt at heart; it goes farther, and proclaims that the way of escape is to be found in the application of the teachings of Christ to the outward life of society and business, as well as to the inward life of the soul. But we must go farther yet. We need more than the recognition of evil, than the faith in a principle of escape. We need a distinct ideal to which we may advance. Unless such an ideal is manifest, socialism will never prevail. For, explain it how we will, not our facts but our ideals,—will-o'-the-wisps, mirages, though they may seem,—our ideals are the lights that fail not, the stars that lead not astray.

More and more is this question concerning the ethical value of socialism coming to the front. Everywhere men are beginning to ask, not "Is socialism practicable?" but "Is it desirable?" The question is not easy to answer. Quite possibly men would be better off in the socialistic state; but it is much more important to know whether they would be any better. Socialism promises that everybody is to be comfortable; yet the end of life is not comfort, but character. What about character? What sort of spiritual environment shall we have? What moral incentives? These are the essential questions, after all. In our much

talking about social mechanism, I think they have been in danger of neglect. Let us muse over them a little, and seek at least for the direction of answer.

I shall not attempt closely to define the socialistic state. I do not hold that it will imply of necessity the abolition of private property. I do hold it to imply collective ownership of the means of production. In the socialist state, as I conceive, material wealth will be distributed on the basis, not of service, but of need. Thus physical support will be insured to all. Absolute equality will not perhaps prevail, but outward conditions will be far more equal than at present. There will be no more violent extremes of riches and poverty, luxury and degradation. Those at the bottom will no longer need to strain every nerve lest the fiend starvation overtake them; those at the top will no longer be allowed to roll themselves in vast heaps of wealth. At both ends disproportion will be cut away; no amount of cleverness, snap, effort, will enable a man to get much ahead of his neighbor in the race for wealth, and society will tend towards a dead level of external equality.

I am not pretending to ask whether this can ever be done. In this discussion I take the liberty of assumption. I am only concerned with the result on character of a hypothetically achieved socialism.

A number of our wisest thinkers believe that the results would be disastrous. "All forms of socialism are forms of slavery."—so Herbert Spencer calmly announces. "Materialism and socialism," exclaims that clear, sad soul, Henri Frédéric Amiel, "two modern tendencies which ignore the true value of human personality, and blot it out in the collective life of nature or of society."

Let us expand their thought. The value of life is in struggle; all individuality springs from the conflict with destiny. This conflict socialism would destroy. For our modern world—stern, strenuous, stirring, with its fierce and eager activities, its vigor, its suspense—socialism substitutes, what? A mechanism of dull monotony, a vulgarized and cockney ease. Now zest is found in contrast alone. All our artistic pleasure, all our romance, depend upon the strong alternations of light and shade. Take away suspense, and the dramatic element would vanish. What makes men care to live to-day, or exert themselves in living? The uncertainties of life,—the consciousness

of the horror of black failure waiting to engulf them; of prizes to be won if they shall prove themselves the fittest to survive. In the socialist state, all this will go, and in consequence a desperate ennui, a profound world-weariness, will engulf the human race. To use a phrase of Matthew Arnold's: "We shall all yawn in each other's faces with imperturbable gravity." We shall be bored to death.

Kingsley, in "Water Babies," describes a race of men who lived in a delectable country. All day they sat under soft-foliaged trees, whence dropped into their laps the nicest little hot rolls. Roast pigs, small and succulent, trotted up to them, squealing enticingly, "Come eat me! come eat me!" But those happy people grew by degrees too lazy to pick up the rolls out of their laps; too lazy to bite the little pigs. Sad to say, that favored race perished by slow starvation, and the earth knew them no more.

Exactly this will happen in the socialist state. People will no longer be forced to work by the stringent fear of starvation; thus they will not work at all. We shall end by producing a race of dead-beats. And not only will interest and energy vanish; virtue, as we now conceive it, will cease to exist. Courage, endurance, industry,—the militant instincts,—will have no room to play in. Self-sacrifice and charity, with no one left on whom to exercise them, will die a natural death. The mechanical elimination of motives to crime may, indeed, produce a passive virtue, pallid with negation; but a full-blooded, self-disciplined, ascetic character, trained by denial, alert and vigorous through resistance, we shall see no longer. The full, free swing of individual competition which we have to-day is better than this characterless millenium. Many are crushed, physically and morally; this we do not attempt to deny. But the human struggle for existence is simply in line with the struggle in all nature; and it is out of the whirl and fight, the inexorable sternness of difficulties overcome, that evolution has produced its miracles. Human nature itself is a palimpsest of the battles of the past; and the law of conflict must ever, as heretofore, be the law of growth.

Now, this is a very dismal prophecy. And I must confess that all the advocates of socialism whom I know, even the noblest, lend it a good deal of countenance. Socialist Utopias seem to me dreary, lacking in color, interest, life;

painfully dull in their suggestions of enervating material prosperity.

The difficulty is not modern. John Stuart Mill felt it clearly sixty years ago. His youth was filled with ardent hopes and plans for the future of humanity, though he had not at this time become a socialist. One day the thought came to him: Suppose his ideal realized, what would life mean? And the answer sprang from his soul in horrified surprise, Nothing! It would be hollow at heart. This discovery threw Mill into a profound melancholy, from which he only rallied by reading the poetry of Wordsworth,—a medicine which, excellent in its place, not the most ardent Wordsworthian would recommend as a solace for the entire human race. Nay, farther back than Mill we find the same suggestion, that if our present evils were removed, life would be hopelessly tame. The poet Shelley, who was a good communist, wrote us a lyrical drama, which he called the "Prometheus Unbound," and which represents in all its first glow and glory the democratic ideal that we are trying to realize to-day. The poem is about humanity,—its torture, its bondage, its temptation, its redemption, its final bliss. All through the scenes of suffering and bondage the verse bounds and soars and sings. It is like sunlit waves of the sea, like clouds of dawn, like singing birds, like all that is rapturous with life. But as soon as the redemption is accomplished, and humanity set free, the verse flags and drops; the poem becomes stupid; we yawn over it, despite ourselves. All Shelley has to tell us is that men, when their ideal is reached, are to be "equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless, exempt from awe, worship, degree;" and when we imagine them reduced to this freedom of blank negation, we know that they must have been as tedious to themselves as the thought of them is to us.

When I come nearer home, and think of our more recent Utopias, I find much the same trouble. I confess the life which "Looking Backward" describes for us does not attract me in the least. In its smug materialism, its Philistine pervasiveness of comfort, it seems to me dismal. I would a great deal rather live in the nineteenth century—yes, even if I were a working-girl on five dollars a week—than in Mr. Bellamy's twentieth century. William Morris, in his last Utopia, "News from Nowhere," has felt this difficulty, and suggests a mode of escape. His

old sage speaks to the waif of our world, who has wandered into an Epoch of Rest:—

“I can at least hint at one of the chief difficulties which had to be met; and that was that, when men began to settle down after the war, and their labor had pretty much filled up the gap in wealth caused by the destruction of that war, a kind of disappointment seemed coming over us, and the prophecies of some of the reactionists of past times seemed as if they would come true, and a dull level of utilitarian comfort be the end for a while of our aspirations and success. . . . But, after all, this dull thundercloud only threatened us, and then passed over. Probably, from what I have told you before, you will have a guess at the remedy for such a disaster. . . . That remedy was, in short, the production of what used to be called art, but which has no name among us now because it has become a necessary part of the labor of every man who produces.” And elsewhere he says: “The spirit of the new days, of our days, was to be delight in the life of this world; intense and almost overweening love of the very skin and surface of the earth on which man dwells, such as a lover has in the fair flesh of the woman he loves. All other moods save this had been exhausted.”

Thus Morris would find the meaning of life in art, in nature, and, he adds elsewhere, in love between the sexes. I confess that I am not quite satisfied. I find no progressive element in his idyllic pictures of the easy life to be. I do not admire the men and women he describes. Scope or incentive for the development of character, for the free play of the higher spiritual instincts, I here, as in all other socialist ideals with which I am familiar, fail to discover.

Yet, if socialism be not adapted to produce a higher character than the present order, of socialism we will have nothing. No, not though it bring never so much material comfort in its train; not though it bestow on humanity complete exemption from the grosser forms of vice.

But are these negative conditions of comfort and virtue really all that socialism can promise us? Despite the Utopias of the socialists, I do not think so. Let us search for ourselves the interests and incentives that will exist in the socialist state, and question whether men will be sunk in the dull mechanism of selfish routine, or set free for a fuller life of work and aspiration.

We shall be helped in our speculative enquiry by seeing

what conditions now, in our present experience, prove most conducive to the development of character, and by comparing these conditions with those offered by socialism. Whence spring our great men,—great in moral heroism, in intellectual and imaginative reach, in active power?

If the advocates of individualism are right, we should expect to find them at the bottom of the social scale. There the inspiring forces of competition have free play; there the sharp goad of necessity drives men to fiercest exertion; there rages that struggle for existence from whose clash and conflict, we are told, all heroisms, all most strenuous virtues, all clear and strong and forceful personalities, emerge triumphant.

Alas! For these fine, fancy pictures, one looks in vain in the ranks of the very poor. Instead of characters racy, bold, and free, you shall see, if you wander through workshops or slums, sodden faces, natures obtuse to finer issues. I think the testimony of all who have lived among the poor would agree that there is nothing to equal the dull monotony of their lives, the pathetic barrenness of their natures.

Do I say nothing? I mistake. In another region, in a remote sphere, the same characteristics reign. Think of our very rich; of our "leisure classes," still, thank Heaven, small. Would you know its interests, its occupations, its aims? Read Ward McAllister, and you will rise from the book with a profound pity in your heart for our fashionable society, deep as any you can feel for the denizen of the slums.

Two classes in the community are hopelessly bored,—the very poor and the very rich. And from these two classes, to-day and in the long sequence of history, our great men do not spring.

They do not spring from extreme poverty; there, life is starved. They do not spring from extreme luxury; there, life is stifled.

They spring, I call all history to witness, from the ranks of the great middle class. They spring from conditions which neither enervate nor crush; conditions simple, austere, peaceful; summoning, tempting to work, but, unless in rare cases, not forcing to it. The necessity of self-support has been in the back-ground only of the consciousness of most great men. Shakespeare knew it not; nor Milton, nor Browning, nor Gladstone, nor Garibaldi, nor Gam-

beta. Carlyle knew it; but he refused to let it alter by one whit the grim earnestness with which he uttered unpopular truths, and alienated the British public. John Howard knew it not; nor Florence Nightingale, nor Arnold Toynbee, nor Father Damien. The long roll of statesmen, saints, poets, and philanthropists is made up principally, though of course not entirely, of men and women who were nurtured in conditions of simple competence and peace.

A life removed from sordid cares, yet freed from choking riches,—this is the life which, so far, has produced the highest type of character. This is the life which Jesus Christ commended. He attacked the rich with unfaltering, revolutionary, sorrowful scorn. Almost, so He declared, was it impossible for a man clogged with riches to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. But the people on whom He looked and said, "Blessed are ye poor," were not the haggard, stunted, stupid products of our fierce competitive industries. They were the agricultural poor of Judæa,—a people, hardy, simple, used to labor, to fishing, tilling the soil, carpentry, and all useful trades; men free, in the healthful simplicity of their lives, untouched by worry or haste, to receive in brooding hearts the message of the Kingdom of God. From such men Christ chose those disciples who remodeled the world; of such men He himself was one.

Thus the conditions among which our greatest men are found, the conditions clearly inculcated by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, are alike those which imply a comparative freedom from material anxieties and material interests. *Just such conditions it is which socialism aims to make universal.*

That socialism would imply absolute equality in material possessions is an assumption not yet proven. It would, however, as has been said, tend to equalize. It would insure to every man, whatever his mode of life, a reasonable, modest, constant maintenance at the hands of the state, thus removing at once material anxiety and material ambition. Our best characters, as we have seen, spring from conditions closely approximating to these. Is it unreasonable to assume that a form of social organization would be wise which should insure to all the conditions proved most favorable to the few?

In return for maintenance, the state will demand from every man and woman a moderate amount of daily labor.



And here we run against one of the stock objections to socialism,—an objection so ethical and so vital that we must stop to consider it. It is claimed that in the socialist state men will do no work.

The contention sounds reasonable enough. Place yon boot-black, scrubbing vigorously at his trade, in the socialist state. Behold his incentives vanish away! No fear that he go hungry if he fail to secure a certain number of five-cent shines; no more chances, on the other hand, that he attain the true democratic ideal of every boot-black, and become, he too, a second Jay Gould. Wherefore should the boot-black then black? He will abjure forever the blacking of boots. He will bask in the sun, consume unlimited tobacco, and rejoice in the social revolution.

The picture has the tints of life; but let us look at it more closely.

Your boot-black was "born tired." He comes of an anæmic race, exhausted by generations of overwork, diseased and run to seed by life under unwholesome conditions.

Suppose—remember our liberty of assumption—suppose socialism to have been in force for three generations. That is, suppose that for three generations everybody had had enough to eat, drink, and wear, and decent houses to live in. A race of children would, it is fair to say, greet our eyes different from the languid, half-alive little waifs, who, with pitiful stolidity or a more pitiful and ghastly nervous vivacity, sport around the streets of our slums. We should doubtless not find a perfectly healthy people, but we should assuredly find a higher average physique than we find to-day.

Now, I claim that in people with physical nerve and muscle nourished for a few generations back, the impulse to work, the delight in productive energy, is innate, instinctive, masterful.

Already, to-day, the work impulse is strong in the normal man. Every one wants to be busy. Every one feels the inspiration of a sharp summons to action. Who can see the rugged top of a mountain caressed by clouds without a tingling desire to climb thither? Who can think of a great art or science without the quivering of latent energy, longing to conquer? No sane man. What pleasure like that of a piece of work accomplished? What, except the delight of the doing? Few people are absolutely lazy.

Even the votaries of pleasure work hard enough; and, preposterous as it may seem, many rich men and women are indolent, or, at least unproductive, simply because they do not know what to do; their labor is useless, often, simply because misdirected. It may be that this work-impulse is a late note of evolution; yet some animals possess it; and Adam, in the grand old story, is set, even before the Fall, to dress and to keep the earth-garden. Be this as it may, in man as a product of Western civilization the impulse has come, and come to stay; and joy of productive activity is a primary instinct of every healthy soul. The lethargy of bequeathed exhaustion and the inertia of reaction are, I believe, responsible in our climate for the greater part of the indolence of the race. Numbers of people under our present system are not more than half alive. For these poor creatures, weak, stunted, or heavy in brain and body, little can be felt but the tenderness of sorrowful pity. A better day may surely come; a day when all may know, what many cannot know in this languid civilization, the simple rapture of doing; the delight of the athlete, whose austere activity thrills his every nerve and muscle with the joy of life.

And, beside this initial impulse, there will be plenty of incentives to work. The best work of a community, even in our hard-driven civilization, is not done for money; it has never been done for money. An army of the world's workers—pioneers, physicians, statesmen—rise in protest against the debased pessimism of such a thought. Money is a correlative to labor; it is not—by all that is practical, as by all that is ideal, let us repudiate the idea—it is not the motive. The avoidance of starvation is not the only spur to work. Men have been known to scorn delights and live laborious days for the sake of winning praise from their fellow-men. The desire for praise is mighty, insistent; demanding that men recognize the work as good, and honor the doer thereof. Honor is a stirring word: it drives soldiers to the act of death; might it not also drive them to the nobler act of useful life? In the very act of creation there is a mystic rapture; the blessed consciousness of power, which, whether it achieve a table or a poem, knows itself one with the productive energy of the universe. And, finally, we cannot ignore that sense which grows with our growing, and shall spread more and more as organic consciousness deepens, and as socialistic con-

ditions prevail; the sense that every bit of work, however menial or dull, is accomplished not for the self, but for the all. The hour cometh when the performance of a bit of manual work shall be as distinct and happy a piece of service as watching the sick or feeding the hungry; for in those days we shall have learned that to help the positive production of the world is as great as to care for its victims.

Joy of activity, joy of fame, joy of achievement, and joy of service,—these are the joys that might play upon the healthful, eager, sensitive organism, and draw it into a due share in the great labor of the world. And it is claimed that they will not be sufficient; that the fear of starvation must be added, or men, undeterred by vacant days or the pitying scorn of their fellows, will yield themselves to luxurious indolence, because, forsooth, they know that society will treat them kindly as it would treat a stray cat, and will give them shelter and food! Such a contention is false to all faith in our common humanity: more than this, it is false to the facts of human experience.

We have tried to show that socialism need not fear the development of an infesting horde of dead-beats, and also that its aim is to furnish to all the conditions which a partial experience has manifested to us as most potent in the production of character. It remains for us to go farther; to show, or at least to suggest, that socialism is the next phase, the logically inevitable phase, in that grand and gradual sequence of energy which slowly, firmly, by the operation of divinely natural law, is lifting man from the brute to the god.

For, if socialism be true, it must be shown not to deny, but to fulfill, the past. It will eliminate none of those great and stern powers which have so far governed evolution in its progress from body to soul; it must show us those powers working in a higher sphere, with new stringency and new completeness. I believe that the study of the progressive action of such principles revealed by history, rightly apprehended, carries us straight, by purely scientific induction; to the threshold of the socialistic state.

I might seek to establish this statement through many a line of thought. I will choose one. It shall be taken from the latest word of the science of the human mind,—the "Psychology" of Mr. James. The subject under discussion is the Automatic Life.

“We must”—so he says in trenchant words—“we must make automatic and habitual, as early as possible, as many useful actions as we can. The more of the details of human life we can hand over to the effortless custody of automatism, the more our higher powers of mind will be set free for their own proper work.” And he proceeds brilliantly to expound the scope which the æsthetic and intellectual life may know as the conscious volition becomes more and more relieved of the lower forms of activity. The principle which Mr. James applies to the individual I would apply to the social organism.

We all see how the development of life from babyhood to maturity depends upon this gradual subjugation of volition to instinct. Wretched is the man who has not learned this; to whom the acts necessary to physical well-being—eating, sleeping, dressing—are still the results of conscious effort. This law of progressive unconsciousness, as we may term it, obtains in the ethical as in the practical sphere. Holiness is that state where virtues, once painfully achieved, have become instinctive, automatic. The more of life is intrusted to the automatic sphere, the greater the range of our power. The individual advances by the progressive transference of physical and nervous functions from the sphere of volition to the sphere of instinct.

Now let us apply this law to the collective social body. We shall say: “Society advances by the progressive transference of those material functions necessary for its support from the sphere of conscious effort to the automatic region of instinctive achievement.”

Now this statement lands us straightway in full socialism. Socialism demands nothing but this: that the functions of physical maintenance become in the social organism rather automatic than conscious; and this it would effect by intrusting that anxious supervision of physical needs and responsibility for physical support, which now falls upon the individual, to the collective whole, that is, to the state.

All civilization is, in one sense, but the record of this very process. The savage, one unit dissociated from his fellows in rude isolation, spends his entire vital force in defending his physical existence through war, or providing for it through the chase. The mediæval knight, in a more organized state of society, is comparatively free for

the development of higher virtues, and even to some degree of the arts; yet he also has for his main profession and occupation the struggle to protect the physical well-being of himself and others. The sequence is clear to the scholar or poet of our own day, who, relieved by the shelter of society from care for physical needs, spends his energy in conquering the world of thought. The more society removes from the individual the hampering anxiety for material sustenance, and insures his shelter from violence and need, the nearer we approach the ideal state. Socialism would be but the latest, perhaps not the final, stage in a continuous development.

For that this process is yet accomplished few would be found to claim. A fierce though secret dread of starvation lurks at the heart of modern life. It is safe to assert that the consciousness of nine-tenths of the community to-day is dominated, if not absorbed, by material cares. We are at a pitifully short remove from the savage. The greater part of our mental and physical power is imprisoned in the mechanism of life; in the effort of each man to provide for himself and his family food, shelter, clothing. Now the material functions must be performed. They must absorb a certain amount of time. We cannot live like those denizens of Mars imagined by Flammarion, who sustain themselves by breathing in sunshine, like the flowers. Socialism would demand from every one, and receive, as we have tried to show, from at least the majority, a constant quantity of honest, peaceful toil, sufficient in sum to supply the physical needs of the community. Just so the body has to eat and sleep, and plan for eating and sleeping. Work is holy. But worry is sinful; and it is worry which weighs down the lives of our men and women, which forms those harassed faces and nervous forms that surge in breathless procession through the business parts of our American cities. This worry springs from fear. At present, each man works in the dark, ignorant of the harmonious interaction of his power with other power.

Hence constant gnawing anxiety; hence feverish unrest; hence the weary tale of economic disturbance,—the uneven distribution of wealth, the spasmodic gluts of over-production, the strikes, the riots, the dull discontent of modern life. Socialism claims that it would eliminate, not work, but worry. It would establish a general over-

sight over the whole field of human need. The organization and direction of labor, the plans for the creation and distribution of wealth, it would intrust to the state; and each individual would play his part, as peacefully assured of the wisdom of the general plan as a soldier in an army. We have already produced conditions which insure to the few freedom from gnawing, practical care; from these conditions, as we have seen, spring our greatest men. Is it Utopian to suppose that they might be extended? Work must be done; but socialism claims that it is possible to withdraw from work the element of selfish anxiety, and to transfer it to the unconscious life of the social organism. The claim is in absolute harmony with the scientific law which governs the advance of the race; it is the next step forward in a process already begun: the burden of proof rests, it seems to me, on those who deny, not those who affirm, its possibility.

Thus we have tried to show, not only that socialism seeks to render universal the conditions which experience manifests to us as best, but also that it is in line with the entire sequence of harmonious evolution, and demanded as the next stage of development. We might have reached the same result more simply, more directly. The lucent words of Christ reveal as a moral duty that which history and psychology reveal as a natural law. Socialism would render possible, for the first time for centuries, literal obedience to the commands of the Master; it would enable men to "take no thought for the morrow," for it would remove from them the necessity of constant thought for what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed.

Thus set free from the fierce and absorbing struggle for physical survival, what will be the value, the content, of human life? Nothing! say many. Man will sink back, material comfort once assured, in a mechanical and unspiritual prosperity.

Easily might we brand as pessimists and cynics men who take so low a view of our common humanity,—easily arraign them for ignorance of that witness of history which shows us freedom from sordid care as the primal condition of progress. Yet the fear is not strange. We think of our feverish and hunger-bitten world; of the tumultuous surge of conflict for existence which sways back and forth, breaking in foam of bitter passion in our midst,

or tossing its spray upward in heroic, unavailing strife. We turn from this to the vision of a world of outward peace. No wonder that it seems to us at first stagnant and dull!

Yet even to-day, it is not from practical struggle that spring the deeds we honor most. The Christ hangs on the cross, not to bestow on men a physical benefit, but to win for them spiritual redemption.

☛ We cast our eyes into the future, into that socialist state which assuredly shall one day be. What do we see?

Not a Utopia. No socialists are fools enough to claim that any change of social machinery would radically alter the spiritual conditions of human life,—would eliminate suffering, disease, and pain. There is no fear lest trouble and difficulty be removed from our path, and men find themselves in an enchanted garden of ease.

Not a dead level of characterless monotony. Character only emerges as we escape from the barren individualism of the savage state. Material equality does not imply spiritual equality, neither does the removal of material conflict imply the cessation of struggle. Character is not leveled to-day, its infinite play is not checked, by equality before the law. Neither would its fascinating and subtle variations be impeded by equality of possessions.

Not a sinless world. Socialism promises no heaven where men shall bask in the sunshine of lazy sainthood. No fear but that plenty of evil will remain to form the spice of life! The same old humanity will meet us; men and women with the same insistent passions, the same sorrowful temptations. A radical change in human nature socialism does not promise nor require.

What it does promise is this: the uplift of the struggle of humanity to a higher plane, the removal of certain external clogs and shackles that bind down to the earth the free spirit of man.

Far from being free for spiritual development, our present society is held in degraded bondage to the flesh. We see extremes of bitter poverty and fatuous luxury, alike deathful to the spirit, alike contrary to the commands of Christ. We see even our middle class held by material struggle; society as a whole absorbed by the dominant and feverish consciousness of physical need. When this bondage shall be relaxed, when that rush for wealth which is the swinging of the pendulum away from the fear of starvation shall be no more, then will unfold countless

delicate, spirited powers unguessed to-day in the dreary uniformity of money-making. Longing for glory, longing for truth, longing for service, will play upon a humanity responsive, high-mettled, eager. Socialism will produce neither a race of saints, nor a race of heroes; human nature will remain what it is,—strange mixture of divinity and brutality. But it may produce a race of men ready to enter with new zest the domain of new interests which we are to-day too heavily burdened to explore.

Let us think for a moment what some of those interests may be. They press upon us, clamoring for speech! A hundred voices will summon us, a hundred ambitions draw us, a hundred delights entice. We need not speak again of the buoyant pleasure in practical work which shall be the heritage of all healthy men and women. Beyond and above this, the world glistens with radiant possibilities.

Here, to begin with, is the whole sphere of art,—art realistic and ideal, *e. g.*, art which seeks accurately to reproduce the wondrous beauty of the world, art which seeks rather to embody the subjective experience of the artist. We may not, indeed, agree with Mr. Morris, that art would be a sufficient occupation for the human race; but a glorious play it is, and for three centuries men have had no chance to play it in freedom. Think what cities might be—nay, what they have been—when men built in peace and gladness, no longer from fear of hunger or of the sullen frown of an employer, but from love of the work itself! Think what pictures might render vivid the great story of the world's waking hours, or the greater story of its dreams! Think what poems remain unsung! This is no sentimental dreaming. There was a Florence in the thirteenth century. What has been may be once more.

Then, there is all the world of thought which awaits us. Truths enough remain to be won, in the sphere of the natural world, in the subtler sphere of the brain and soul. Science and philosophy are yet in their infancy. Here is the chance for consecration, for ardent sacrifice, for strenuous effort. No indolence can conquer the secrets of nature. The vigils of the future shall wrest new knowledge from the stars. Years of unregarded heroism shall end in flashing on the grateful world more hidden secrets of the mystery of human life. It is safe to predict that, when material well-being is secured, intellectual

activity will be multiplied ten-fold in militant vigor. Even to-day, in our sodden world, scientific and æsthetic passion assert themselves, and the fact is a perpetual witness to the buoyant indestructibility of spirit. But it must be that much power is wasted; that many a latent intellect is held today in bondage by the harsh necessity of ceaseless mechanical labor. Yes, and further: the scientist or philosopher is rare—he is day by day growing rarer—who can serenely pursue his high and recondite wisdom undisturbed by the moans of his fellows, the sorrow of a kindred humanity. The spiritual atmosphere does not foster to-day the detachment necessary to intellectual effort. It is thunderous, muttering; it fills men with a nameless unrest. Let the storm burst, let the air be clear; then may we bend us to our tasks again, consecrate to the stern and arduous search for the purity of truth: but not yet, my friends, not yet.

Art, science, philosophy,—these are much. These, even, are not enough. Man has an æsthetic nature that craves to receive and produce beauty; he has an intellectual nature that strains ever towards the true; but, more than these, first, last, and deepest, he is a spirit. And, whatever may be true of the others, it is at least certain that the spiritual life is a life of action. The soul has to be lost before it can be found. The self has to be vanquished: for this we are sent into the world.

A critic of socialism quotes Faust:—

“‘For man’s activity sleeps all too easily,
And so I gave to him to be his mate
A Devil, who will stir and work and must create.’

Socialism is the Lemure’s canal. Take care, dear Lemure! if you drain the marsh of inequality you are digging Faust’s grave. He will have no spur, and stagnate and die.”

He is right. The intellectual and æsthetic life cannot produce the miracle of full personality. For this we must have the scope, the stir, the passion of moral struggle. There must be temptation to goad us, high sacrifice to inspire, causes to live and die for. We seek the clash of truths, the call to suffer. Through action alone—action strenuous and militant—can salvation be wrought and the soul mount higher to its source. Without darkness, no

light; without sin, no holiness; without possible failure, no glory of victory.

O fools and slow of heart to suppose that Socialism could ever obliterate this struggle; that any change in the social order could put an end to the eternal battle, breathless, wearisome, glorious, wherein the soul has ever won its spurs! No danger that the Devil, our God-given companion, desert us; no danger lest an equal distribution of wealth entail uniformity of nature! Certain external elements of romance may vanish with the lessening of outward gloom: the novels of Dickens would no longer be possible. But the inward romance of the spirit, with its contrasts of joy and pain, its heroisms, its ardors, its tense efforts, its silent sacrifices,—all this would remain. Remain? It would develop in a way we hardly imagine. If I mistake not, our interest to-day tends more and more away from material conflict to the subtler conflicts of the soul. The scene of our life-drama is shifting to the inward stage; we are learning that the fight between good and evil is no less deadly when the combatants are thoughts than when they are acts. Our modern fiction reflects this change, in most interesting form. Books like "John Inglesant," like "Robert Elsmere," like "Middlemarch," might essentially have been written in the socialist state. They can hardly be called devoid of passion or of problem. We see a Dorothea bending her fair spirit to save the soul of her mean rival; we see in real life a man who has spent years in perfecting an invention destroying his machine in silence because another man, whose need of fame is greater than his own, has made the same discovery; we see, again, a man withdrawing from a friendship which has been as wine to him, because his presence casts a shadow between wife and husband. And we realize that there is no danger lest opportunities for heroism fail us, and lest no battles remain to fight.

This transference from outward to inward, from physical to spiritual, is the law of all human development. A Darwin, not an Achilles; a Father Damien, not an Æneas—is the hero of modern life. Already the literature of external conflict begins to have for us a symbolic rather than a literal value. Already, as we read of the wrath of an Achilles, of the rage of a Macbeth, we translate these titanic woes into the language of the inward

life. Socialism will never eliminate struggle; it will simply free us from the crude battle with material obstacles for the contest with spiritual foes. And it is reasonable to expect that life in the future, in delicacy, in fire, in sensitiveness to fine moral issues, will bear to our own life the relation which ours bears to the fierce and crude morality of the elder world.

This change is in harmony with the teachings of Christ himself. Our Lord Jesus transferred the external commands of the Mosaic law to the region of the mind and heart. This more secret and subtle wisdom, incomprehensible to the Hebrews of old, we, too, fail fully to apprehend; yet into its high mystery we are bound to penetrate more and more.

Socialism is often condemned as expecting by external and mechanical means to affect the free spirit of man, to achieve through outward reform what can only be achieved through the purification of the heart. The question is scornfully asked, Does socialism—the change in material conditions—expect to make better men and women? And the answer must come clearly. In one sense, *no*. We cannot emphasize this thought too often. Socialism makes no claim to achieve redemption by machinery. But it does claim that this translation of the struggle of man to a higher and more inward sphere is in line with the whole process of evolution; deeper far, that it is the method of Christ himself. The kingdom of God is within us, and that kingdom it is the progressive effort of society to set us free to seek. The removal of incentives to crime does not, indeed, create virtue. The girl who walks the street, the drunkard in the dramshop, may be better in God's sight than you or I. Yet we fight the dramshop, and bring up our young girls in homes we seek to render pure. The whole civilization enjoyed by our upper and middle classes—our churches, schools and homes—bears witness to our faith in the powers of environment. Why should we deny this power when the question of extension arises? If the delicate daughters of the rich are products of whom our society may be more proud than of the girls in the slums, the inference seems clear: let us place the second class under the conditions enjoyed by the first. There is an old prayer which reads, "Lead us not into temptation." The shelter which civilization now affords for the favored few is the effort to realize this

prayer in part; socialism is the effort to realize it for all.

I claim, then, to summarize, that socialism is no demand for a destructive evolution, but the next step upward in the journey of the human race. This is made evident, whether we look at the teachings of science or of faith.

Observation tells us that a condition of moderate wealth most favors the development of character; the science of the human mind suggests to us that life advances through intrusting its lower functions more and more completely to the unconscious and automatic life. Christ bids us take no thought for the morrow. These possibilities socialism, and socialism alone, promises to fulfill.

The law of development shows us the interest and value of life progressively transferred from the outward to the inward sphere. Christ translates the Decalogue from terms of act to thought. This process socialism promises to continue.

In socialism the incentives of labor, of art, of thought, of service, will play with new power on the enfranchised nature of man. Then, as now, will be scope for moral struggle; for the choice between love and self. Only in this struggle the men of the future may, if they will, be strengthened with a new power; for the socialistic state will render possible what is hardly possible today, — literal obedience to the commands of Christ.

It is possible to claim that when Socialism is realized, the fire of life will be gone, and men sink into indolent comfort. It is possible; but only for a pessimistic nature, devoid of faith in man, in science, and in God. Devoid of faith in man must be he who claims that, if the bare necessary of physical maintenance be removed, honor will avail nothing, ambition nothing, love nothing, to impel to effort strenuous and poor. Devoid of faith in natural law must he be if he believes that the result of æons of patient evolution is this sorry creature on a moral level with the brutes. Devoid of faith in God must he be; for if man be of the earth alone, it is possible to conceive him, when earthly incentives are removed, sinking into animal ease: not so if he be formed in the image of the Heavenly. There is a spark of the Infinite in his finiteness, and so he cannot pause. Step by step, urged onward by an imperious inward stress, he must struggle

upward to his Source. Stage by stage he must leave behind him the false dreams of physical strife, the antagonism to his fellows, the sharp pursuit of his individual needs. He will not leave sorrow, he will not leave temptation. At every step will appear new evils to be conquered. This his curse is also his blessing, for only in battle can the soul of man be strengthened for immortality. But these evils will become ever more subtle, more mysterious, more inward; and the soul that treads them underfoot shall mount by them to ever new regions of holiness and power. For this struggle—ceaseless, eternal, glorious; the struggle upward, by means of the perfect law of liberty, into celestial light—I believe that socialism will, in wonderful and unforeseen measure, set free the soul of man.

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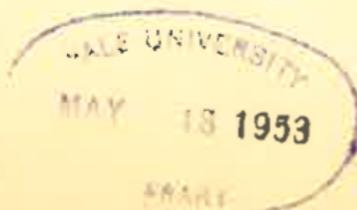
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IN THE ORDER I READ THEM. SORRY NOT SORRY

Tract 1: Thoughts on The Ministerial Commission, Respectfully Addressed to the Clergy, Newman, 9 Sept 1883

This Tract is concerned with the authority of the Church, made newly relevant by “secular advantages” potentially being taken away from the clergy by the state of England. While Newman is not pleased with the possibility - “We know how miserable is the state of religious bodies not supported by the State” - nevertheless he asks, if such support is withdrawn, by what authority do fellow presbyters engage in their task?

The answer for him is Apostolic Succession, especially of the bishops. He then proceeds to show that this doctrine is contained in the rite of ordination that they all shared in. The tract ends with an exhortation to choose a side for or against such a doctrine. The idea that priests may in such a time of crisis choose to refrain from “worldly politics” is distasteful to him.

Tract 2: The Catholic Church, Newman, 9 Sept 1883

Published with Tract 1 (and 3), this continues and expands the thesis of the first tract. Newman here openly calls out the actions of the legislature in its remodeling of the diocese of Ireland - events that also inspired the famous Assize Sermon of Keble as well. Newman forcefully asserts the authority of the Church to determine its own functions and accuses the state of overstepping its bounds. As part of his challenge, Newman states that not only is the Church’s authority a necessary belief of the Catholic Church found in the Creeds, but of the visible Church as an institution going back through the laying on of hands to the apostles themselves. Here we see the visible Church contrasted with the visible state, and sets the two authorities against each other.

Tract 11: The Visible Church (In [2] Letters to a Friend), Newman, 11 November 1883

The position of Newman's friend is succinctly put: "Why may I not be satisfied if my Creed is correct, and my affections spiritual?" Doctrine and feelings are enough to unite Christian to another (notice the individuality even here).

Newman says the Bible asks an "additional test of true faith, obedience to God's word." Scripture is the only real source for doctrine, and Newman warns against cherry-picking this or that bit of it.

Inasmuch as the sacraments are necessary to salvation, a visible church is a necessary condition for salvation, and schism is a wound against it. Baptism testifies to this because baptism is incorporation "into an existing community."

Here he moves deeper into biblical material but runs out of paper, ending the first letter by saying that to believe in Christ is "a social or political principle."

In the second letter Newman says the sacraments are "not a solitary individual act, they are a joint communion. Surely nothing is more alien to Christianity than the spirit of Independence." This quote is resonant for our topic because of how often individualism is associated with capitalism in these early years and cooperation pitted against it as the Christian political ideal.

The church continues in perpetuity, until Christ's return, however corrupt it might be at any point, because it is Christ's church; not because it is always faithful. Then it ends with a litany of Scriptural passages that 'prove' the necessity of a visible church.

Tract 20: The Visible Church (Letters to a Friend No. III), Newman, 24 December 1883

Newman's friend is now anxious that belief in the visible Church "should lead to Popery." But Newman reassures his evangelical friend that he himself loathes popery and believes it a corruption of the Gospel.

The visible church was established by Christ to witness to him, and to Truth, when the world turns aside to ignorance and disobedience. He praises the American Episcopal

Church for flourishing even amidst rebellion and revolution. Human nature is such that it requires visible guides. The RCC possesses an admirable unity and visibility but is “infected with heterodoxy.” “Popery must be destroyed; it cannot be reformed.”

Tract 47: The Visible Church (Letter IV), Newman, 1 November 1834

The friend’s latest concern is that if one were to follow Newman’s line of thought, Dissenters would lie outside of salvation. Newman interprets the OT figuratively that just as God had preserved a remnant of faithful under Ahab, so even Presbyterians in Scotland may have the Word of God. But this does not preclude the possibility of judgment against a rebellious state of affairs. Even Dissenters, once dissent has “become hereditary and embodied in institutions,” are able to produce saints.

For Newman there are degrees of conformity to truth. Native Americans, being “theists,” are superior to polytheists; as “Mahometanism” is to “Hindooism.” Judaism better than the lot (Notice the supersessionism here). To inherit dissent is of a different kind than those who intentionally divide and reject. In the final judgment we all will be individuals before the throne, but in this world there are not merely two states, one unmixedly good and the other unreservedly evil.

Tract 49: The Kingdom of Heaven, Benjamin Harrison, Christmas 1834

The bulk of this tract is an exposition of the Gospel of Matthew for the purposes of suggesting the visible Church and apostolic ministry can be found in it. Harrison says St. Peter is the primary actor in the first canonical Gospel. Jesus “appears in the character of a prophet, like Moses, raised up to be a Giver of a new law, and the Founder of a new Kingdom or Polity.”

The tract relies on a supersessionist replacement theology. At times he takes this typology quite far indeed, suggesting not only that the Church “comes into the place of Israel” but the apostles into the office of “Levitical priest and judge,” and Christ’s commandments a new law “in his spiritual meaning.”

Tract 59: Church and State, Hurrel Froude, 25 April 1835

Froude, like the Tractarians more broadly, fully believes the Church of England is the only legitimate heir of true Christianity in the isles, and full legal honor is due it; however in this Tract he tries to address the current state of the relation between the English state and its church by delineating two kinds of relation: State protection, and state interference.

State protection consists in four things:

- 1 - Legally keeping ancient endowments for the Church of England. This point implicitly assumes a continuity of the pre and post Reformation church.
- 2 - The power to raise a property tax for parishes. A healthy state recognizes the civil need of religion.
- 3 - The allowance for the thirty bishops in the House of Lords, per the Magna Carta
- 4 - The capacity for the state to arrest anyone excommunicated. Froude considers this an antiquated law, "bad and useless, which cannot be done away with too soon."

There are two ways the state is currently interfering with the Church.

- 1 - Church patronage: Whereas there used to be public, democratic and religious checks against the improper consecration of an unfit bishop, now any person of any religion or none may appoint bishops and impede the Church. (It's becoming plain that the Tractarians are most concerned with this fact, not state interference as such. Presumably if they were all "good Anglicans" things could proceed apace)
- 2 - Church discipline: A curious, minor closing point. Churchwardens are supposed to visit their archdeacon once annually, and give a list of persons living notoriously immoral lives. Froude points out nobody reports anything anymore! Thus either everyone has become saints or churchwardens have become purgerers.

National Apostasy, John Keble, Preached at St. Mary's, Oxford, 14 July 1833.

So famous as almost not to need annotation. This sermon is also concerned with the legal status of the Church of England, but spends more time with the "practical atheism" of the English people, and especially its leaders. Keble does this by way of a typological interpretation of the story of Samuel and Saul in 1 Samuel. It opens with a defense of such a style of interpretation. Such "spiritual" interpretations of the Old Testament had fallen out of favor and Keble is aware of the sermon's novelty.

Samuel serves as the model patriot, faithful to God even in the face of a nation bent on impiety. Saul as the model of a weak, ineffectual leader, who bows to the pressure of common people, and who trespasses on the religious prerogative of divinely appointed clerics.

The sermon ends with admonitions to people who would like to be faithful in England. Such people must intercede in prayer, and remonstrate or upbraid neighbors who have gone slack. (He makes a point not to suggest political unrest or rebellion).

F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ: or, Hints to a Quaker Respecting the Principles, Constitution and Ordinances of the Catholic Church*. S.C.M., 1958.

A foundational text for the later revival of Christian socialism among Anglicans in the late 19th C. It was written as a defense of the "Catholic Church" to a Quaker. It begins with an affirmation of the "pure" insights of Fox and the earliest Quakers, especially with respect to a universal, spiritual kingdom, and proceeds to affirm the "pure" initial insights of Luther, Calvin, and Zwingli. Luther in particular interests Maurice, and he says Luther provides a necessary corrective to Fox in that he, Luther, identifies the universal, divine Word with the incarnate Logos, Jesus of Nazareth. Here, then, is some groundwork for the "incarnational" theology of liberal catholicism.

Maurice proceeds to criticize these four strains for losing their fire and falling into complicated dogmas and systems. Their "true" legacies can be revived by rejecting the party systems they succumbed to.

After the genealogy of "pure Protestantism," Maurice goes through Unitarianism and modern philosophy, demonstrating - to his mind - where each was right and where they went wrong. All, he said, at root believed in the universal spiritual kingdom that unites all humanity, transcending their merely local manifestations.

Maurice believes that even a spiritual kingdom needs concrete expression. He considers the Scriptures, the two dominical sacraments, the episcopacy, the liturgy, and the creeds to be essential marks of the universal Catholic church (which he does not identify directly with the church of Rome). Thus Anglicanism is a uniquely situated church to embody all the "true" marks of catholicity, and the end of the book is as much an apologia for the Anglican church as Hooker's *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (though Hooker is a far more

sophisticated theologian).

The universal kingdom is one not of party competition and individualism, but of cooperation and unity. He is nothing if not a high Tory paternalist. One could profitably skip most of Part I and refer to the "Recapitulation" beginning in Part II for a brief, lucid *precis* of it.

John Ruskin, Works. Wiley, 1891. Unto This Last, August - December 1860 (originally in Cornhill Magazine).

A series of four essays on "Political Economy," it has been generally published as a single work with a preface advocating for a collective of government-funded trade schools. These schools should be in a relationship with government-run factories, by means of which there should be guaranteed work for all - and forced work on the slothful. These institutions should also provide a pension for the aged. This is the last we hear, though, of such socialized infrastructure. It is not entirely clear how he gets to these through the arguments of the four essays.

The Roots of Honor quickly sets a case against "political economists" (he generally is arguing with J.S. Mill), charging that in denying the "social affections," they deal with abstract humans who don't actually exist, since economic actors do in fact have souls. To what ends, then, do merchants live, and for what can they die? Wherein lies their "heroism" for the nation? The merchant is to "provide for the nation" and give paternal care and guidance to those under his charge, being willing to risk loss in business for the wellbeing of his laborers.

The Veins of Wealth moves into the nature and purpose of wealth. Ruskin uses the example of an individual inheriting a great estate, but unable to procure laborers to work the land to illustrate that the mere accumulation of useful objects makes no one truly wealthy. They would have to live by the same meagre means as a simple peasant. Rather wealth derives its power "from the need or desire another has for it...the art of making yourself rich...is therefore the art of keeping your neighbor poor." Inequality, however, cannot be considered good or bad in abstraction but only on account of whether it is "justly acquired" and "justly used."

Qui Judicatis Terram. The words of the title of this essay are part of a longer phrase that goes "You who judge the earth must give diligent love to justice." This essay explores what constitutes just remunerative pay. It condemns the moral indolence of those who

set laborers against each other in order to maximize their own advantage. The end of the essay unveils Ruskin's thoughts concerning social hierarchy and private property, which he fiercely defends. There are, for him, those who are truly better, who ought even to compel lesser people to conform to their "wiser will."

The final essay, *Ad Valorem*, looks further into value, wealth, price, and produce. To Ruskin, the entire point of wealth is for consumption, and nations are to be judged by how good they make the life of all who belong to them. For this reason hoarded wealth goes against the very purpose of wealth, and makes for an unhealthy society.

There is much to commend in the essays, and much to address. Ruskin is keen to maintain social hierarchies without allowing an examination into power structures, assuming that most inequalities result from the natural superior virtue of those who have accumulated power. But read alongside his essay *The Nature of Gothic*, it gives a lively and important vision of the moral considerations of wealth, what their ends ought to be, and thus how those who labor and those who exercise oversight ought to act to preserve a just, communal existence.

John Ruskin, *The Nature of Gothic*, 1851-1853.

The Nature of Gothic is one essay situated in the middle of Ruskin's book examining the architecture of Venice. The essay was often printed independently (for instance by Morris and the Kelmscott Press). *The Nature of Gothic* is broadly divided in two parts, the first on the "spirit" of Gothic and the second on the exterior features of Gothic buildings. For the purposes of our study one could read just the first part.

Ruskin gives six "moral elements" of Gothic architecture. These moral elements are transformed into marks of the builders of Gothic architecture: Savageness or Rudeness, Love of Change, Love of Nature, Disturbed Imagination, Obstinancy, and Generosity.

The creative freedom of the builder in this essay is used to understand the ends of all creative labor. Elements of this essay have often been synthesized by socialists with elements of *Unto This Last* to give a picture of what an entire society could be if it were dedicated to the love of virtue and to the liberty of all workers to live without fear of poverty; able to devote themselves to life without servility or excessive labor.

Stewart Headlam, *Theatres and Music Halls: a Lecture given at the Commonwealth Club, Bethnal Green on Sunday, October 7, 1877: with a Letter to the Bishop of London and Other Correspondence. Women's Printing Society, Ltd., 1877.*

A brief essay that does not give any great theory about the stage but merely defends the institutions and those who both work at them and frequent them, against a judgmental upper and middle class - especially clergy. For Headlam, music and dance promote grace and beauty for both performers and audience. The working classes deserve to be entertained. It is "the leisure class" that we should actually worry about. Headlam makes his defense with reference to the Incarnation, which he believes hallows all good human activity. Not a systematic treatise, but important as a representation of how the Incarnation was put to work by anglo-catholic socialists. Also important because it was published and circulated with condemnatory letters from the Headlam's bishop, John Jackson, of London. We see here the "dissenting" position that Anglo-catholics, and the socialists in particular, have had to stake out in relation to a hostile church. The ritualists were being persecuted around this same time and Headlam was one of their defenders.

Stewart Headlam, *The Laws of Eternal Life; being studies in the Church catechism. William Reeves, 1888.*

In 1875, Headlam composed an essay ("The Church Catechism and the Emancipation of Labour") in reaction to hearing that "during the lock-out of the agricultural labourers it was said that their low condition was owing to the clergy having dinned into them the lesson that they should be content with their lot, and submissive to their employers. Words from the Church Catechism were quoted in order to prove this." This situation must have continued to stew in his spirit until he decided to compose this work, over ten years later.

The themes of this work are too diverse easily to summarize, but many of the main lines of Headlam's thought are here expressed. The universal "brotherhood" of humankind; incarnation and sacramentalism as baptizing all human life; the difference between charitable giving and justice; the priority of the Eucharist over biblicism; the grace and power of infant baptism; the social relevance of the Decalogue and Great Commandments, and so on.

Interestingly Headlam uses the Gospel of John quite a bit, where in other works he leans heavily on the Synoptics, especially Luke - the Magnificat was a favorite of the Christian Socialists of the time.

The book is addressed to two main groups: "Secularists" and Anglican teachers. His appeal to the former is that "true" Christian religion is not a hindrance to a just, magnanimous society; and to the latter, that teachers are bound by the catechism to teach something akin to Christian socialism. The idea is that the Catechism was the only thing members of the Church of England were bound to both teach and affirm, and if such principles can be discovered there, then not doing so was an affront to catholic Christianity. It is not a theoretical work so much as a polemical pastoral work, full of good zingers and indicative of the general temperament of Anglican socialists.

Stewart Headlam, *The Socialist's Church*. George Allen, 1907.

A book consisting of four essays:

1 - The Church as an instrument of social reform

The Church exists to "carry out the principles of Socialism." Baptism is the universal sacrament of equality, the Mass that of "brotherhood." It is for the people, and it is time the people took possession of the inheritance that is rightfully theirs. Through the universality of the parish system, an institution is already in every place ready for organizing social reforms. Proper doctrine and belief, far from working against socialism, is entirely in alignment with it, when properly understood.

2 - Some dangerous popular misrepresentations of the Church's teaching

Biblicism and mythological thinking are a scandal that prevent reasonable people from participating in the faith that is rightfully theirs. He takes aim at the voluntarism and rationalism of adult baptism in "the sects", and attacks any who teach the Bible is infallible. Similarly, belief in eternal hell and damnation for all but a few is an error that prevents many from entering the Church. (n.b. - Draws on biblical criticism to suggest that the Gospels, written later than Paul, intentionally modified his harsher teachings!)

3 - On the limitations and the aim of socialism

The fight against marriage is not a key aspect of socialism, and associating it with socialism hinders the cause and distracts from the root causes of inequality. Don't even let good concession goals like "The Factory" acts misdirect you. They are fine as far as they go, but they don't adequately address the problem. And the problem is that land and labour are not socialized. Maurice, Ruskin, but above all Henry George, have shown the real issue. Abolish landlords by taxing them out. Take possession of what is rightfully the people's anyway. Only then will an emancipated cooperative labour force emerge. And once this is done, the Church will have all the more work to do. Indeed it is

prevented from its real work because of the conditions of capitalism.

4 - On the emancipation of the middle-class wage slave

The organizing of a middle-class of labourers falls drastically short of the goals of true sociality. A division between lower and middle classes inevitably sets a petty bourgeois against the truly destitute in favor of the moralism and bureaucracy of a mothering state. The Labour Party, on account of its non-radical platform, can't even deal with inequality of the sexes, and would leave women subject to the whims and power of men. The only answer is a universal society with socialized land and socialized means of production.

**Percy Dearmer, *Socialism and Christianity*, Tract 133. Fabian Society, 1907.
(Reprinted in *The Hour's* Spring 2020 issue).**

This tract is a useful, representative piece that gives us tiny glimpses into positions common for the time. It opens with a quote from F.D. Maurice; it shows evidence of sympathetic familiarity with Marx, but nonetheless keeps from full-throated endorsement; it leans heavily on the Gospel of Luke, especially the Magnificat; it attempts to ground Christian socialism in Scripture, with special attention to passages authoritative for Anglicans, such as the Lord's Prayer, used in catechesis; the Epistle of James is utilized - a key text for the Anglican socialists.

Of the Fabian tracts about Christianity this is the longest and the best. Even Headlam's is not as lucid, neither does Headlam's cover the same amount of ground. Dearmer conceives socialism in a specifically Christian way, appealing to Scripture and exhorting against vice. It is not a "scientific" tract attempting to say something novel about economics, but an appeal for Christians to become converted to the socialist's creed of "brotherhood," and an appeal to the non-religious socialists to see the radical potential for Christianity.

Percy Dearmer, *Patriotism*, Papers for War Time No. 13. H.Milford, 1915.

"Patriotism is more easily praised than explained." So begins this tract written in response to World War I. The series of papers assumed that it was necessary for Britain to enter the war, but just as convinced that the church exceeds all national boundaries. Dearmer's essay begins by engaging the question of why war has begun in a time of growing international solidarity. It would seem that "intellectual" unity, disconnected from the affections of place and other presumably "organic" forms of belonging, is a failure to the extent that it has not prevented the war. Patriotism, Dearmer says, can be neutral, or

noble, or evil. He spends a fair amount of time on what it can contribute to peace. He seems to have a positive view of patriotism, or at least what good patriotism can be.

But as the essay progresses the argument shifts slightly to a discussion of the Kingdom of God. This shift has the effect of turning what seemed to be the main thesis of the essay on its head. We are returned to the internationalism of the Kingdom of God, of a unity not bound by mere local custom or family. The benefits of true patriotism are the benefits of seeking God's kingdom. Only when this universal kingdom is sought can a local, cultural unity be of any use; only then will it be purged of prejudice and pride - and not devolve into war. Dearmer's essay a useful tonic to the praise Vida Scudder has for patriotism in her *Socialism and Character*.

Conrad Noel, *Life of Jesus* (2nd ed). London, 1939.

In 1856 the German scholar David Strauss published *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, and launched an entire genre of historical Jesus studies. Noel researched his *Life* for nearly 30 years, but it does not read like a straightforward historical work in a classic sense. Noel's goal is to show the history of the development and practice of "the Kingdom of God." To this end he examines the development of Israelite political existence, with special attention to Moses and the prophets - and most of all to the Jubilee laws. He attempts to show that these laws had been practiced well into the Maccabean times. This was key because the Jubilee laws had often been dismissed as merely idealistic, never having been put into practice. Noel is a particularly astute reader of the apocalyptic literature, coming to conclusions that would not become mainstream for many decades. Namely that they are not about the literal dissolution of the cosmos but a way of giving "cosmic significance" to the political turmoil of the author's age. Noel discusses the rise of the Roman Empire, and especially the way wealth was created as the empire expanded. He excoriates the tepid false neutrality of classics scholars who give tacit approval to Roman expansion, and lays waste any naivety about the capitalist oligarchy that intentionally provoked war and imperialism as a way to enrich themselves. He discusses slavery and taxes and the Roman situation in Palestine leading up to Jesus' time.

Having thus set the stage, Noel begins his *Life of Christ* proper. He gives fresh accounts of Jesus' geography and upbringing; he gives a theopolitical interpretation of Jesus' temptations, parables, miracles, death, and resurrection. In a few addendums he addresses questions regarding the reasonableness of miracles, of whether the Kingdom should be understood as a commonwealth, and a few other assorted matters.

Noel's *Life* is a complex, thoroughly engaging work, marked by genuine insights, touching narratives, moral indignation, and impatience with any kind of scholarship or popular teaching that would seek to neuter the power of the Gospel. Unfortunately his treatment of Pharisaism is grossly out of date and frankly anti-semitic, utilizing historical Christian tropes about Judaism.

At key junctures in the argument Noel relies on a replacement ecclesiology that crosses into supersessionism. It would take a great amount of care to read it without knowledge of Jesus scholarship since his time. I dedicated a lot of time to it because it was a work important to Noel, and Frederic Hastings Smyth considered it a kind of part-one to his *Manhood Into God*. One could get the highlights of the *Life* in his *Socialism in Church History*.

It is not entirely worthless. Despite his replacement theology, Noel demonstrates a firm belief that one cannot understand neither the Kingdom nor Jesus without the witness of the Hebrew scriptures; he anticipates more recent scholarship on apocalyptic literature; and mainstream historical Jesus work now agrees with him that the Kingdom is the central feature of Jesus' ministry. One can gain an appreciation for the animating spirit of the work, without having to commit to affirming every word in it.

Conrad Noel, *Socialism in Church History*. The Young Churchman Co., 1911

The Anglican socialists of Noel's age put incredible amounts of energy into trying to make an apology for socialism to the Church of England, and for the church to secular socialists. Noel had started collecting radical quotes from early Church fathers while in school and loved to torment conservative Christians by liberally distributing these quotes about campus. His hobby eventually flowered into this book. As one could surmise from the title alone, it is a work dedicated to showing that the principles of socialism are to be found all throughout Church history. The goal is to commend socialism to Anglicans who found the economic theory both too radical and too new. "The object of the present work is to justify the [idea that the Church is the 'mouthpiece of the kingdom'] by an appeal to Christian history, and to suggest that economic socialism provides the practical and scientific form for our own day and in one important human sphere for the realization of those very objects which the Church has always had at heart." After a brief description of socialism and how it has come onto the British scene, Noel begins, as he did in his *Life of Jesus*, with Israel. He then moves on to treat the Gospels, the Early Church, and Paul before proceeding to a chapter on socialism and the sacraments. In another move typical of the time, Noel tries to give an historical account of the rise of capitalism in

Europe and its connection with the Reformation. Noel considers the high middle ages in England a “golden age of the laborer” since, according to him, so many had access to land and the means to work it. Noel, like several others, has often been accused of simple nostalgia for the middle ages. I’m not entirely sure this is correct. We must certainly grant an element of romanticism and naivety from Noel, but I think John Milbank is nearly right that appeals to the middle ages in this time are more allegorical and aesthetic than nostalgic.

Noel, even more so than the early Christian socialists, is concerned not with recreating an imaginary middle ages but with establishing precedent both in theory and practice, that the Church has not always believed in the legitimacy of “buying near and selling dear.” That a Christian, moral, theological critique of capitalism is not just possible, but manifest in past ages. He can usefully be supplemented here by the more serious, historical work of another anglo-catholic scholar, R.H. Tawney.

He finishes with a brief history of Anglican socialism to his own time, with special appreciation for Stewart Headlam. Nevertheless Noel believes “real economic socialism” goes beyond what even Headlam was aiming for. Noel paints a picture of what he thinks needs to happen for complete socialism to be realized.

Noel believes the Church should be involved in the nitty gritty of politics, but not be confined to the political; it should make alliances in movements and parties, but be prepared to be a critical force when necessary. If one were to read just one Noel book, this is the one.

Vida Scudder, *Socialism and Character*. Houghton Mifflin, 1912.

Vida Scudder stands out in this list by being an American, and this seemingly small detail makes a world of difference for the style and commitments of her work. She also stands out for being the only woman. Scudder, an early feminist, theorist of the social gospel, labor organizer, English teacher at Wellesley, and partner to Florence Converse, was one of the only women of this time who was not only an activist but a creative theorist of social theology. Scudder’s contributions have mostly been neglected in theological studies. Classes on early American feminism, or maybe on the Social Gospel, will mention her, but she is not regularly referenced in studies I have come across. Which is all the worse for us because her work provides a useful contrast to some of the british assumptions that often go unchecked in the works we have already

been covering. *Socialism and Character* is her magnum opus, though her much smaller collection of essays the Church and the Hour is more well known. *Socialism and Character* seeks to address concerns from anxious Christians who believe that there will be no need for the Church in a realized socialist state. For these critics, Christianity's distinctive moral heroisms would necessarily become obsolete in a nation marked by economic equity. (This anxiety would be very interesting to investigate! What are the soteriological assumptions that fuel such insecurity?) Scudder doesn't really look into why Christians worry about irrelevance; rather in this work she goes to great lengths to show the ethical characteristics that would be necessary to accomplish socialism, to sustain it, and what kinds of new moral vistas might open up in an equitable society.

She gives a brief history of Christian socialism to her day, and notes the failures along the way. She is deeply critical of reformers, who believed that paternalistic, voluntary, charity would be sufficient to address social ills. She also has sharp words for Ruskin and Carlyle, who she understands to be anti-democratic, paternalistic, and heavily invested in the maintenance of a strong social hierarchy. In contrast to some these days, she would not associate the word socialism with "red toryism." And Scudder is not at all reductionist about Ruskin! She dedicated an entire book to his work. He started her on her path and stayed with her the entire journey.

Scudder, more explicitly than any other in my study, believes there is no serious socialism without Marx. Inasmuch as she is a dedicated Christian, and committed to the idea that Christianity has a place in realized socialism, she disagrees with much in Marx; however her view of history is indebted to him. Scudder is confident history has a movement and that socialism is inevitable. It is then imperative for the Church to come to grips with history and get on board; else they risk being left behind.

Her work bears all the marks of the optimism of the time. And while she does at times attempt to relate materialist history to an understanding of progressive revelation, she is less successful at this than the Lux Mundi school, which had read its Hegel. It would be impossible to give a full picture of this large work in a precis of this length. Which is unfortunate. This is unquestionably one of the better works that I covered, and has more contemporary relevance than one might be inclined at first to suppose.

Gerrard Winstanley, *A New Law of Righteousness*, 1648.

A tract addressed to "The Twelve Tribes of Israel Circumcised in Heart." Winstanley was a leader of the radical group called the "Diggers" or "True Levellers," who resisted the

enclosure of common land through direct action, planting on land that had been taken from the people. Winstanley was influenced by Quakers but as far as we know continued to serve his parish as a member of the Church of England. This tract relies on the idea of the “inner light” that does not need to be mediated by a clerical hierarchy. Yet he transfigures it into a social doctrine. In this way he preempts Maurice; but unlike Maurice he believes that the Spirit’s work will bring about the total annihilation of a social hierarchy. He is more a communist than cooperatist, going so far as to claim equality of the sexes. More thoroughly dogmatic in method than most other Anglican socialists I studied, he rejects the idea that damnable guilt is inherited by birth. The Fall is more to do with the inflamed lust to possess and oppress, which tendency continues in distorted human hearts. Thus private property, lordship, prisons, and all forms of usury are the direct result of sin and the fall. This is distinct from those theologies that would say that private property and rulers are necessary to educate and discipline humankind into greater virtue and freedom. The latter supposes them to be unfortunate, but requisite; Winstanley would say, to use a modern phrase from Audrey Lourde, “you can’t dismantle the master’s house with the master’s tools.”

In keeping with a strict pacifism, Winstanley does not believe violent revolt can bring about salvation. But he believes the time has come for the Spirit to revolutionize the hearts of humanity, and it is only the Spirit that can accomplish it. His view of history, then, is somewhat “apocalyptic,” in that he believes God is about to act - the crisis is upon us, and we must await its coming. It is unclear how this passivity works with his radical actions of rebellion to retake common land. More study would be needed to see this through.

This work stands in sharp contrast to the more gentle socialism of the period I studied. Uncompromisingly communist, more systematic and biblical than the Victorians, Winstanley is radical in a way they rarely are. In addition to things already noted, he also envisioned an end to imprisonment. He could quite profitably be brought into the current moment, writing as I am only days after the murder of George Floyd.

Gore, Charles. *The Incarnation of the Son of God*. John Murray, 1892; *The Mission of the Church*. John Murray, 1892.

When I was trimming my reading list I decided to pass over Gore because I wanted to focus on the more radical wing, despite being a personal fan of the bishop of Oxford. But when the library closed at the beginning of the semester I was “stuck” with some Gore books I had in my home. So I changed my plan. Lecture VIII: Christ Our Example

and New Life, in Gore's famous Bampton Lectures deals with the Christian moral life. In this lecture he deals with how to interpret Jesus' teachings in the Gospels; contrasts this with Mohammed; explicates what he takes to be three errors in Christian dissemination (the "frankish", the Jesuitical, and the Anglican); considers whether the demands are too much for Christians to actually perform; and relates this to the way the Church is an "extension of the Incarnation."

An interesting feature of Gore in light of contemporary theological conversations is that on the surface he sounds almost like an advocate of what some have called "the Benedict Option." Gore would see the Church of England disestablished, reduced in size, and become more strident in following the Christian life. This would seem to be what is sometimes envisioned by some conservatives who have been influenced by a certain orthodox convert making poor use of McIntyre - a "faithful" remnant that witnesses to the transforming power of Christ in the Church as a testimony against the world. But Gore does not view "secularism" as the boogeyman against which the church must battle. He believes it is the C of E itself that is corrupted by power and a servant of mammon. Neither would he agree with those who think the church's job is to preserve the local culture. He is quite adamant that the Anglican fusion of nation and church, even in its highest articulation by Richard Hooker, necessarily leads to compromises with ruling power. The cord must be cut for the sake of faithfulness.

The Mission of the Church covers some of the same ground but has a heightened sense of the leadership of the Church needing to give instruction in the moral life. Gore says, in a move I see as more controversial than is sometimes supposed, that basically there is not a natural moral law accessible to all. And even if there were the broken state of humanity is such that it is not readily clear. Many cultures and nations have quite different moral beliefs between themselves. Therefore it is requisite to have a moral education; to learn through language and practice to become a Christian moral agent. In some things Gore is intransigently conservative, as when he speaks of the "place" of women; and in others a firebrand of liberalism, as with economics or historical critical methods of Biblical interpretation. In all things Gore is adamant that the Church answers to a higher authority than any state. I suppose in this we come full circle back to some of the primal instincts of the Oxford Movement - even though second generation Tractarians considered Gore a betrayer of anglo-catholicism. I imagine a deeper dive into Gore would be quite fruitful indeed.

Tawney, Richard H. Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: An Historical Study. Penguin Books, 1938.

Anglican socialists ran up against a great deal of institutional resistance, in no small part because socialism was seen as a novel development. Why should such new ideas, with such an intense critique of the English way of life, be accepted? A common way the Anglican socialists dealt with this accusation was to investigate the historical origins of capitalism. Christianity had not only existed without capitalism, they argued, but for the majority of its history actively denounced the foundational assumptions that constitute capitalist material relations and ethical suppositions. Most of the socialists were not historians, and so their interpretations were commonly marked by romantic and naive ideas about former Christian ages. With Tawney, though, we are face to face with a trained historian, and talented economic thinker. Tawney played a substantial role in the post-WWI British reconstruction, and was the ideological progenitor of the socialist Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple. Religion is an historical investigation into both the medieval roots of capitalism, and the Protestant - especially Calvinist - flowering of the capitalist system.

Tawney's book is in conversation with Weber's famous Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, while subjecting Weber to important critiques. The medieval church was consistently opposed to usury, and indeed profit generally, Tawney argues. The Catholic church was certainly inconsistent in its application of these beliefs, but the clarity and unity of scholastic voices are nearly unanimous. Luther in many ways maintains this medieval consensus, but his social thinking is ad hoc and inconsistent. The true roots of capitalism come about in advanced calvinism as newly powerful merchant class began to spread internationally.

When Calvin speaks of economic matters it is true that he can be as severe as Thomas; but the middle class traders that formed the base of calvinism as it spread was now the new norm. Mercantilism needed to be baptized. In the Middle Ages, merchants were viewed with great suspicion. If they were a necessity, they were a necessary evil. But now commerce became a battleground for salvation. A way needed to be found to allow for trade to be profitable for the merchant and for the soul. In a move that deserves more attention, Tawney hints at how the Protestant understanding of grace helped to open up this new possibility.

Having dealt with the continental reformers Tawney analyzes the Puritans before summarizing and concluding. Tawney believed that it is with the Puritans that we see

the full victory of the economic virtues over the medieval consensus regarding wealth creation.

Religion remains a landmark study that has hardly lost any of its force to developments in the field. One of the most substantial gaps in his analysis - and it is a major gap - is that the transatlantic slave trade does not make an appearance as an explanatory factor in capitalism's rise. Slavery is mentioned in passing and roundly condemned to be sure, but if we are to give a fuller picture of the shape of capitalism we must supplement and critique Tawney for this oversight.

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