

ment upon the domain of their English and Protestant neighbours. The situation is in the highest degree embarrassing. It is the perplexity, almost the despair, of Canadian statesmanship. But, admitting all this, it is not easy to see what good can result, or how anything but evil can result, from perpetual denunciation of the French Canadians and their policy in the columns of English journals. It is impossible to deny to our fellow-citizens of French descent the right to hold together and work together for the perpetuation of their cherished language and customs. It is impossible, without gross breach of faith, to take from them the special privileges guaranteed by treaty at the time of their conquest, recognised by all subsequent legislation, and distinctly secured to them by the British North American Act. Argument cannot now be needed to convince English-speaking Canadians that the perpetuation of a second language, an anti-democratic and un-American State Church, and antiquated and un-English laws and customs, is incompatible with the complete national solidarity to which they aspire. The statesman who can point out a straightforward and honourable way out of the difficulty will send his name down to posterity as the best benefactor of United Canada. But to go on continually harping on the "particularist" and aggressive tendencies of the Quebec French, as if they had not a natural and moral right to cherish their own peculiarities of race and religion, is but to increase the difficulty by intensifying the mutual distrust which already exists, and possibly engendering a mutual enmity which happily does not yet exist. And after what has been said and written on the subject during the last few years, can any one put his finger on a single feasible and statesmanlike proposal that has yet been made, looking to a peaceful and honourable solution of the difficulty? If any such solution is possible, is it not much more likely to be found along the lines of quiet argument and educational influence?

THE LAMBETH CONFERENCE: SOCIALISM, II.

COMING to the consideration of "Socialism Proper," we find it necessary to begin with some attempt to define the term, and this is not quite easy; but we may, for practical purposes, follow the guidance of the Lambeth Committee, who give us some valuable contributions towards the understanding of the word and the thing.

What is Socialism? Proudhon said: "Every aspiration towards the improvement of society." Laveleye says, "Proudhon's definition is too wide: it omits two characteristics. In the first place, every socialistic doctrine aims at introducing greater equality into social conditions; and secondly, it tries to realize those reforms by the action of the law or the State." Mr. Kirkup, in the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, declares that "the central aim of socialism is to terminate the divorce of the workers from the natural sources of subsistence and of culture;" and he adds, "the essence of the theory consists in this—associated production, with a collective capital, with the view to an equitable distribution." In short, Socialism aims at the destruction of private property, and the equalizing of all sorts and conditions of men.

The Report of the Lambeth Committee points out that, in the general definition of Socialism, there is no contradiction of Christianity. For the Gospel teaches the brotherhood of man; and although this is widely different from the equality, it does affirm common interests, common claims, and common duties. And this involves "the improvement of the material and moral condition of the poor," as an end which the community is bound to promote. But Christianity does not teach equality, nor does it regard mankind as having the power to elevate itself by its own inherent power.

The real question which the Christian and the philanthropist have to consider is this—whether the proposed methods of Socialism would probably tend to the elevation of society as a whole, whether they are likely to make men better and happier. If they have this tendency, they cannot be really opposed to the Gospel, and they must be based upon a principle which is in harmony with the teaching of Christ.

We have examined some of the theories of the Socialists of the present day. We have done so as simply desiring to find out what is true, and what is likely to conduce to the well-being of society. But we have not yet dealt with the thing which would annihilate private property, which would make the State the only proprietor, while the individual would become the child and the workman of the State.

Such a theory is not without plausibility. We will go farther and say that, if such a theory could be worked successfully, we might accept it as the true idea of government. It was tried at Jerusalem, in the early days of the Church, but it did not seem to be perfectly successful. "The poor saints at Jerusalem" were soon in need of extraneous help. Doubtless, it is the ideal of human social life, and it will probably be realised in the perfected society of humanity. All this may be true, and yet it may not

be a workable theory of social life under present conditions, and it may be well that we should consider its probable effects before we commit ourselves to it.

Let us, then, see what the Lambeth Committee say on the subject, and inquire whether we can accept their conclusions, or give ourselves up to the Socialism which declares that property is theft (*la propriété c'est le vol*). Here are the words of the Report: "If all men had to work under State or Communal inspection or compulsion, it would be difficult for them to retain freedom, the sense of parental responsibility, and those numerous traits of individuality which give richness to the human character." We find no fault with this utterance, except that it is hardly strong enough. We should prefer to say "impossible" instead of "difficult." Moreover, the grounds of the declaration are not brought out, and we must try to supply this omission.

Liberty, we are accustomed to think, is the condition of all true human progress and development, and Socialism destroys liberty. The former of these propositions is generally conceded, and we will here assume it. On the latter we must say something more. But first of the other points. The Report speaks of the difficulty of retaining "those numerous traits of individuality which give richness to the human character." It may, perhaps, be questioned whether individuality is to be desired, and indeed there are many who regard it as a lingering symptom of the inequality which they regard as the greatest blot upon our social system. If this opinion is accepted, there is an end to the argument. But can it be accepted?

We think it is M. Taine who asserts that Frenchmen care little for liberty, but only for equality; but that Englishmen love liberty and care nothing for equality. There is a good deal of truth in the saying. This being so, we might expect Socialism to flourish more in France than among English-speaking men, and the French have had more Socialistic theorists than the English, although even among them the system has never really taken root. However this may be, and whatever may be our own preferences, it is clear enough that Individualism cannot flourish under Socialism.

"The sense of parental responsibility" would be equally endangered. It needs no prophet to confirm this statement. Who can tell how much the existence and power of the family sentiment owes to the sense of mutual dependence and responsibility? The abiding consciousness on the part of the bread-earner that the lives of those who belong to him have to be sustained by his exertions must keep alive in him the sense of duty, the sense, too, of authority and supremacy; and this is met, on the other side, by the sense of dependence, of obligation, giving rise to gratitude, affection, submission. The advocates of Socialism are generally very indifferent as to the maintenance of family life, considering that its disadvantages are greater than those which would be experienced when the family was merged in the community. It would be absurd to sneer at a theory which commended itself to the great Plato. But we imagine that we have listened to a teacher still greater than Plato; and at any rate, there are few of the peoples of modern civilization—we doubt if there are any—who will be persuaded to believe that mankind will be benefited by the loosening of the ties of the family.

A point of no less interest is the relationship of Socialism to liberty. At first sight, the socialistic movement would seem to be one of the numerous phases which the association of liberty assumes. Certainly the frightful inequality of classes in the past has been closely connected with the servitude of the many to the few. Of this there can be no question at all and therefore it might appear that the association and procuring of a community of goods would be, on the one hand, a consequence of liberty, and, on the other, a means of extending and strengthening its influence. We have no doubt, therefore, that the ordinary Socialist would be very much surprised, and perhaps even indignant, if he were told that he was planning to provide the weaker classes with food at the cost of their individual liberty. And yet we believe that the Committee have understated the truth in declaring that it would be "difficult" for them to retain liberty. We hold that, under any thorough system of Socialism, it would be not merely difficult, but impossible. Let us make this clear.

It is of Socialism, pure and simple, that we are now thinking—not of schemes for regulating contracts, the investment of capital, the employment of labour, etc. Such schemes may be good or bad, and they may approximate more or less to Socialism; but it is impossible to offer any general criticism of them, as this might be inapplicable to any particular scheme that might be brought forward. With regard to Socialism, full-blown and consistent, there is no such difficulty.

According to Socialism private property is theft. Everything belongs to the community, and each individual is entitled to his own share of the whole, and no more. There are great differences as to the manner in which