

Socialism

PHILLIPS THOMISON.

SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY.

A lively controversy is being waged in the columns of *Citizen and Country* and other Social Reform papers as to the relations between Socialism and Christianity. Some of the advocates of economic reform are disposed to look askance at the Socialists proper, on the ground that the utterances of some of their leaders, if not the entire tone and spirit of the movement, is distinctly anti-Christian. The aim of *Citizen and Country* has been to harmonize all the elements which appear to make for social progress and to discover if possible a common platform, but from the course the discussion is taking it is evident that there are many and serious difficulties in the way. Possibly one mistake is in counting too much on the co-operation of some agencies whose influence, judging by past experience, is more likely to be in the main antagonistic. Foremost among these stands the so-called Christian Church.

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Socialism and orthodox "official" Christianity will no more mix than will oil and water. The teachings of Christ are thoroughly Socialistic—which was, no doubt, one reason why the scribes and Pharisees, the representatives of the wealthy and influential classes of Judea, stirred up the mob to clamor for his crucifixion. But the Church has departed very far from the precepts and example of the Man of Nazareth, and in no respect more than in its subserviency to wealth, its cowardice in failing to denounce wrong and injustice, otherwise than "in the abstract"—and its support of existing institutions, and no matter how opposed to the principle it professes. The orthodox Church never has put itself forward as the champion of any reform until the movement had first attained a measure of success and popularity. It was the great buttress and bulwark of negro slavery until "infidel" Abolitionists had done the pioneer work and slavery was losing ground. It opposed the earlier temperance workers, who were also treated as heretics and blasphemers. It supports capital punishment to day, in opposition to the sentiments of the more enlightened and humane.

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The Anglo-Saxon race has gone temporarily mad with the lust of conquest and bloodshed. The two great "Christian" nations—England and the United States—have both undertaken wars of spoliation—wars for which there is absolutely no shadow of excuse or justifica-

tion. There is nothing to be surprised at in this. Both nations have for so long oppressed and degraded their own people that it would be folly to suppose that any considerations of justice or humanity would restrain their greed in dealing with weak foreign nations. But what is the Church doing to censure or restrain the bloody work? How many pulpits in Britain have denounced Kitchener's piratical raid on the Soudan? How many American preachers have been brave and faithful enough to condemn their country's wanton aggression on Spain and its still more unjustifiable and cowardly attempt to reduce the Filipinos to slavery? Instead of risking comfortable positions by standing up for the right, most of them join with the unthinking crowd in paying homage to Kitchener, Dewey and other wholesale murderers and grave-robbers.

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The Church is simply a commercial institution, dependent upon the good will and financial support of the moneyed class. It can't afford to be honest—that is, as a whole. Individual ministers who are specially favorably placed or have independent means sometimes do allow themselves this luxury—but as a class the ministers are subservient to the front pews for the very excellent reason that they have to be in order to live—just exactly as the politician, the editor or the lawyer, each in his sphere, has to conciliate the source of his income. If socialism held the money-bags the Church would very quickly discover that it was the ideal they had long been looking for. But when that day comes people will be too intelligent to consider it necessary to hire a man to tell them to be good. They will then have leisure to do their own theological thinking, and churches will be run strictly on the co-operative principle.

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In spite of all the adverse influences of training and environment, there are a few sincere, earnest Christian ministers who are good, thoroughgoing Socialists, and a larger number who are disposed to pat Socialism on the head occasionally in a patronizing sort of way because it is the thing to be liberal and progressive. But these classes combined form a very inconsiderable minority of the ministry. "One swallow doesn't make a summer," neither does the fact that a few ministers at last recognize that there is a social question, and sometimes preach about it, more or less intelligently, give any ground for the expectation that the influence of the churches is likely to be cast on the side of Socialism. It is an easy matter to give an occasional sermon or lecture presenting Socialism in an abstract, academic sort of way, but when any real crisis arrives in which the people get stirred up, and definite action in opposition to popular prejudice is required, very

few of the clerical, literary or fashionable dabblers in social reform have the courage to stand to their guns.

If a man say he believe that which he really does believe,
Then he is called an unbeliever;
But if a man say he believe that which no man can believe,
Then he is called a believer.

—W. H. Merrill.

THE TRIUMPHS OF MODERN SURGERY.

They sawed off his arms and his legs,
They took out his jugular vein.
They put fancy irills on his lungs,
And they deftly extracted his brain.
'Twas a triumph of surgical skill
Such as never was heard of till then;
'Twas the subject of lectures before
Conventions of medical men.
The news of this wonderful thing
Was heralded far and wide;
But as for the patient, there's nothing to say,
Excepting, of course, that he died.

—N. Y. Medical Journal.

THE DOCTOR'S STORY.

Mrs. Rogers lay in her bed,
Bandaged and blistered from foot to head
Bandaged and blistered from head to toe.
Mrs. Rogers was very low,
Bottle and saucers, spoon and cup
On the table stood bravely up;
Physic of high and low degree;
Calomel, catnip, boneset tea—
Everything a body could bear,
Excepting light and water and air.

I opened the blinds; the day was bright,
And God gave Mrs. Rogers some light,
I opened the window; the day was fair,
And God gave Mrs. Rogers some air.
Bottles and blisters, powders and pills,
Catnip, boneset, syrup and squills,
Drugs and medicines, high and low,
I threw them as far as I could throw,
"What are you doing?" my patient cried;
"Frightening Death," I coolly replied.
"You are crazy!" a visitor said,
I slung a bottle at her head.

Deacon Rogers he came to me;
"Wife is comin' round," said he,
"I re'ly think she'll worry through;
She scolds me just as she used to do.
All the people have poohed and slurred—
And the neighbors have had their word;
'Twas better to perish some of 'em say,
Than be cured in such an irregular way."
"Your wife," said I, "had God's good care,
And His remedies—light and water and air,
All the doctors beyond a doubt,
Couldn't have cured Mrs. Rogers without."

The deacon smiled and bowed his head;
"Then your bill is nothing," he said,
"God's be the glory, as you say;
God bless you, doctor, good day! good-day!"

If ever I doctor that woman again,
I'll give her medicine made by men.

—Medical World.

No more he'll ever greet us,
He now is with the blest;
He got appendicitis,
And the doctors did the rest.

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