

Socialism and Primitive Christianity

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SOCIALISM AND PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY.

In his socialistic novel, "Ring in the New," Richard Whiteing describes in one chapter a public meeting held under the auspices of some workingmen's club. The lecturer of the evening, says the author, "pleaded for a new departure in English Socialism, for a deeper purpose, for a more vitalising method, for the trumpet call that might bring down walled cities of prejudice, for a recovery of touch with the masses of the English people."

"You have left the old propaganda of passion and feeling," he said, "for mere economics. Your whole being has become but a note of interrogation: your psalm of life but a blue book. You are for gas and water sanitation, excellent things in their way, yet but remotely tending to salvation. You have been seen in the scrimmage for the prize of an aldermanic gown. The cry for help that never ceases to rise day and night from the pit of our social system is apt to pass clear over your heads as you burrow in a model sewer. Come forth and stand by us in the old spirit, in the old way. Recover the old fire and the impulse of your earlier and greater day."

The lecturer was followed shortly afterward by an old gray-bearded man who had served in the ranks—perhaps in the old Chartist days—when men took their lives in their hands fighting for the ordinary rights of men. After telling of the violence and brutality they had endured in the earlier time, the old man closed his speech with these words: “An’ why did we do it? Bekos Socialism was not—what d’ye call it now?—a doctrin: it was a religion, if it wasn’t always made on the same last as what they’ve got in the churches now. There was a good deal of ‘Our Father’ in it, though it was set to the tune of the Marsilase. It was a thing to pray for, if prayin’ was your line; to feel for all the time. Liberty, equality, fraternity, an’ ’and to ’and for the rights of man. You must get back to that with all your cliverness—if you want to make Socialism the master of the world.”

I have not quoted these words from Richard Whiteing’s novel, as if they voiced a final authority, or as if there had been a time, long ago, when Socialism was a religion but in these later days has ceased to be a religion. We cannot afford to disparage economics or philosophy or history or science or the press and literature of Socialism. Every department of thought and effort in this world-movement has its place and value. But incomparably the most important fact to be noted in connection with modern socialism is that it is—not may be or ought to be—a religion. Indeed, I claim and shall pro-

ceed to show that it is the logical and historical successor to primitive Christianity as a world-religion—that it is the only thing in our world today that bears any moral or spiritual resemblance to the religion of Jesus. And I undertake this task purely because I am convinced that until Socialism becomes for you and me our religion—that by which and in which and for which we live—we know neither Socialism nor religion. Let me not be misunderstood. I have no interest whatever in inducing any man or woman to accept some religion, as that word is usually understood. I wouldn't lift my hand to encourage any such thing. Nothing could induce me to be a party to the work of getting men and women, young or old, to join any church you can name—Protestant or Catholic, orthodox or liberal—under the impression that in doing that they were performing a religious act. It means nothing of the kind—never did mean anything of the kind. That whole process means one thing and only one: the manufacture of hypocrites. And for the best of reasons, namely, because men cannot be religious in a church or through a church. The thing is simply impossible. They can in that way merely “act a part”—the exact definition of hypocrite.

And yet, there is or can be for any human soul nothing in all the range of possibility so high, so noble, so sacred, so wholesome, so stimulating to every finest quality of manhood or womanhood as to be consciously religious, in

the vital meaning of that word. For a man or woman to become a religious being is to achieve the very blossoming of beauty, of power, of character, of happiness, of life. Merely to exist as an animal, merely to perform the common animal functions—which practically describes no small part of what we miscall human life today—is not to live at all. No matter how lowly the origin of man has been—and I believe it to have been the lowliest conceivable—man is not in any sense that lowly thing from which he arose. Almost nothing which makes man what he is can be found in that lowly origin by any possible analysis. It does not follow, because man can trace his lineage back to the monkey, that he is justified now in living a merely monkey life. The fact that the human ancestry descends through wolves and reptiles does not justify any human being living a wolfish or snakish life. Man is not at the beginning, but at the end of the process. If man is to find himself at all, it must be by facing ahead, not by facing backward. If man is to achieve his birthright, he can do so only by ascent, not by descent. Not by taking the beasts for his models, but by following the lead of the humane and ennobling ideals which have blossomed in his soul, can man enter into his heritage. And I maintain that Socialism is the only thing in the world today which means exactly that thing.

In the first place, think of the marked re-

semblance between modern Socialism as a world-movement or religion—which is the same thing—and primitive Christianity: the religion of Jesus and his followers for the first two centuries of this era. I shall ask you to think, also, of the utter lack of resemblance between that primitive Christianity and the organized church of whatever name today.

You cannot read the New Testament—especially the Gospels—without seeing that the religion which found expression in Jesus and his followers or companions was a distinct contrast to the alleged religion which found embodiment in the established church of that time. Nor did primitive Christianity during the first two or three centuries bear any resemblance to any other religion of that period. First of all, you discover that Jesus condemns in unmeasured terms the organized church of his time as morally and spiritually sterile, calling its leaders and priests hypocrites and whited sepulchers. You discover that he could not use that church as a medium for expressing his religion. You discover, also, that he was persecuted during most of his public career by that church and finally crucified at its instigation. The one thing which Jesus condemns more than anything else is hypocrisy. What did hypocrisy mean—what produced it? Why, hypocrisy was just as natural and inevitable a product of the organized church of Palestine as apples are a natural product of an apple tree. Why? Because what the

organized church at that time and place taught as religion was not and could not be religion. That is exactly the condition which produces hypocrites—an institution pretending to be what it is not and cannot be. The church of Palestine was not and could not be an embodiment or teacher of religion. Its members therefore could not be anything else than hypocrites. That church assumed that religion is a matter of theology, of precepts, of beliefs inherited from the past, of veneration for ancient names, of church-going and forms—exactly as the organized church of today assumes. But none of those things nor all of them together are religion. Religion is above all else, a movement, a crusade, a definite forward march, morally, ethically, spiritually. Religion has life, it grows, it expands, it is inspired by an ideal, it has a sacred and all-inclusive task to perform. And that is exactly what religion was to Jesus, and in some measure to his followers. It was the sense of a world-embracing mission, the mission of organizing the life of the world on the basis of brotherhood. Jesus and his companions—as you cannot help feeling if you read the record—had business to do, business that required all their time and all their power and all their devotion and all the days of all their years. Their business was the establishment of a new social order, and that order they called “the Kingdom of God on earth.” That was the key-note of Jesus’ preaching and the purpose from which he

never swerved. That the same purpose might not fade from the minds of his disciples he gave them a prayer which they could not repeat without saying "Thy kingdom come on earth as in heaven." That kingdom of God on earth was not something vague or mystical, as it has been represented to be by a church which pretends to worship Jesus while it dare not take any of his teaching at its face value. The kingdom of God was simply a world-embracing social order. Its very vastness was such as to make it invisible to warped and narrow minds. Really, it would seem as if only the proletariat of that time grasped the idea, so that it was literally true that only the poor and humble of spirit and condition could see or enter that kingdom of God. Centuries later, when the exploiting class of society, blind and devoted worshippers of Mammon, formally adopted Christianity as its nominal religion in order to secure the allegiance of the multiplying millions of that persecuted faith, all that was vital in that early religion was naturally and inevitably emasculated—and it has never been restored. The only possible way in which Mammon-worshippers could make anything at all out of the simple and revolutionary teachings of Jesus—teachings which had served as the natural watchwords of that most radical and revolutionary movement in all recorded history—was by reading new and strange meanings into those teachings. And the process has been going on ever since and is today. That

is to say, a mammon-worshipping society then and now has been engaged in the task of trying to interpret to suit its own way of life what were originally the natural watchwords of a movement aiming at the conquest of the world for justice and brotherhood and love. So, the preachers of what is called the Christian Church—the spokesmen of that class in society which depends for its existence on the exploitation of another class and could not be at all but for that exploitation—these preachers have been saying that the kingdom of God doesn't mean at all a social order to be realized on the earth—as the Lord's Prayer plainly teaches—but merely a state of mind, and they have translated certain words of Jesus as "the kingdom of God is within you." What Jesus said was "the kingdom of God is among you," is right here in the movement now going on. That this is the true translation is seen in every other reference to the kingdom of God by Jesus. The Kingdom of God, to Jesus, was something people could enter, could have part in. Even publicans and harlots were entering that kingdom, he said, while scribes and Pharisees were not. Members of the lowest order in society were steadily joining his movement and the leaders of the church were staying out of it. Besides, the movement begun by Jesus at once became missionary—as any religion must be—and it continued to be that for two centuries and more. To the propaganda of that movement the disciples and others devoted them-

selves completely, and for it they cheerfully gave their lives.

Now it is simply historical fact that since the year 325 A. D. or thereabouts, when the ruling, despotic, enslaving class in society perverted and destroyed that early religion by formally adopting it, without having the smallest conception of or sympathy with its revolutionary meaning and purpose, what is called Christianity has been in no sense whatever a movement, but chiefly a theological system. Nowhere and in no way has the Christian Church devoted itself to the task of establishing a new social order on the earth and any such idea is simply foreign to its thought today. This for the most natural reasons. The dominant element in that church during all these centuries since Constantine has been that social class which exists solely on the exploitation of another class and can, therefore, have no use for brotherhood. So, the revolutionary religion of Jesus could mean nothing at all to them. Naturally, it became necessary to transform that early teaching, which was done simply by inventing a theology—a system according to which Jesus the teacher and leader of a movement for establishing brotherhood in the world became the savior of the individual either from the wrath of God in an imaginary future world, or, as is increasingly taught today, in some mystical way, by entering into the soul of each man and making him a new man—in both cases

an idea utterly foreign to anything Jesus sought to do.

Over and over again in the past sixteen centuries has the truth of this interpretation been demonstrated. To take but a single instance, consider the great anti-slavery struggle in this country. From no source did the advocates of abolition draw greater inspiration for their struggle than from the plain teachings and the spirit and example of Jesus. No men of that period more convincingly reproduced the purpose and consciousness of Jesus than did William Lloyd Garrison and his associates. The ringing denunciations of Garrison in the *Liberator* were little more than paraphrases of the burning philippic of Jesus in the 23rd chapter of Matthew. The watch-words of primitive Christianity were again the watch-words of the whole abolition movement. As Lowell wrote, abolitionism was in very truth "God's new Messiah." What was the attitude of the Christian Church in America toward this "new Messiah?" Precisely what the attitude of the scribes and Pharisees had been toward Jesus. Not a church or vestry in Boston could Garrison secure in which to plead the cause of enslaved blacks—the one hall opened to him was owned and used by avowed infidels! Christianity to the church of that time was in no sense a militant movement for human freedom, in no sense did it mean "good tidings to the poor," "release to captives," "recovering of sight to the blind," or proclaiming to anybody

“the acceptable year of the Lord.” It was not a living movement, it was a sterile theological system.

It is simply impossible to know the story of the Christian movement during the first two or three centuries, without knowing that the person of Jesus or his office was not the supreme thing at all during most of that time. Brotherhood was the supreme thing. Inevitably so, because that religion was consciously a world-movement for brotherhood, and not a theological system, and it was made up largely of that class in society which had or could have absolutely nothing to gain or hope for except through their own solidarity. On any other plan, they could not have survived at all. If you will read the little book called “Ecce Homo,” you will learn from it how real and how all-inclusive was the actual brotherhood which primitive Christianity organized even within the despotism of Rome. All lines of race and caste were wiped out, and fraternity reigned supreme. Since 325 A. D., brotherhood as an actuality in the Christian Church has been unknown. The members of that church today are insulated from each other, they do not know the meaning of brotherhood. They cannot, because Capitalism makes no place for brotherhood.

And here is the exact parallel between the religion of Jesus and the Socialist movement. Socialism is primarily a movement. No one knows it or can know it, unless he knows it

as a movement—an uprising of the working class, or the intelligent members of that class. It is not chiefly a doctrine or a theory. The movement appeared before the philosophy took shape. And it is a movement which not only aims at a world-wide brotherhood, but which already is a brotherhood. Its basis is the solidarity and brotherhood of the world's enslaved and exploited wage workers. Until we see and know and feel it to be that, we do not know the movement—we have not become vital, potent Socialists. If we are not consciously in this movement as parts of it—if it is not just as fundamental to our life as it must be to the most enslaved workers who have absolutely no other hope, we are not a part of this movement. It is just as essential that it be the first thing, the chief thing, to us as it was that the movement set on foot by Jesus should be the chief and supreme concern to those who would follow him. His words to would-be disciples then apply with absolute accuracy to the Socialist movement today: "If a man love father or mother or wife or children or houses or lands more than this cause, he cannot become a part of the movement." It meant something to belong to a real religion 19 centuries ago, and it cost something, too. But it did not mean as much to belong to that movement as it means to belong to this, and we cannot expect the cost to be any less. Cost is inseparable from worth. I cannot too earnestly say to you that we mean

and women, or any others, are not religious, cannot know the meaning or uplift or power of religion, unless we are today consciously giving our lives to and in and for a movement of world-inclusive beneficence. What movement is there which answers that description outside the world-wide struggle for Socialism?

I cannot think of what people are trying to do in the organized church or anywhere outside the Socialist movement without a feeling of profound sorrow. Think what a spectacle, from the religious point of view, our capitalistic society presents. Think what this alleged religious teaching of church and Sunday School and home means. For one thing, there isn't a single church in Christendom nor a single home that calls itself Christian that is making any attempt to give to boys and girls or men and women the principles of a religion which they are expected to practice in the whole routine and action of daily life. There isn't even the pretense that the plain teachings of Jesus can be practiced in the business world—can be practiced, in other words, in that sphere of life where these young men are to spend altogether the greater part of every day and all their days. The men and women of these churches and these Christian homes know that nothing could be more out of place in the every day relations and operations of the present business system than the precepts of Jesus. No sane business man would dream of hanging on the walls of

his shop or factory or office any single utterance of Jesus, and if you should frame some of them and offer them to him for such use, he would consider it an insult, and probably kick you into the street. Imagine business men displaying on the walls of their homes or offices or any place of business such simple, clear-cut precepts of Jesus as: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth;" "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon;" "Call no man your master on the earth, for all ye are brethren;" "He that would be the greatest among you shall be the servant of all, even as the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God;" "Woe unto you! scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses and for a pretense make long prayers."

Why don't our capitalist church members hang up these words of Jesus in their places of business? Because all these utterances are the natural expressions of brotherhood—were produced by the sense and spirit of brotherhood, are the native literature of a movement aiming at a brotherhood all-inclusive. But capitalism is the denial of brotherhood. That is the reason. And every man and woman, whether in pew or in pulpit, who professes to accept Jesus as a divine teacher or as a true or good man, and yet upholds this transparent pretense of the existing church to be in any sense a symbol of religion,

confesses his hypocrisy, puts himself exactly in the shoes of that generation of church members of the first century of whom Jesus said: "They say, and do not." There is no other escape than hypocrisy for any religious institution which professes to cherish, as sacred or divine, precepts or principles which it makes no attempt to realize in every part of human life. And that describes exactly what the Christian Church of today is, orthodox and liberal alike. The Christian Church is morally and ethically and spiritually decadent today, for no other reason than that it has no sense of supreme obligation to reconstruct society on the foundations of justice and brotherhood.

And yet, members of this same sterile organization are charging that the Socialist movement of the world is threatening the overthrow of religion, is an irreligious movement. This charge, no matter by whom it is brought, has exactly the same force and meaning which the same charge had when brought against Jesus by the Pharisees and hypocrites of his time. In fact, he was crucified on the charge of being a perverter of religion. And there isn't the slightest doubt that some of these modern hypocrites (with Mr. Roosevelt at their head) who are now attacking Socialism and Socialists, would do the same thing for those who in our time are bearing forward the torch held aloft by the hands of Jesus and other great prophets of religion. The unconcealed malice, the murderous

spirit, the ignorant brutality which is written on almost every sentence of that attack by Roosevelt tells where he belongs. The only ground for the charge made against Jesus was that he had advocated and illustrated in his own action a religion, not for Sundays or temples or cushioned pews and organ recitals, but for every day and all the days—a religion of brotherhood, a religion which was primarily the organized effort to make brotherhood the core principle of human society. The members of a dead church then feared and condemned that movement because it clearly made that institution of no use. What use could there be for the elaborate rites of temple and synagogue and Sabbath, if any man might find the lake-shore or wayside or street a holy place, if all days were equally sacred and all life a religion?

We have an exact parallel of that today. Socialism would mean—must mean—not a formal and meaningless brotherhood—a mere brotherhood of words—which people vainly imagine inside a church and which they have not the slightest sense of, either inside or outside of the church, but a brotherhood in the whole process of life itself, cooperation in the production of all the necessities and luxuries of life. For any one to say that such cooperation or brotherhood cannot be had or would not be a sacred thing unless we all make Jesus an object of worship, is simply to use language that has no meaning. We have already to-day such

brotherhood, such solidarity, among large sections of the working class as no fanatical devotion to the person of Jesus ever surpassed.

What is the religion which Mr. Roosevelt says will be destroyed by Socialism? It is one thing and only one—the religion of capitalism. It is because Mr. Roosevelt has found in the writings of socialists—quite naturally, because Socialists are above all truth-speakers—the frequent declaration that the Christian Church is utterly sterile and useless—just as Jesus declared of the church of his time in terms of denunciation which no Socialist of modern times has ever surpassed—because of that plain truth-speaking Mr. Roosevelt charges Socialists with the crime of irreligion. I do not forget that Socialists have often rejected the whole philosophy of religion on which the church rests, and even professed atheism. I am not in the least disturbed by that. No mere name—I care not what it be—has any sacredness. It is facts, realities, that have sacredness. No repetition of the word “God” ever made or ever can make any man religious. No profession of any faith, however ancient or popular, makes a man religious. Religion cannot be adequately expressed in words. Jesus didn’t attempt it. He wrote nothing. His expression of religion was supremely in deeds, in the movement he inaugurated for the kingdom of God on earth. Religion is a movement. If you are a part of the human movement for brotherhood,

you are religious, no matter what you think or don't think about any theology or creed or church; no matter what you believe or don't believe. And if you are not a part of the movement for human brotherhood, all-inclusive, for ending exploitation and tyranny and enthroning liberty, equality, fraternity, then you are not religious, no matter how loudly or incessantly you pray or sing or repeat the empty professions of faith.

The truth is, Socialists understand exactly, as no other people do, the sort of religion Mr. Roosevelt believes in—the religion of the Big Stick. To quote Rev. Geo. E. Littlefield, of Boston: “Cannon on a church tower in St. Petersburg, Bloody Sunday, belched a sermon the workers of the world understood. Capitalism is materialism. It worships dollars and mumbles about a cross—on which it once celebrated another bloody day. What capitalists support as religion, Socialists abhor. Socialism will give the ethics and faith of Jesus, after centuries of perversion and suppression, a chance to be realized instead of being merely professed.”

Nothing so concisely expresses the situation as that one brief sentence: “Capitalism is materialism.” And because capitalism is materialism and because capitalism stands first in the mind and thought of the vast majority of the capitalist class, that class is simply incapable of giving the world a religion. It is still easier for a camel

or an elephant to go through the eye of a needle than for a person possessing the capitalist mind even to see religion, or to recognize it, if he should see it. The capitalist's God is the Socialist's devil. No wonder there can be nothing in common between them. No wonder the capitalists' class is proving itself unable to convince the world of its religious sincerity—as evidenced by the growth of the mass of unchurched. No wonder men and women today who really want to be religious, who really want to make their lives count, have to get out of the church as thousands are doing and even out of the Capitalist class, as men like Tolstoy have done. That class hasn't any religion. Religion cannot be materialistic, God cannot be reconciled with Mammon. Religion stands at the opposite pole from materialism. Defenders of capitalism are fond of accusing Socialists of being materialists, of being concerned only with material considerations—and Mr. Roosevelt repeats that silly accusation. They remind us of our doctrine of the materialistic interpretation of history, economic determinism and the like. Think what this accusation means. Listen to these words of a wage slave: "I am a coal miner. My entire life has been a hard, cruel struggle, not for autos, steam yachts, vacation trips and the luxuries of life, but for a mere animal existence. I am engaged in a hard fight for food, clothing, and shelter for myself and mine. The proletarian may not be able to talk

glibly of 'patriotism' and 'Christian civilization' and 'eternal justice' and of 'our great country.' He is not in the clouds. He is not troubled with religious or metaphysical speculations. His contact with machinery, made by man and operated by man day after day before his eyes, teaches him uncsciously cause and effect. If he or his fellow-workers are injured by this machinery, he learns that his was not punishment sent by some outside supreme power, but due to some failing within himself or the machine. Economic Determinism is taught him week in and week out. He knows that his feelings towards himself, to his family and to society, are determined, generally, by his economic condition, whether he realizes it or not. He is not puzzled over the theory of surplus value as college professors are. It is impressed on him every time he sees his employer buy a new auto or take a trip to Europe while he is turning out dividends at home, or when he inquires for a job and finds he is not needed because he has produced too much. And the class struggle, none know it better than he. Every day of his life it is impressed upon him. He knows he is being robbed by those higher up and he knows they are his enemies."

Why do industrial proletaires—millions of them—know the meaning of economic determinism at first hand? Why have they no interest in patriotism or religion, so-called? Where has

the so-called Christian Church been and what has it been doing all these long centuries, that millions of wage-slaves should know only the hard, cruel necessity of struggle for an existence little higher than that of beasts of burden—an existence which effectually bars a man from having any religion at all in all his industrial life? He cannot even have the thing which Mr. Roosevelt calls religion—the religion of attendance at church on Sunday. What has the Christian Church—this professed purveyor of religion—been doing for these millions of wage-slaves? Has it done anything to make religion for them possible? Not a single thing. To say that these men and women of the working class, some of whose minds in childhood have been warped by mere superstitions as their bodies have been dwarfed and deformed by the most brutal exploitation, have any sense of religion as they go into churches or cathedrals to repeat a mere routine, is to trifle with 20th century intelligence. Not only is that not religion, but it is a great deal worse than none. Instead of attempting to give these millions a religion—as Jesus tried to do for the millions of toilers in his time—by inspiring in them the hope of emancipation, the religion of the capitalist class consists in training its children to be in their turn exploiters of this same hopeless class of wage-earners. That is the one end toward which all the energies of the capitalist class, by the voice of its preachers

and the precepts of its colleges and schools, are directed.

The charge of materialism comes with mighty poor grace from the capitalist class. That class is simply saturated with materialism. It lives, moves and has its being in and for materialism. Professing on Sunday a faith of spirituality, it never pretends to put that faith into practice, and it devotes its whole energy to the maintenance and perpetuation of a social order that is totally materialistic. On the other hand, while the Socialist movement professes a materialistic philosophy because it recognizes the forces which produce social evolution, the whole expression of this movement is profoundly and nobly spiritual. It is a denial of materialism. The stock exchange, where members of the capitalist class howl and snap and tear at each other like a pack of wolves, is the very apotheosis of capitalism. But the symbol of Socialism is seen in every labor strike, where members of the same trade and even of other trades take their lives in their hands, urged on often by their wives, in behalf of brother workers. Capitalism drives men and women apart, sets men and women against one another, makes them rivals for an empty and worthless thing, a thing which brings neither happiness nor nobility of character to the winner. Socialism makes men comrades, brothers, solidly knit together in a co-operation which develops the higher and better nature. All the instincts and ideals of religion are dying

out among the members of the capitalist class. Fathers and mothers of that class no longer expect their children ever to know the meaning and inspiration of religion, as a fulfilment of their life. They train their children simply for the game, for the gamble. That is what life is to mean for these boys and girls of capitalist homes—a game, a gamble. It is not to have—does not have—any higher or more sacred meaning than that—the life of the business world. They are to find out the rules of the game, the gamble. They are to win, if they can. And life is to mean no more than the alternative of triumph or defeat. But in the Socialist movement of the world there lies such inspiration, such enthusiasm, such comradeship, such affection, such cementing of life to life as not all the world outside can afford. Life in the Socialist movement is infinitely more than mere playtime, mere existence, mere animalism, mere eating and drinking and having a good time. It is a noble and ennobling struggle. It is a character-building, soul-making, manful, womanly endeavor—a fight for sacred issues, the only struggle in which the god-like in men and women can find expression. Life in the Socialist movement is exactly of the same quality as life in the missionary crusade which Jesus led—only fortified and quickened by the clearer light of modern science and stimulated by the nobler possibilities which beckon from the 20th century world. Instead of the old commission of Pale-

stine: "Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all nations," the commission of the modern religious movement is, "Workers of all lands, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains, and a world to gain." Does some one say this is a sordid, selfish watchword? Whoever says that doesn't know what he is talking about. He is so obsessed and saturated by the false morality and ethics of a capitalist society. that he cannot recognize a divine idea when he sees it. There never was a time when religion did not mean the breaking of chains, the emancipation of men and women enslaved. The religion of Israel was born in the escape from Egyptian bondage. In no way so clearly did Moses establish his title to be called a religious leader as in his knowledge that freedom, economic freedom, is the first and highest need of men. And when Jesus began his own ministry in Palestine, he disclosed what underlay that ministry and inspired it when, in the Nazareth synagogue, he announced the purpose of his life in the words: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." The Socialist movement finds no fault with those noble utterances of Jesus. There isn't one of them which it cannot inscribe on its banners, not one of them which may not

be an inspiration to its whole endeavor. It has no deeper faith than is expressed in that beatitude: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." Nothing could have been a sweeter inspiration to that modern Christ, Karl Marx, in his long privation and poverty in London than this beatitude of his great-souled Galilean comrade. Socialists can find meaning in the beatitude which says: "Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Their doctrine of the class struggle needs no better statement than: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." The very manhood of their movement finds expression in the words: "Call no man master on earth, for all ye are brethren." No one so well as Socialists know why "it is easier for a camel to go thru the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Socialism is the practice of the precepts of Jesus where they mean something and are worth something. Socialism differs from capitalism in that it takes the principles of religion seriously. Religion to capitalism is merely an ornament, to be put on exhibition one day in the week. Religion to Socialism is a struggle which will never end till the exploitation of man by man is made no longer possible. Capitalism is the creed of the southern slave-holders and their Northern apologists of a hundred years ago. Socialism is the spirit and purpose and effort which in William Lloyd Garrison declares:

"The standard of emancipation is now unfurled. Let all the enemies of enslaved labor tremble. I will be as harsh as truth and as uncompromising as justice. I am in earnest. I will not equivocate. I will not evade. I will not retreat a single inch, and I will be heard. Posterity will bear testimony that I was right."

To be a part of the Socialist movement is to consecrate one's life to the service of all classes and conditions of human society. Socialism does not mean the exchange of one set of masters for another set, as Mr. Roosevelt would have us believe. The success of the Socialist movement, as Marx and Engels saw sixty years ago, means the highest welfare of all, since it will abolish all classes. It means the supreme moral and ethical and spiritual gain that mankind can achieve, the establishment of a social order in which social esteem shall rest on social service and not on the chance of birth or possessions, in which a man's standing shall depend, not on cunning or brute might, but on qualities which most widely separate the human from the beastly. Socialism registers, as nothing else does or can, the moral and ethical and spiritual awakening of the world—it is the promise and prophecy of a higher civilization than man has yet known.

"This is the Earth-god of the latter day,
Treading with solemn joy the upward way;

A lusty God that in some crowning hour
Will hurl Gray Privilege from the place of
power.

These are the inevitable steps that make
Unreason tremble and Tradition shake.
This is the World-Will climbing to its goal,
The climb of the unconquerable Soul—
Democracy, whose sure insurgent stride
Jars Kingdoms to their ultimate stone of pride."

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