

The Earl of Wemyss made an elaborate speech, and warned the Prime Minister of England, the leader of the Conservative party, of the downward course he was pursuing, fraught with terrible danger to the Empire.

"On the Continent," said the Earl mournfully, "Socialists are theorising, in England they are legislating." But such piteous though feeble demurrers of laggards in this age of progress now merely raise a smile among intelligent onlookers, and the *Saturday Review* had a sympathising article entitled, "The Earl of Wemyss *contra mundum*."

Let us take another illustration to show the influence these "new-fangled doctrines" are exerting in the Church of England. The following is an extract from a sermon lately preached before the Oxford University by the Rev. J. M. Wilson, Head Master of Clifton College:—"The new current that has been setting in for some years, and is now, I think, clearly defined, is the resolution to deal, as the Church of England, as a great national organization, with great social reforms, and the conviction that the truest service of Christ, who went about doing good, is fidelity in the effort to seek first the kingdom of God here on earth. Among these great social reforms there stand conspicuous the movements for temperance, purity, education, for better housing of the poor, better recreation, better land laws, and better labour laws; these and all else that concern the total social condition of the millions that make the nation. The Church as a Church is resolving to deal with these questions."

From these references it must be evident that the spread of Socialism is by no means a petty movement, working only among small isolated parties, but a general advance in all lines of thought, and though the motives for action and the rates of progress may differ in kind and in degree, yet the same end is kept in view, the peace and happiness of the greatest number.

And it is most unjust to declare this agitation essentially anti-religious. Quite apart from the enthusiastic and ever-increasing body of workers who follow the standard of Christian Socialism raised in England by Maurice and Kingsley, there is to be found amongst Secularist reformers an amount of good and conscientious work, and an appreciation and practical use of Christian ethics, which put to shame many a seemingly devout Church-goer. The experience of the Guild of St. Matthew, a Church Guild dealing especially with Secularism in England, all tends to show that the Secularist of to-day does not concern himself with the dogmas of religion, but regards solely the practice and characteristics of professed Christians. And when these fall so short of the precepts of their faith, can we wonder that doubts are entertained as to the efficacy of the sacraments and other supernatural aids to a good life? Certainly there has been a vigorous awakening in the Church during the last fifty years, and now, "*Deo gratias!*" Archbishop and Cardinal are seen working harmoniously for the common weal, but what lukewarm-

ness, not to say hypocrisy, still too often degrades the ordinary Christian.

On the Continent, it is true, the Democracy is more bitterly opposed to religion as it is expressed there, yet the explanation of this fact is not hard to discover. The Romish priesthood in Europe has won no enviable reputation for illiberality and intolerance in the past, and up to a recent period has always shown itself adverse to reform and progress. But Rome is now espousing a more liberal policy. Witness the spread of broader views in the ranks of the German and Italian priests, and the late manifesto of the Spanish bishops. In Germany the priests have zealously devoted themselves to the study of the great social questions of the day, and with the following result: "The strength of the Catholic Socialists in the Imperial Parliament," says M. de Laveleye, "increases at each election, and the party has become one of the principal factors of German politics." Nor do Protestants lag behind. The eloquent Dr. Stocker, court preacher at Berlin, heads a strong organization of workingmen, and upwards of 700 ministers sent in their adhesion to his "Central Union for Social Reform."

And this is as it should be. However irreligious some social reformers may be, it is quite certain that the principles of Socialism are the logical outcome of the Christian revelation. The highest conception of the life of an ancient Greek community, formed by the philosophical mind, falls far short of the relations between man and man inculcated by the Christian ethics. The cultured Greek confined his plans to his own country, not to say to his own city, and recognized no bond uniting him with other men whom he included under the comprehensive term, "Barbarians." The true Christian brotherhood, on the contrary, is concerned with no divisions of race or clime, the Communion of Saints disdains worldly distinctions of rank and wealth.

It is through religion, therefore, that the full realization of Socialism will be consummated, since it is only through faith in a Providence, in one God, Father of us all, that an altruistic unselfishness may be generally established sufficiently approximating to the ideal to accomplish the wished-for end. A religion must this be large-souled and truly Catholic, which will lay less stress upon sectarian differences and dogmatic controversies, and be more anxious to act up to the unmistakable precepts of a good Christian life. Under such a *regime* there would be little fear of the world being troubled with rumours of social revolutions. Life would begin to present a brighter and happier aspect to the masses of mankind, and as a consequence vice and godlessness would tend to decline.

EXON.

(To be continued in our next.)