

MODERN SOCIALISM

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Modern Socialism by Charles H. Vail

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CHARLES H. VAIL

**MODERN
SOCIALISM**

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MODERN SOCIALISM

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BY

REV. CHARLES H. VAIL

Author of the "National Ownership of Railways"

"Read not to contradict nor believe, but to weigh and consider"

FRANCIS BACON

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
NEW YORK

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of the
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TO VAIL
ANDREW

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PREFACE.

IT has been my purpose in this volume to present, in as concise a form as practicable, the principles and purposes of Socialism.

The growth of Socialism has been phenomenal. Its rapid spread surpasses that of early Christianity, with which it has many features in common. It has become international and cosmopolitan in character.

The importance of the movement is sufficient reason for the publication of this book, but this is not the principal reason it is put forth. As a clergyman, believing in the Kingdom of God, and realizing our apparent distance from the ideal, some years ago I began to seek a solution of the problem. I had not proceeded far upon my investigation before being impressed by the incongruity between the demands of the Kingdom of God, and the demands of our economic system. I saw clearly their incompatibility, and the hopelessness of realizing the former under the environment of the latter. I became convinced after a careful study of the various phases of sociological thought, that it is useless to hope that the ideal of the ages—peace, justice and plenty—would be realized under the antagonisms of our competitive system. But to substitute co-operation for competition would be Socialism.

There have been so much calumny and vituperation heaped upon this word, due partly to ignorance and prejudice and

partly to wilful misconception, that my first thought was to do as many have done,—adopt the theory under the name Nationalism, Mutualism, or Collectivism. But no word is so well adapted to express the doctrine of the social ownership and management of the means of production and distribution as Socialism. It stands for one of the highest ideals of which it is possible for the human mind to conceive. I decided, therefore, not to be swayed by ignorance and prejudice, nor by the calumny of the privileged classes. People are beginning to understand the meaning of Socialism, and the aversion to the use of the word will surely disappear, in spite of the misrepresentations employed by the defenders of capitalism to discredit it before the world. In fact, it *is* rapidly disappearing. So great has been the change of late that even to-day one need not hesitate to proclaim himself a Socialist.

Prof. Ely informs us that nearly all the great Economists are believers in industrial democracy, which is Socialism. The highest possibilities can only be realized by united effort. There would have been but little progress had men not united their efforts for the good of the common weal. The procedure under the haphazard methods of private enterprise is akin to barbarism. We have already, in many fields, replaced chance and private enterprise with intellectual co-operation, and we need but extend the principle to realize the ideal. The very basis of society is co-operation, and civilization is measured by the extent of its attainment.

In this period of modern industry the progress of concentration has been so accelerated that the prophecy of complete unification is no longer considered Utopian. This inevitable evolution of the social order has not only evidenced the possibility of Socialism, but also its necessity.

Being thus convinced that Socialism is the only solution of modern problems and absolutely essential to a higher