

SOCIALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

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Socialism and Christianity by A. J. F. Behrends

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BY

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TO MY WIFE.

PREFACE.

THE cobbler should stick to his last. This old and homely saying may be quoted against me by those who are inclined to divorce religion and ethics from political economy. It is high time that a protest be entered against such an attempted separation, and that the religious leaders of the people acquaint themselves with the industrial and social problems of our day, so as to be prepared to apply the principles of the New Testament to their solution. An applied Christianity is as much needed now as when Paul passed, without hesitation and apology, from the profoundest theological argument to the plainest and most incisive criticism of the social life of the Roman Empire. The lines of controversy were never more sharply drawn than they are at present, and the opposing disputants are not always careful to maintain the temper of dispassionate argument. They must be brought together upon common ground, and that can be done only by the exhibition and exposition of fundamental and immutable principles. Every great debate is an ethical one, and only at the bar of an enlightened conscience can it be rightly and permanently settled.

I was induced to undertake the studies, of which this volume is the fruit, by accepting an invitation from the Faculty of the Hartford Theological Semi-

nary to prepare a series of lectures on the Social Problems of our time, to be delivered before the students of that institution, stipulating for a year's time in the preparation. This will account for the local coloring of an occasional paragraph, though the seven lectures have been broken up into ten chapters. The months have passed all too rapidly, and I should have gladly availed myself of the opportunity for more careful and extended investigation; but while such a delay would have enlarged the range of discussion, and increased the bulk of the volume, it would not have affected the method of critical treatment. The time sufficed, by patient industry, to secure a clear knowledge of the claims of modern socialism, and of the political philosophy upon which these claims are based; while the principles of criticism, to which I have constantly recurred, seem to me to require no more vindication than the law of gravitation or the rule of three.

The limited time at my command, and the duties of a city pastorate, compelled me to limit my investigations to the study of easily accessible English and American authorities. These have, however, been numerous enough, and of sufficiently high repute, to secure accuracy in the statement of facts. "Progress and Poverty," by Mr. Henry George, has received a careful reading, as well as other books and pamphlets not so widely known, but adopting a similar line of argument. Laveleye's "Socialism of To-Day," Rae's "Contemporary Socialism," Ely's "French and German Socialism," Kaufmann's edition of Schaeffle's "Socialism," Professor Rogers on "Work and Wages," Professor Walker on "The Wages Question," the

works of Fawcett, Mill, Spencer, and Woolsey on Political Economy, and the more practical contributions of such students of modern industry as Thomas Brassey, Daniel Pidgeon, and Edward Atkinson have been carefully and constantly consulted and compared. Want of time compelled me to abandon the attempt to read the bulky volumes of Karl Marx, and the exhaustive treatment which Mehring has given to the history of Social Democracy in Germany. I keenly regret that I was forced to forego the examination of standard French and German authorities, and to depend upon the testimony of English and American reporters, though in Laveleye's masterly survey the original sources are brought within easy reach, and Professor Ely's little volume is pervaded by so thoroughly impartial an historical spirit, and fortified by so numerous references, that I have felt justified in accepting its descriptive and analytic results. The standard English and American Cyclopedias have also been freely consulted.

In the constructive part of my work I have been careful to maintain an independent position. I have copied from no one, and have frequently found myself in agreement and at variance with the most opposite schools of thought. The method of criticism was fixed for me in my conception of Christianity, and in my settled conviction of its adequacy to solve the pending social problem. For the facts I have given my authorities; for the logic, be it good or bad, I alone am responsible. I am far from claiming exemption from error in matters of fact, or from fallacy in reasoning; but I should have committed my manuscript to the flames could I not honestly say, after

frequent revision, that I have been impartial both in description and in criticism. I have written as a candid man, and as a lover of all men, and to candid men I make my appeal.

The study of Pauperism and Crime involved the examination of many pamphlets and official reports, as well as the standard treatises on political economy. This proved to be by far the most painful and oppressive part of my task, but I have spared neither time nor thought in the endeavor to secure a clear and exact understanding of these most perplexing problems of industrial and social life. I have endeavored to trace them to their proximate and remote causes, and by a careful diagnosis to indicate the remedial treatment to which they must be subjected. The extended discussion, in the closing chapter, on the true doctrine of the family, grew out of the deepening conviction that in all radical and permanent social reform, *a high view of the sanctity of marriage must lead the way.*

I may add that the substance of these chapters was given in a series of Sunday evening discourses in my own church, while this volume was passing through the printer's hands; and the favor with which they were received leads me to hope that I shall not speak without effect to the wider audience, whose ear I now seek to gain.

BROOKLYN, *May*, 1886.