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### The Christian Minister Protagonist of Social Justice

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*Oberlin College*

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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER  
PROTAGONIST OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

H. Ellsworth Escott

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER  
PROTAGONIST OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

by

N. ELLSWORTH ESCOTT

A. B., Albright College, 1923

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A Thesis

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The citations and quotations from numerous sources are indicated in the footnotes of the text.

TO OUR CHILDREN

That They May Be Encouraged  
To Press Further The Quest  
For That More Abundant Life  
In A Better World

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER  
PROTAGONIST OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Let justice roll down as waters,  
And righteousness as a mighty stream.

Amos 5:24.

For I say unto you, that except  
your righteousness shall exceed the  
righteousness of the scribes and  
Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter  
into the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 5:20.



## I

## INTRODUCTION

The thesis to be elaborated in this paper is that the Christian minister has a responsibility of profound import in the great common enterprise of achieving social justice. By social justice we mean the greatest possible realization by the individual and by society of abundance of life by way of the most complete practical coordination of individual attitudes, social relationships, economic arrangements and ethical motives. In the development of this thesis we shall be under necessity of employing a number of technical terms, such as democracy, dictatorship, capitalism, profit economy, acquisitive society, economic imperialism, which are in current use. We shall employ such terminology according to the significant connotations which are affirmed through their common usage by informed men.

The cause of social justice is a primary issue in the life of today. The contemporary importance of this problem is attested by many factors in the present day world. The great Russian experiment is a momentous testimony, radically revolutionary though it may seem to be, to the outreach of that mighty people for a larger measure of justice in their total life. The eager yearning for a more rapid realization of social justice is assuredly one of the factors that has entered into the production of political dictatorships in the post-War world. When the

regular processes of democratic government seemed to be too slow and ineffective for the conserving of what a people regarded as the essentials of its national well-being, increasingly resort has been made to some form of dictatorship in the hope of attaining that which was envisioned as the most desirable national goal. In our land the widespread unrest in the ranks of labor testifies to a similar search for social justice on the part of a large portion of our population. In recognition of the contemporary nature of the problem of social justice, we note that the President of the United States has dedicated his second term of office to the removal of the causes of injustice.

A quick survey of the world scene reveals lights and shadows, inconsistencies, paradoxes, achievements and defeats as regards the achievement of an equitable measure of social justice. The cause of social justice must not be mistaken for a distinctly new and modern crusade for human welfare. The Code of Hammurabi and the Mosaic legislation are documentary evidence of the struggle for social justice long before this phrase was coined. The reformer Ipuwer of Egypt, during the reign of the Hyksos kings (1675-1575 B.C.), and the prophet Amos in Israel of the Eighth century, B.C., are incarnations of the spirit of mankind that has pressed toward the full realization of the goal of social justice. The present phase of that age-long struggle for a fuller attainment of that life more abundant for the greatest number of people seems like a trumpet summoning all who will to move forward with God who would lead his children

to greater and more abundant life.

We of today may take a pardonable pride in the vast and impressive achievements of the brain and brawn of man. We can point to desert areas reclaimed for the habitation of mankind, to the Panama Canal and Norris Dam, to speeds of four miles per minute on land and six miles per minute in the air, to Art Museums and tall Towers, and to international radio communication. But the social order that boasts the Art Museum likewise harbors dives of vice and crime. From the Terminal Tower in Cleveland, Ohio, for example, can be seen the impressive structures about the city Square and the miserable shack on the refuse dump; the Shaker Heights mansion presents a rebuking contrast ~~to~~ the Whiskey Island hovel; and the reputedly "most religious portion of the city" is contiguous to one of the most notorious parts of the same city.

Although we may indulge in self praise for the mighty achievements of the present age, we cannot escape the fact that our social order is characterized by gross inequality of privilege; by vast wealth unshared, side by side with poverty unrelieved; by flagrant luxury and waste confronted by unemployment, poverty and want; by costly homes and resorts for the rich and powerful, and reeking slums and disgraceful housing conditions for the poor and underprivileged. Due to its undisciplined acquisitiveness, our present competitive, profit-taking order results in strife. There is strife between conflicting classes in industry; between competing races,

white and black, yellow and brown; between contending nations, each one of which is a law unto itself in an international anarchy that leads periodically to overt war. The past four milleniums comprise a sorry record of the unhappy results of the maladjustments of the social order.

Confronted with this social order whose injustices are so numerous, so gross, so far-reaching in effect, we may well ask, What shall the Christian minister say and do toward the correction of these abuses and the securing of social justice? Should he disclaim any responsibility for dealing with this problem? Should he use his high office as an ambassador of Jesus Christ to challenge as a prophet of God the continuance of social injustice which he discerns in contemporary society? Should he treat the effects thereof only, or should he deal vigorously with the causes of injustice? In case the minister elects to deal with the causes which produce injustice, should he be a critic or a reformer, a diagnostician or a surgeon? Does his position as an ambassador of righteousness exclude or include the functions of critic, reformer, crusader, prophet, in the area of social justice? These are the questions I must face and endeavor to answer in what follows in a satisfactory and constructive manner.

What is man, that thou art mindful  
of him?

And the son of man, that thou visit-  
est him?

For thou hast made him but little  
lower than God,

And crownest him with glory and  
honor.

Psalm 8:4-5.

For what doth it profit a man, to  
gain the whole world, and forfeit his  
life?

For what should a man give in ex-  
change for his life?

Mark 8:36-37.

## II

## HUMAN PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Our Western civilization in its more commendable aspects rests upon belief in the worth of the person. Human life counts for more in the Western nations than in the Eastern ones, in the democratic countries than in those under dictatorships. This consideration attaches not only to life itself, but includes the tenet that the unfolding and developing of human personality is a continuous process. But the "urbanization of modern life, with its vast dormitory districts and its mechanization of the daily routine" tends to counteract some of the more commendable aspects of our present social order. "A man no longer belongs where he resides; and everywhere the modern man finds himself at the mercy of largely impersonal forces. He seems, indeed, to have scarcely any foothold in the structure of our civilization. In business he is merely a unit and in politics one among many million voters. 'Life today...is not a social order at all as Greek city states or the feudal society was a social order. It is rather a field for careers, an arena of talent, an ordeal by trial and error and a risky speculation. No man has an established position in the modern world'". (\*)

There are problems of vast social import which reach to the very heart of our civilization and affect

(\*) Barry, Christianity and the New World, pp.16-17.

the whole structure of society. "Conditions of palpable and vast wrong persist throughout the world, which thwart the rich promise of human life, consign millions to degradation and defeat, and fill the habitations of men with anguish and sorrow. Greed and lust and oppression devastate life. Untold millions are starved by poverty and physically and spiritually drained by exploitation. Millions of children are broken upon the wheels of industry. The burdens of our economic order lie heavily upon the shoulders of our womanhood. The dread of unemployment, old age and disability hangs like a pall over the working classes. Nowhere in the world today do those conditions of justice and opportunity which would make possible the free, untrammelled unfoldment of personality, the harmonious development of God's children according to the measure of their capacities". (\*). This confused and insecure state of affairs is hostile to continued belief in the realization of an ordered society erected upon the recognized worth of human personality as a foundation.

With respect to the opportunity for the development of human personality our modern social order is a bewildering mixture of assets and liabilities. Through this maze the individual must find his way. The individual cannot fully live his life without society, nor is he able adequately to realize the fulness of his personality within society. Such notable writers as Harry F. Ward, Reinhold Niebuhr, F. G. Peabody and Norman Wilde have effectively stated this problem in its modern setting. Only through society can the individual achieve the utmost

(\*). Silver, Religion in a Changing World, pp.61-62.

degree of self-realization; at the same time society tends effectively to regiment ~~the life~~ and to restrict, if not to stunt, the growth of human personality.

Let us consider, for example, the relation of the individual to society in the form of the political state. By virtue of the existing conditions, the individual in a state cannot possibly be granted absolute freedom. The individual must take into account, or be constrained to take into account, the rights and privileges and aspirations of the other individuals comprising the state. It is within reason to say that the state has a responsibility to the individual, for the establishing of those conditions of life and action which will admit of the highest development of human personality. There are those who hold that the end of the state is justice, who "emphasize the worth of personality, but they recognize its dependence upon social conditions. They realize that the moral life must be self-chosen and self-developed, but they realize that it is also a life of social activity, the development of which is conditioned by the social structure". (\*). The essential state as the constructive organizer of practical social justice is discarded only by explicit anarchy. As a people we have rejected the conception of social atomism as the condition of individual development and social wellbeing. Nevertheless we dare not ignore the truth that "the ideal of social welfare is a community of free and responsible persons whose happiness is essentially self-wrought. The fact that the highest development of this ideal can only be attained

(\*) Wilde, *The Ethical Basis of the State*, p.144.



through training and a favorable social environment, should not blind us to the truth that what the state can do in the furnishing of these is to be regarded as merely the preparation of conditions on the basis of which individuals must work out for themselves their own moral fortunes. With qualifications such as these, then, we may accept the general formula that the state is the organizer of rights and the guardian of social justice". (\*). In the processes of such organization and guardianship differences of a kind may arise. There may be inequalities as among individuals or groups, but so long as these differences are not arbitrary, nor such as affect adversely the relations of the individual or the group to the common welfare, they can hardly be considered as inconsistent with the requirements of social justice. When some men are highly educated and other men are not, it cannot be considered an injustice if this difference be due to intellectual endowment or personal character; an injustice here arises when there is a denial of the opportunity for such educational achievement on the ground of race, or economic condition. It is not differences themselves which constitute an injustice to one or the other individual or group; but it is the fact of differences which are arbitrarily and externally imposed, the differences which prevent a man from being his real self, or even from understanding what his real self might be. "The freedom involved in justice is thus freedom to discover and realize personality". (\*\*).

Thus to state the problem of the relation of the

(\*) Wilde, *ibid.*, p.153. (\*\*) *ibid.*, p.169.

individual and the state to each other in theoretical terms does not by any means provide an adequate answer to issues, sometimes critical, which arise out of conflicting interpretations of their respective ideals and purposes. This is particularly true in the case where the individual firmly objects to a state's determined course of action, as for example, the conscientious objector in time of war. The attitude of the conscientious objector raises some of the most fundamental questions regarding the relation of the state to the individual. There might indeed be considerable truth in asserting, as Norman Wilde does, that after all "the great rival of the state is really the individual, and that its essential problem is that of adjusting the public and the private aspects of life so that freedom of personality shall not be sacrificed to the external conditions of its realization". (\*) For the conscientious objector in time of war is simply affirming in a particular situation the age-long demand for individual freedom of thought and expression, an inner mandate that repeatedly has found voice in the demand for religious freedom, and for freedom of the press and public discussion. The conscientious objector is setting the mandate of his own conscience in opposition to the expressed will of the group. The conscience of the individual is by no means inerrant, but it is a commonly accepted maxim among informed people that the conscience of a group becomes less intelligent and less sensitive in proportion to the size of the group and the remoteness of its agents from the individual sources of authority. The public will as

(\*) *ibid.*, p.11.

expressed by government, especially in democratic countries, "is not the expression of a single clear insight into the needs of the situation, but is the resultant of innumerable cross currents of opinion, dominated by prejudice and private interest, and pushing blindly toward unseen ends....The intelligence and goodwill of the crowd is far below that of the individuals in it, and when the crowd is enlarged to the size of a state, responsibility is so divided and ignorance so great, that the public mind scarcely deserves to be dignified by such a title. To commit the individual conscience to the control of such a rudimentary organ as this under the idea that it is the expression of his higher self and the guardian of his true freedom, is criminally absurd. It is to stultify intelligence, negate progress, and throw back the individual upon the instincts of the herd". (\*)

The ground of the opposition of the conscientious objector to the state must be considered. If he is objecting simply in the interests of himself, he has certainly very meager basis upon which to build his claim for consideration. His pleasure and personal convenience are of little weight when compared with the general welfare. If his opposition is an honest expression of the otherwise inarticulate will of the group to which he belongs, then he is due the consideration accorded to a bona fide member of the group, and wisdom counsels that the group listen and consider well. Further, if his opposition is for the promotion of a higher moral end than

(\*) *Ibid.*, p.74. Cf. Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, pp.xi. ff.

would be realized by conformity, it must be the evident expression of sincere and high moral purpose. This objection is useless when it comes from men other than those of high social intelligence and of such acknowledged good-will, that only those hopelessly blinded by the passions of the controversy would long misconstrue their actions. "The voice of a man who is willing to die for his beliefs carries weight, but it must be free from contention and self-will. The voice must be a voice from the people, and the suffering willingly borne. Under such conditions it may be the duty of a man to resist the state, but he must also recognize that the state has its own duty to resist him....The problem for the individual is as to whether his conscience is clean enough, his vision clear enough, and his devotion to his people great enough to make him the spokesman of the nation's better self. It is impossible to deny the existence and the justification of such prophets of the people, but it must be a very wise and very humble man who can venture to feel that the call has come to him to be the mouthpiece of the ideal". (\*). Who will venture to gainsay that the conscientious objector is on the side of eternal righteousness, when we consider the devastation which the social institution of war wreaks upon human personality?

On the fly-leaf of "All Quiet on the Western Front", Erich Maria Remarque places this "Dedication":

"This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession, and least of all an adventure, for death is not an adventure to

(\*). Wilde, *ibid.*, pp.220-222.

those who stand face to face with it. It will try simply to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped its shells, were destroyed by the war".

With words that sear the mind and burn themselves deep into the soul, the author describes the effects of war-- not German war, nor French war, nor any other particular brand of national war-- but realistic modern war, in its inevitable devastation upon human personality. After he has indulged in some of the preliminary description of experiences away from the front line, Remarque gets to the core of the degradation of personality by warfare, when he sets forth his reactions during an actual attack and counter-attack on the battlefield: "We have become wild beasts. We do not fight, we defend ourselves against annihilation. It is not against men that we fling our bombs, what do we know of men in this moment when Death with hands and helmets is hunting us down-- now, for the first time in three days we can see his face, now, for the first time in three days we can oppose him; we feel a mad anger. No longer do we lie helpless, waiting on the scaffold, we can destroy and kill, to save ourselves, to save ourselves and be avenged....We crouch behind every corner, behind every barrier of barbed wire, and hurl heaps of explosives at the feet of the advancing enemy before we run. The blast of the hand-grenades impinges powerfully on our arms and legs; crouching like cats we run on, overwhelmed by this wave that bears us along, that fills us with ferocity, turning us into thugs, into murderers,

into God only knows what devils; this wave that multiplies our strength with fear and madness and greed of life, seeking and fighting for nothing but our deliverance. If your own father came over with them, you would not hesitate to fling a bomb into him....We have lost all feeling for one another, we can hardly control ourselves when our hunted glance lights on the form of some other man. We are insensible, dead men, who through some trick, some dreadful magic are still able to run and to kill....Today we would pass through the scenes of our youth like travelers. We are burned up by hard facts; like tradesmen we understand distinctions, and like butchers, necessities. We are no longer untroubled, we are indifferent. We long to be there, but could we live there? We are forlorn like children, and experienced like old men. We are crude and sorrowful and superficial--- I believe we are lost". (\*).

Remarque closes his book in a confused mood and with a heart-rending cry of despair: "What do they expect of us if a time ever comes when the war is over? Through the years our business has been killing;-- it was our first calling in life. Our knowledge of life is limited to death. What will happen afterwards? And what shall come out of us?" (\*\*). When we take account of the swift manner in which the evil forces of militarism and nationalism and greed and dictatorial governments have exercised their malign power over so large a portion of the modern world, our own hearts are not much encouraged in the way of truth and righteousness. "Everything for the war", was not a mere slogan, it was a command that everything be

(\*) Remarque, *ibid.*, pp.113,115,122,123.

(\*\*) *ibid.*, p.266.

surrendered to the abysmal destruction by Mars. "Everything for the war". "The war was its own sort of communism, of fascism. It cheapened human life and personality, and considered them as means and instruments in the hands of the fatality of history. And since the war, humanity remains mobilized, it continues to do its military service, it is plunged to the depths in external things: society, the state, nationality, class....And what is still more astonishing is that man in the postwar generations has acquired a taste for all this. He does not feel himself oppressed, he rather inclines to place himself under such a discipline. The war educated a generation of believers in force. The demons of hatred and murder then released continue their activity". (\*)

In a less thoroughgoing fashion and in a less spectacular manner human personality is cabined and cribbed by certain outstanding factors of our modern industrial arrangements. The transfer of the physical load from the worker to the machine on first thought is a great gain; and perhaps we could so account it, were it not accompanied by a corresponding transfer of the mental load from the worker to the office. With our increasing mechanization of the industrial task, the worker is increasingly deprived of a constructive mental stimulus during his working hours; the mechanized monotony of highly specialized piece work at stamping machine and assembly line is not conducive to the healthy mental life of the worker. And what is more depressing than the mere

(\*) Page, Living Courageously, p.244, quoted from Nicholas Berdyaev, The Fate of Man in the Modern World.

fact of this tendency to mechanized work, is the realization of the motivating purpose of those responsible in industry for this situation, the tendency which Fred W. Taylor has characterized as the "ideal of simplifying the work to such a degree that it can be done by a trained gorilla". (\*). But even so, it may be a small gain to have labor no longer regarded in terms of a commodity, and instead be rated in terms of a "trained gorilla"; at least this suggests that "labor" has been stepped-up from the realm of the inanimate to that of the animate, in the view of our industrial magnates.

As for the worker himself, we find that he is in revolt against many of the industrial arrangements. Sometimes he is revolting against a specific evil, as, for example, the discharge of a fellowworker because of his activities in favor of a labor union. At other times the worker seems to be in revolt blindly against forces which he cannot clearly discern nor adequately describe. Andrew Furuseth, one of the minor labor leaders, has made articulate for us some of the urges which operate within the life of the worker and which prompt him to break out in open revolt: "Discontent is natural and comes as a consequence of the condition of the worker in modern life. The organization of monster corporations-- supermen-- capable of acting at once over an indeterminate area, of being present in many cities and states at the same time, and endowed with practical immortality, are grinding the faces of the workers. They control wages-- and this means the control of the clothing that wife and children shall

(\* ) Davis, Labor Speaks for Itself on Religion, p.102.



wear, of the food they shall eat, of the shelter they shall enjoy, and of the education that the children shall be able to obtain....The worker feels himself controlled at his work and often fears to straighten his back. Kingly power touched man in spots and at times. The industrial master controls him at his work, blanketing his creative powers; he watches over him at his home; he follows him to his church and to his benevolent society, and finally forbids him to join with his fellows in any trade union to consult about his grievances with the view of having them redressed. As the king punished or rewarded, so does the industrial master; as the king sent unyielding men to prison or drove them into exile, so the industrial master, by the use of the blacklist, drives men from their homes and compels them to become wanderers, often under assumed names". (\*). It is the considered judgment of the writer both as a worker and as a minister to working people that Mr. Furuseth has given us a rather intimate and accurate picture of this part of the mind of the worker. Realizing these things, is it a matter of wonder and amazement that the worker not infrequently voices his inverted yearning for fuller self-realization in such terms as this, "The poor working man can hardly claim his soul as his own"?

However, the contemporary phenomenon of the so-called "sit-down" strike is a powerfully dramatized affirmation that the worker has by no means surrendered his soul to the industrial machine. In one manner at least, this new strike technique is an assertion by the modern industrial worker that he not only owns his own soul, but

(\* ) Davis, *ibid.*, pp.39-40.

that he determines that the industrial order shall not prevent him from realizing the greatest possible development of his personality. He is thereby affirming what he believes to be his inherent right to self-realization through genuine collective bargaining between employer and employe, although the method of seeking the achievement of this aim may be of doubtful present legality. Essentially the "sit-down" technique of the worker challenges the very foundation of our inherited capitalistic order, namely, that of ownership. Capitalism has been variously defined as ownership of the land, ownership of the tools of production, and ownership of the industrial plant. "Various types of ownership have been underscored by varying commentators, but the one thing on which all have agreed was that capitalism, as such, rested on the fact of ownership. But what is ownership today? What is possession?....How many Americans realize to what an extent ownership has become in actual practice a totally different thing from what it was in the days of our fathers? Who 'owns' the United States Steel Corporation? Who 'owns' the American Telephone and Telegraph Company? Who 'owned' Mr. Insull's utility empire? When the strike in the Chevrolet plants at Flint was in progress, Robert Morss Lovett wrote of his visit to see what the sit-down strikers were doing with 'his' property. He owned a few shares of General Motors stock. He reported himself as well pleased with what he discovered. Professor Lovett's article was probably dismissed by most 'capitalists' as mere whimsicality and, under the circumstances, ill-timed.

whimsicality. Yet it pointed to a profound truth, namely, that under capitalism's new era of supercorporations 'ownership' has become so scattered, so diffused, so attenuated, that it scarcely exists any longer save as a metaphysical conception". (\*). This same editorial on "Capitalism in Transit" proceeds to show that just as the concept of ownership has become more and more metaphysical, in similar manner the concept of property has tended to become less and less physical, more and more imponderable. The famous Danbury hatters' controversy is a case in point. In this instance the courts ruled that the "property rights" were quite intangible in nature, but none the less real; the nature of the property in question was that wholly impalpable thing known as a "market". The item of "good will", which carries a definite price tag when a business is sold by one man to another, might well serve as another illustration of the intangible nature of some forms of modern ownership and property. In the case of the sit-down strike, the striker has taken a suggestion from the actions of the traditional holders of large property, and is demanding that a like right be accorded him. In other words, the sitdown striker is putting forth a powerful and dramatic effort to "push social thinking and law ahead another furlong to where a job is recognized as property, entitled to protection as much as a machine".(\*\*). Naturally those who are interested in maintaining the status quo in the field of economic relationships denounce such a move by the worker as absurd and revolutionary; the ensuing movement to outlaw the technique of the sit-down

(\*) The Christian Century, April 7, 1937, pp.446-447.

(\*\*) *ibid.*, p.447.

strike by legislative and congressional enactment is logical and is to be expected. Troublesome as is the present conflict of labor and capital to the individuals involved, and disruptive as this conflict is of order in present society, it will likely be viewed in the perspective of history as a critical phase of the movement to make our economic arrangements such that they will contribute to the development of character and the realization in fuller measure of the promise of human personality.

Again, our elaborate educational system needs to be oriented in such manner that it will prepare individuals the more fully to realize the high goal of a developed personality. The influence of Dr. John Dewey upon the educational system has been deep and far-reaching. Another educator, Dr. H. H. Horne, in his "The Democratic Philosophy of Education", which is a critique on Dewey's "Democracy and Education", very severely criticizes the philosophy of education promulgated by Dr. Dewey. Horne maintains that Dewey's pragmatic humanism is not great enough to equate the rich potentialities of human personality. Horne gratefully acknowledges the vitally constructive features of Dewey's philosophy in affirming that (Dewey) "with Saint Paul rejects an abundance of things as the secret of the good life. With Saint James he rejects fine sentiments without corresponding deeds. With Leigh Hunt he writes at the head of the list the one who loves his fellowmen". (\*) Then Horne proceeds to indicate what he regards as the one serious weakness in Dewey's philosophy. "The failure to appreciate the sig-

(\*) Horne, *ibid.*, p.529.

nificance of personality is one of the striking features of this philosophy. Education is concerned with teachers, pupils, parents, manual workers, lawyers, doctors, ministers, business men and women, and society composed of such, no two individuals being the same. Yet the discussion hinges not on the worth of personality, but on the democratic type of experience. And it is personalities who have experience. It is almost as though democracy and individuality were so read as to omit personality". (\*). And W. H. Sheldon, in an article on "Professor Dewey the Protagonist of Democracy", is equally critical of Dewey on the same point: "Personality is, and forever ought to be, a mighty force; and the social democratic heaven of equal development would reduce personality to nothingness". (\*\*). However much of Dewey's philosophy of education and democracy the minister may be disposed to ratify, he must finally turn from this educator and affirm with Horne and Sheldon the primacy of his concern with human personality.

In making such an affirmation, the minister will recognize that he is affirming the fundamental teaching of his Master, Jesus of Nazareth. "One of the fundamental concepts of Jesus was a democratic evaluation of the individual which set personality above all other goods".(\*\*\*). Jesus was most vitally concerned with the worth of personality. Time and again he shocked the religious leaders of his time by insisting that man was and is always of superior worth as compared with any institution. "The

(\*) Horne, *ibid.*, pp.531-532.

(\*\*) *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. XVIII, p.484.

(\*\*\*) McCown, *The Genesis of the Social Gospel*, p.3.

sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath".(\*) . He outraged the sense of the social and religious propriety of those conservative champions of inherited religious practice by his associations with all brands of sinners, and the only defense he offered was that he had been called to be a healer of the sick, a ministering physician to broken and beaten personality. (\*\*). "Wilt thou be made whole?" he asked of a man with the palsied body on a small mat before him. (\*\*\*) . But that was a question he was constantly asking as he traveled the roads and hills, the streets and plains, and lake shore and temple court of Palestine. Meeting people in the light of day or in the midnight solitude, his eager heart and eyes, quick to perceive and to understand the wounds which had been afflicted upon personality, seemed to be always asking, "Wilt thou be made whole? Do you want to recover your lost integrity? Do you want to achieve unity and peace and power?" (\*\*\*\*).

Furthermore, Jesus did not hesitate to reject those inherited attitudes and norms of conduct which did not clearly serve to the noblest development of the person. However sanctified by antiquity and ratified by legislation, he urged the rejection of such attitudes and norms of conduct which could clearly be superseded by attitudes and norms of conduct which were of greater constructive value to the realization of the promise of personality. (\*\*\*\*\*). In other words, what Jesus was championing was that a person should be treated as an end,

(\*) Mark 2:27. (\*\*) Mark 2:17. (\*\*\*) John 5:6.

(\*\*\*\*) Day, Jesus and Human Personality, p.21.

(\*\*\*\*\*) Matthew 5:17-48.

not as a means; the person is of more value than even the sacred institutions of the Law. "To treat a life as an end signifies to permit that life to realize its true possibilities. Where such permission is not granted, where the customary order of existence is one which subordinates the individual to ends whose fulfilment negates his possibilities or holds them in abeyance, that society fails to realize its moral purpose. It is a society, therefore, which is still on a sub-moral level". (\*)

Jesus clearly taught that the society and institutions of man must so function that the individual will have ready access to the resources for making life more abundant. He came not for the purpose of destruction, nor holding in abeyance, nor negation, but for the purpose of the fulfilment of life. "I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil". (\*\*). He brought to bear upon the raw stuff of personality, the native impulses, those captivating, transforming values that were within him in such a way as to lead the person into creative expressions of life which are internally harmonious, socially useful, and in unity with the good will of God.

(\*) Overstreet, We Move in New Directions, p.52.

(\*\*) Matthew 5:17.

So the priest gave him hallowed bread; for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the Lord.

I. Samuel 21:6.

The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.

Mark 2:27.



## III

## SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The extent to which social justice exists as a fact or as a reasonable possibility within the limits of our present social order is a genuine concern of the Christian minister. By virtue of his high calling as an ambassador of God and by reason of his unique responsibility as a citizen of his country, the minister is under urgent moral obligation, not to accept the institutions and conventions of the social order without question, but to examine these critically and appreciatively with the fairest of judgment and for the noblest moral and religious purposes. His is a solemn obligation and pledge to pattern his life after that of the Master, and to apply to the best of his understanding and ability to every area of life that comes within the reach of his ministry the principles of Jesus of Nazareth. In order to accomplish this he must bring to bear upon the institutions and conventions of today the same critically constructive evaluation that his Master, Jesus of Nazareth, brought to bear upon the institutions and conventions of the social order of his day. "Ye have heard it said..... but I say unto you", was a moral judgment which more than once or twice came from his lips and that "stabbed wide awake" the consciences or the prejudices of his hearers. Such moral judgment came with effect never more shocking

to the hierarchy of the traditional religion and to the high priests of that status quo than when he pronounced his epoch-making judgment upon the conventionalized sabbath. (\*). Constantly upon the social institutions and conventions of his day Jesus was applying with refreshing discernment and with courageous incisiveness criteria such as these: Does this make for increase of life? Does this make for abundant fulness of life? Does this make for unity of life? --- Upon the truthful answers to such searching questions depended the judgment of Jesus regarding the constructive or the destructive effects upon human life of an act, an attitude, a convention or an institution.

The minister must be deeply concerned with the realities of the personal fellowships and the products of the human relationships within the social order. If his mission is to proclaim and to practice daily the religion of Jesus Christ; if he is to preach righteousness, and to denounce sin in its every contemporary form; if he is to strive manfully to help make the will of God done on earth as it is in heaven; if he is to fulfil his charge to urge upon men the acceptance of the religious realism based upon the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man;-- then it cannot be that he will look, unmoved of heart and with equanimity of soul upon such humanly devastating and personality-destroying factors in the social order, as war, poverty, disease, prisons and slums; for he has within his reach and understanding

(\*) Matthew 5:21-48; 12:8; Mark 2:27-28.

the certain criteria of the mind and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. (\*). He will have no desire to "pass by on the other side" when he sees a man lying beside the road, and who has on his person the indisputable evidence of having suffered at the violent hands of these robber-evils of life. In passing by on the other side, he might still remain a priest or a Levite in good and regular standing, but he would not maintain his integrity as the honorable ambassador of Him who came to minister unto others and to bring the life more abundant. (\*\*).

In the fulfilling of his mission the Christian minister is called upon to deal not only with the "atrocities of barbarism", but with the "sins of civilization" as well. Barbarism may be prolific of some of the grosser evils of human relationships, but civilization, as we know it, is fertile in the development of the more refined methods of afflicting humanity and torturing the individual. These more refined evils are the more reprehensible because they are perpetrated in deliberate violation of the conscious and widely-recognized standards of social wellbeing. Nor is the minister of today the first to recognize this essential principle of social justice. For, as G. A. Smith with his keen discernment, in his "The Book of the Twelve Prophets", shows, Amos of Tekoa achieved a feat "which extends far beyond his own day. The sins he condemns in the heathen are at first sight very different from those which he exposes within

(\*) Luke 4:18-19; Matthew 5-7; Luke 10:35-37; 15; Mark 10:45.

(\*\*) Mark 10:45; John 10:10.

Israel". (\*) Not only are they sins of foreign relations, of treaty and war, while Israel's are all civil and domestic; but they are what we call atrocities of Barbarism-- wanton war, massacre and sacrilege-- while Israel's are rather the sins of Civilization-- the pressure of the rich upon the poor, the bribery of justice, the seduction of the innocent, personal impurity, and other evils of luxury. Amos had no familiarity with the interior life of other nations, and could only arraign their conduct at those points where it broke into light in their foreign relations, while Israel's civic life he knew to the very core.....Amos had a strong and a deliberate aim in placing the sins of civilization as the climax of a list of the atrocities of barbarism. He would recall what men are always forgetting, that the former are really more cruel and criminal than the latter; that luxury, bribery and intolerance, the oppression of the poor, the corruption of the innocent and the silencing of the prophet-- what Christ calls offenses against His little ones-- are even more awful atrocities than the wanton horrors of barbaric warfare". (\*\*). If the coexistence of palaces and hovels was felt by Amos in his day to be inconsistent with even a decent measure of civilization that is just and moral, how much more should we today feel that the coexistence of mansions and slums is no part of the social order envisioned by the gospel of the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man?

(\*) *ibid.*, p.122. Cf. Amos 1:1-2:3 with 2:4ff.

(\*\*) *ibid.*, pp.122-123.

The field of racial relations is another of the areas in which social injustice has been grossly exhibited, both in its barbaric and in its more refined forms. No considerable part of the earth seems able to escape the ravages of injustice in respect to this phase of the total human relationships. The record of lynching in our own country furnishes us with the materials of racial injustice within the four walls of our own national house. A lynching is not an isolated phenomenon; socially it is of far-reaching importance. Lynching is of such significance in that it is an external manifestation of a vicious social condition. Behind and under the actual lynching in America are powerful emotional complexes and urges compounded of race prejudice, fear, sex, religion, love of excitement, politics, recreant officials, the crowd mind. In reality, lynching is murder--plus!. It is murder plus revolution plus anarchy. It is a flaunting and overthrowing and trampling underfoot of the prerogatives of the courts of the land, courts set up to be the dispensers of honest justice. The mob arrogates to itself the rights and powers of the processes of law and order: it arrests the victim of the mob's displeasure, tries him, condemns him, and then cruelly executes that unfortunate person. Such practices are antagonistic to, and, unless properly checked, may prove to be one of the significant factors contributing to, the overthrowing of the great American hope of free men in a free land. There is, however, some measure of encouragement in the fact that, gauged by decades, there has been a steady

decrease in the number of lynchings since 1890. This gain is not as significant as mere figures might indicate. This mathematical gain is in large part morally discounted by the fact that, due to the cumulative influence of mob sadism, the lynchings in recent years have been characterized by greatly aggravated brutality. The intelligent, informed Negro leader, Mr. Walter White affirms: "Expectant mothers, children, hopelessly insane, mental defectives, innocent or guilty-- American mobs of recent years have drawn the line neither in the choice of their victims nor in the sadism of their deeds of death. One can easily comprehend the truth and depth of James Weldon Johnson's observation to the effect that 'lynching in the United States has resolved itself into a problem of saving black America's body and white America's soul'". (\*). That such salvation will require vast resources of Divine grace and human cooperation, is amply indicated in White's diagnosis of the disease and the prescription for its cure. Declares White: "Lynching is but one of the symptoms of intellectual and moral decay resulting from the closed mind....Judge Lynch's absolutism will end completely when open minds and scientific scepticism replace not only the South's but America's and the world's present attitude of snobbism, bigotry and greed on the questions of color and race". (\*\*).

Respecting the part that the economic influence exerts in the oppression and exploitation of other peoples much indeed might be said. This phase of the problem is dealt with more fully in the chapter on

(\*) White, Rope and Faggot, p.33. (\*\*) *ibid.*, p.18.

the relations of economic welfare and social justice. In his "The Rise of American Civilization", Charles Beard has treated this subject with directness of approach and convincing statement. We may endeavor to minimize our own guilt as regards racial economic exploitation by stoutly affirming that at least we did not take part in the exploitation of Africa, and that as far as we were able to do so we sought to correct our late Nineteenth century mistakes in China; and so far as these two situations are concerned, we will be speaking the truth. But the rest of the nations of the world may truthfully reply that we were too busy conquering the frontier in our own country, and too busy taking territory away from Russia and Mexico, to engage in the exploitation of other continents. And this charge and counter-charge would carry some truth, but not the whole truth. For have we not been involved, and deeply involved in that extensive racial economic imperialism by reason of the many loans made by the house of J. P. Morgan and Company and other banking houses to England during the Boer War, by California bankers to Japan in her occupation of Manchuria, and the financial investments made in Santo Domingo, Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Philippines, which, on one pretext or another, we have asked to be defended by the armed forces of the United States? To the extent that this economic exploitation is based upon the feeling of the racial superiority of the white race over the others, the charge of Walter White cannot be successfully refuted: "The terrific impact of this whole propaganda against the colored races has penetrated far deeper

than is visible on the surface. Not even a great world war growing out of the prejudice and greed which this propaganda was so largely instrumental in creating could arouse the world to the gravity of continuing such a course". (\*).

Whether one may believe that this racial friction will gradually lessen or be productive of still greater human catastrophes, may depend upon the range of facts considered and the viewpoint of the individual. When measured in terms of centuries and in the process of the rise and fall of kingdoms, may it not be quite possible that the Battle of Port Arthur between Russia and Japan and the First Battle of Aduwa between Italy and Ethiopia will prove to be two of the decisive struggles of human-kind? For note that in both of these battles a colored race was victorious over the white race! On the other hand, we may come to see that racial friction is a process of our social immaturity; and thereby we may be spurred to grow into a more mature and intelligent social self-control. It should suggest to us that, as races and individuals, we need to become more aware of our emotional biases and our intellectual mind-sets; and further, that we must learn how to discipline the one and think through the other before our civilization can actually be regarded as having the more balanced life of adulthood. This more hopeful attitude is shared by Reinhold Niebuhr and H. A. Overstreet. The former writer holds that there are mighty moral and rational forces which make for

(\*) *ibid.*, p.108.



better relations of Negro and white man: Educational leaders for the Negroes have been trained largely in schools endowed by philanthropic whites; various inter-race commissions aid in eliminating misunderstandings. However, these educational and conciliatory functions have limitations, for they operate within a system of injustice. (\*) Racial intolerance is rated by H. A. Overstreet as perhaps the deepest and darkest of all injustices. What a pity that God made such a mistake as to create so many people without "shining white faces and eager unselfishness"; and this story repeats itself all over the world. He maintains that the world is showing signs of a growing distaste for those indiscriminating condemnations which are visited upon individuals solely on the ground of their racial connections; and that a new sense of basic justice is developing among us, which evaluates individuals in terms of intrinsic qualities of worth rather than in terms of extrinsic qualities of birth. (\*\*). The arguments of men such as these two carry weight, for they are based on wide observation and honest thinking. Their statements reveal the great need for the development of the most generous tolerances among all races, the one towards all others, if we are to learn how to live together in creative human relationships. On the part of all peoples there is great need for bearing and for forbearing, for giving and for forgiving.

Another of the social institutions which merits

(\*) Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, pp.252-253.

(\*\*) Overstreet, *We Move in New Directions*, pp.217-220.

consideration is that of public education. In one sense, that of the means whereby a larger measure of social justice might be secured, public education may be said to be an elaborate attempt by society to produce a solvent for the ills of the social order. Starting from very modest beginnings the educational system has enlarged until it now comprises a wide range of educational preparation from the kindergarten to the university, and from the simplest lessons in the ABC's to the most thorough-going courses of study and research. As might be expected, the educational set-up in its development has been largely shaped and directed by the forces of an acquisitive society. During the more affluent period of the decade immediately preceding the present one the creative courses were given some consideration in the more progressive schools. But when the profits of an acquisitive society were more and more restricted, as they have been during the present decade, the creative artists of life, the men of scientific and aesthetic insight into a better way of life, were ignored or rudely shoved aside for the teachers of the "practical courses", at the behest of the organized powers of an acquisitive social order. The concept of education as economic leverage is built deeply in our educational system, and is fashioning the American youth in the mold of their elders. This process, in the large, tends toward the continuous adoption of the principle of worldly and social success through vanquishing one's competitors. The administrative machinery of the school system is a measure of this tendency,- with its

prevailing scheme of promotions, marking and grading of pupils, the competitions and prizes, the "rank-order" philosophy. Far from freeing youth from the mercenary standards set by an acquisitive climate of opinion, this philosophy of competition and success merely effects the strengthening of the bonds of the status quo around growing children.

This is far from being a desirable condition. "Why not perpetuate the existing order?" asks Dr. John Dewey. Because "its greatest evil is not poverty and its suffering, but callings, without any personal appeal, pursued for money....At present both intellectual and emotional limitations characterize both the employed and the employing class. The employed, not being interested in what they are doing, are looking for a money reward; the employers are looking for profit and power". (\*). The way to relieve this distressing condition is a cultural process that includes at least four factors: 1) Instruction in the historic background of the present conditions. 2) Training in science, to give intellectual initiative in dealing with the materials and agencies of production. 3) The study of economics, civics, politics, to bring the future worker into touch with current problems and methods of progress. 4) Training the powers of readaptation to changing conditions so that future workers would not be blindly subject to any imposed fate. But such a program is difficult of realization, for there are two things with which it has to contend, namely, "the inertia

(\*) Horne, The Democratic Philosophy of Education, pp.446-447.

of educational tradition and the opposition of the captains of industry, who realize that such an educational system, if made general, would threaten their ability to exploit others". On the other hand, such opposition "is an encouragement to those believing in a better order; it presages a more equitable and enlightened arrangement, giving evidence as it does, of the dependence of society on the school". (\*). This outline of a reconstructed educational program enriches the values of experience and of living in certain scientific and social ways. Yet one wishes that so fertile a mind as that of Dr. Dewey might have added constructive suggestions for the further enriching of personal and religious ways of living. The development of social justice does depend to a high degree upon the extension of the rational processes. Yet reason alone is insufficient to this high end; we need the further equipment of an adequate dynamic, an inner impelling sense of obligation to achieve the more worthy social objectives of education and of life. On this point it is the part of intelligent interest to note the emphatic statement of Reinhold Niebuhr: "The sense of duty, faint and flickering as it is in most men, is sufficient to keep the social order from disruption. It is dubious whether the development of reason, though it increases the opportunities for the exercise of conscience, strengthens the force of conscience itself. In that task religion is more potent than reason". (\*\*).

(\*) Horne, *ibid.*, pp.448-449.

(\*\*) Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, pp.39-40.

One of the most important questions relative to the relation of religion and the quest for social justice, is that of the claim of the modern state to absolute sovereignty. The modern state brooks no opposition to this claim; and the Christian Church progressively is discovering that it confronts a problem quite similar to that conflict of the early Christian Church with the Roman Empire. The Church may by law be abolished in Soviet Russia; or it may have to make a choice between serving as a sanction for the acts and policies of the state or of becoming an object of persecution by the state. In Italy the Church has been cajoled by the dictator; in Germany the Church has become essentially a department of the government; and in our own country the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States in the *Mackintosh* and *Schwimmer* cases indicate the trend of events. The question of the relation of a free Church in a sovereign state has become something other than an item of history or academic speculation: it has become a stark reality of the modern day. The religion of nationalism has come into possession of considerable authority.

Now there is much that might indeed commend nationalism as a focus of the supreme loyalty of a man's life. The nation is allied to, and is the specific realization of some of the noblest elements of human life. It has enlisted the devotion of the most mature minds of men. It has challenged and held the devotion of multitudes of the common people. Treitschke's argument that the state is the ultimate community of significant

loyalty finds ample support in the widespread and long-sustained devotion of men to the state, Treitschke may be logically correct in positing such ultimate loyalty in the state; he is wrong only in that he exalted this moral difficulty. There is something deep within the spirit of man which is awakened by his devotion to the nation. There need be nothing contemptible in this loyalty to his nation. The point of critical danger is that the state lays claim to absolute sovereignty, and that nationalism is exalted to the status of a religion. And yet it is not the status of "a" religion, but that of "the" religion to which the citizen is required to pledge and demonstrate his supreme loyalty. Edward Shillito has rendered the world a most notable service through the publication of his book, "Nationalism: Man's Other Religion". In this book Shillito has helped to clarify a deep and significant cleavage in modern life that was but vaguely understood by the Christian Church. In a recent remarkable book on "Religion and the Modern State" Christopher Dawson has further clarified the issue, following Professor Julian Huxley, in the declaration that this conflict of Church and State will be one between the "God-religious and the social-religious",- or in other words, between the worship of God and the cult of the state. (\*).

The most reprehensible feature of the modern absolute state, from the standpoint of social justice, is not alone in the arrogating to itself of comprehensive

(\* ) *ibid.*, p.57.

power over the lives and fortunes of the citizens. Nor does it reside in the fact of the state's self-deification. Nor does it consist in the process of making all Churches,- Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Mohammedan, etc.,-conform to certain social requirements. From the viewpoint of the quest for social justice, the most reprehensible feature of the modern absolute state is its increasing denial of freedom to individuals and groups. Progressively in recent times the state has restricted the exercise of freedom through universal compulsory education, universal compulsory military service, and by the increasing economic control by the state. The one place where the state has most grossly exceeded its rightful purpose and most unwarrantedly violated its true function, with the inevitable accompaniment of the denial of freedom to its citizens, is in its self-arrogated power to make war upon another state or states. For thereby the state commits a double atrocity: It violates every tenet of appreciation of personality and reverence for all personalities with respect to its own citizens; and it forces a like course upon the other state.

"The strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf", is Rudyard Kipling's terse summation of the interrelationships of the individual and organized society. Not infrequently we lose sight of the true nature of these relationships, by our thinking in terms of antitheses rather than in terms of the complementary functions of the individual and society. It may be well that, as Reinhold Niebuhr in his "Does

Civilization Need Religion?" has so clearly and forcefully expressed, organized and institutionalized society impinges so heavily on the individual that we are driven almost irresistibly to think of these relationships in terms of conflict. In many important and significant areas of human life, as, for example, in the opposition of the individual to civilization and to nature; of individualistic religion to social tasks; the lack of correlation of private rectitude and the highest social attitudes; the happy appreciation of one's personality unaccompanied by reverence for all personalities;- these and other factors provide abundant and convincing evidence of the conflict of the individual and organized society. (\*)

This problem of rights and responsibilities is not one of "either-or", but rather one of "both-and". We have to deal, not with the individual in a lonely wilderness, but with the social liberty of the individual in the group. The real problem is not how to remove the individual from society and give him free rein in a world all his own, but rather how, while he remains within the social relationships, he may still be himself and have his freedom. Such freedom is not like that of a jungle beast in a raid upon a native village; it is a freedom which is socialized. The only freedom worthy of the name is that in which intelligence has taken the place of passion, where social consideration has superseded jungle selfishness, and where regard for the whole has been

(\*) *ibid.*, esp. Chapters I and II.



tempered by a coordination of all the relevant facts. The ideal social freedom is represented by a group of friends who are aware of one another's differences and are interested in the development of them, but who likewise are aware of an "underlying unity of spirit and (are) ready to subordinate their differences for the maintenance of the common understanding. In such a group individuals are not externally limited by one another, but are interpenetrated by a common spirit that enlarges and enriches their own lives. The personality of each is interpreted by that of his fellows and reflected back upon him in a greater and more sympathetic understanding of life as a whole. Only through such community, sustained by voluntary action, can the individual escape from the restraints of alien wills and achieve true social freedom. Improved democratic machinery may do something to register more accurately men's wills, but until those wills themselves are socialized the result will not be liberty". (\*)

Such socialization of the individual would seem to be a task of millennial dimensions. The securing of economic readjustments, public ownership or control of basic industries and public services, genuine collective bargaining between employers and employes, and the abolition of predatory capitalism, would not in themselves effect such socialization of individual freedom. These may serve to channel certain of his actions, but they may leave his inner motivation entirely untouched. These would alter the rules of the game, but the essential contest itself

(\*) Wilde, *Ethical Basis of the State*, pp.207-208.

would persist in the activation of men by the acquisitive instincts and urges, and thereby continue to threaten the social wellbeing. With a most delightful touch of humor, Norman Wilde has called our attention to the fact that "Saint James is not usually looked upon as an authority in economics, but he has put his finger on the ultimate source of social strife". (\*). His point is well taken. Saint James avers: "Whence come wars, and whence come fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your pleasures that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and covet, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war; ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it in your pleasures". (\*\*). Unless these acquisitive urges of the individual are moderated and sublimated by a sincere personal interest in social justice for its own sake, all external control would still leave a man a menace to the freedom of others. It is the task of constructive education, and preeminently that of the Christian religion to press toward the achievement of an ethical socialization of the individual, that society itself might through such process be raised to higher levels of life.

However, the recognition of the validity of religion as constituting the ultimate ground for the solution of the problem of the social wellbeing does not in any sense mean the relegation of the economic question to an unimportant position. Life for the individual in the social milieu can be most free and most socially valuable

(\*) *ibid.*, p.208.

(\*\*) James 4:1-3.

on the basis of generous possession. The good life presupposes life, and life involves appropriation of goods sufficient for its sustenance and highest development. Hence the economic question is an important one in any kind of social order. Yet in our present order we are in constant danger of over-emphasizing the needs of the economic man and of assuming that the entire problem can be solved on an economic basis. This is one of the fundamental and ultimately fatal defects and assumptions of Marxian economics and Marxian philosophy. Man does live by bread; but man does not live by bread alone: even a Bertrand Russell will so affirm. We need ever to keep in mind, both for our own task as Christian ministers and by reason of the constructive influence we may be able to exert on others, that in "economic self-seeking there is no principle of unity and therefore no basis of freedom. Out of wealth-seeking individuals we cannot build a free community. As Bertrand Russell puts it, it is only in the development of the creative impulses,-- industrial, artistic, scientific,-- that we can have the conditions for a sound social organization, since it is only through an interest in these that men are brought into cooperation with their fellows". (\*) This is a consummation most devoutly to be wished; for through such achievement a fuller measure of justice will be made possible through our social institutions and conventions.

(\*) Wilde, *ibid.*, pp.209-210.

And God said, Behold, I have given  
you every herb yielding seed, which  
is upon the face of all the earth,  
and every tree, in which is the fruit  
of a tree yielding seed; to you it  
shall be for food.

Genesis 1:29.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Matthew 6:11.

## IV

## ECONOMIC WELFARE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The economic conditioning of modern life is of vital concern to the Christian minister; to it he must give a generous measure of intelligent attention. The approach to the study of the relation of economic welfare to social justice may be as various as the kind and significance of the relevant materials. We elect to begin consideration of this relationship on the basis of the contemporary interest in the economic causes of war.

It is commonly conceded that the practical underlying causes of war are economically grounded. Large and growing navies are created for the thinly disguised purpose of protecting commerce. Trade rivalries between different nationals develop into international disputes, which in turn issue into the clash of arms. The broad outlines of this process are clear; the details of the process by which this development takes place are not always easily discernible. That which has become a widespread conviction, however unclearly the reasons for that conviction may be understood by the common man, receives important confirmation from one of our highly respected American diplomats, Ambassador Houghton. Speaking before the Harvard Alumni Association in June, 1927, he declared that "Before war is conceivable there must be an issue. And that issue, broadly speaking, is the outcome of a series of maneuvers (by small groups of men) by which the masses concerned are brought

into positions of opposition.....The entire process is in the control of the smaller groups. They make the issue, they declare the war. The masses they control simply obey".(\*)  
 In the light of such a frank statement of the actualities in a situation which precipitates a war, for a government to assert that a murder in Serbia or the invasion of Belgium or reputed outrages by one country's soldiers upon another country's civilians, constitutes a genuine "casus belli", brands such a government as guilty of unconscious hypocrisy, inexcusable ignorance, or deliberate deception.

There are two prime factors in our politico-economic order that are prolific of international friction, namely, collusion of a government with commercial enterprise and collusion of commercial enterprise with the military. The formula for securing the collusion of a government with commercial enterprise is rather simple: A private citizen or a group of citizens of a developed country seeks trade abroad. He secures a concession for the use of or the development of the raw materials in the foreign country, a concession which he obtains through the cooperation of some department of the government of his native land. By this means, a nation gets control of raw materials against the possibility of future war, as well as assisting the entrepreneur in securing profitable foreign investment; and by so doing the government inserts the thin point of power which makes for the extension of its own influence and which sometimes attains the reality of political dominion over the less developed country. This protection of private commercial enterprise abroad by the use of diplomatic or mili-

(\*) Stidger, The Pew Preaches, p.147.

tary support gives rise to and sustains such over-governments as "spheres of influence" and "economic imperialism". The relations of England with South Africa, and of the United States with Haiti and Santo Domingo are cases in point. Perhaps it is not complimentary to the larger nation, but it is of more than passing interest to note that such collusion of commercial enterprise and the government is practiced only by the relatively stronger nation against the relatively weaker nation. This virtual domination of the weaker by the stronger country is most likely to be developed if the smaller country is rich in natural resources, such as oil, timber, agricultural products, etc., which are in demand to feed the great industrial mechanism of the stronger country.

The collusion of the commercial enterprise with the military needs little more than mention, in order to bring to our minds abundant evidence of the anti-social results of this conjunction of greed and force. Such indiscretions, as in the case of Mr. Shearer who, in the employ of three armament firms of the United States, and supplied with plenty of money, went to Geneva for the purpose of bringing about the failure of the Conference on Armament Limitation, have become so numerous since then that it is impossible to believe that the military headquarters staffs were entirely ignorant. This paper is not the place, as the French economist, Francis Delaisi, might observe, to provide "a list of generals and admirals who figure with honor, if not with disinterestedness, on the boards of directors of great armament firms, nor to seek

what shares or publicity contracts the latter possess with various newspapers. However, it is curious to note how, each time that there is a rapprochement between France and England, Belgium and Holland, Germany and Poland, Russia and England, etc., just at the psychological moment a 'confidential' or 'secret' document escapes from the military or diplomatic archives of one of the Powers concerned and finds its way into the press of the other, with a view to showing the duplicity of the first". (\*). The net result of such tactics is that the mind of the people becomes afflicted with an unconscious contradiction which leads it at the same time to call for the support of disarmament conferences and to accept all increases proposed by the military "experts": On the same day that the American Senate ratified the Kellogg Pact for the renunciation of war it also agreed to the construction of new cruisers. The cruise of American warships to South American waters "happens" to be exactly times with military missions to Argentine and Peru; and large orders shortly find their way back to American firms for armaments and military supplies. The key to the extension of the late War beyond the summer of 1916 is to be found in the lucrative, though covert, trade between France and Germany through the neutral countries as intermediaries. The shipments of potential war materials between France and Germany through Switzerland alone is reliably estimated at 150,000 tons per month at times during the War. France shipped aluminum and cyanamide, and Germany returned

(\*) IPULN, Character of a New War, p.204.



magnetos; all of these materials were used in the construction and use of airplanes by the receiving country to fight against the nationals of the shipping country. These exchanges, carefully checked, were effected through the intermediary of Swiss factories. The English Admiral Consett has revealed a similar traffic between England and Germany through Denmark. To the rational mind, such traffic is nothing short of high treason, but "headquarters" and governments seem to regard it in a different light. For example, in France during the most tragic part of the War, under the Clemenceau ministry two trials for high treason took place simultaneously. Bolo Pasha was accused, tried, and executed for having tried to sell a great French newspaper to Germany, and by so doing he had sought to break the will of the French people and poilus to continue the war to a finish. The same week, "some great French industrialists", accused of having delivered through Switzerland cyanamide and carburet to Germany, were acquitted with honor-- at the request of the commissary of the Clemenceau Government-- because in this way they had furnished French headquarters with means to push the struggle to a final decision! What about the aid extended in similar fashion and for a like purpose to the German (enemy) Government? This was conveniently overlooked, "with honor". Furthermore, the coal mines and steel mills of the Briey area were in the hands of the German forces during the war; these resources were utilized by the Germans for military supplies. The French officers and troops at the front line were not allowed to shell or bomb these mills and mines,

because of the powerful influence of certain industrial interests (notably those of the Du Wendels-Von Wendels) with the French High Command; at least one high ranking officer on the French line who dared to take the initiative in bombing that part of the Briey industrial area which was immediately in front of his sector was sharply disciplined and transferred to another part of the line.(\*).

Capitalistic enterprise thus spoke more effectively than international welfare in the late War. Capitalistic enterprise spoke more effectively than human welfare in Mussolini's reduction of Ethiopia; and it is an open secret, at least outside Italy, that this desperate adventure was made because of the internal conditions of Italy necessitating such aggression if Mussolini's Fascism should stand. American capitalism's stakes, financial and commercial, finally swept our country into the War; this is the sinister meaning readily deduced from Ambassador Page's famous cablegram to President Wilson, just one month prior to the Declaration of War by the United States against Germany. In this communication the Ambassador pathetically appealed to the President to bring our country into the war in order that the wheels of industry might be kept going at high speed! And again, to put the same truth in more human terms, for every five American soldiers killed in action in this War, there were made in this country two more millionaires; a total of approximately 51,000 of the flower of American youth slain on the altar of Mars, in order that some 22,000 more millionaires in the home of the brave might take their ease and be merry!

(\* ) *ibid.*, pp.198-205.

It is no mere rhetorical question to ask, Who won the War? There are no divisions of victors and victims in modern warfare. There are only victims. Clear thinking on this subject may not relegate war to some museum of human history, but it will make war so understandable that we shall know better how to fight against such senseless and insane devastation of peoples and the earth on which they dwell. We shall thereby come to see that the factors which produce wars are openly operating in our world today,- fervent nationalisms, economic pressures, closed and armed frontiers, tariff barriers, stimulated international suspicions, mutual aid pacts, and the alluring prospect of certain kinds of war profits. We may in all sincerity make our declarations of neutrality, but future war is inevitable unless we actually set to work cooperatively and intensively to eliminate the conditions under which wars originate and by which they are extended.

Shall we now investigate our economic system in time of peace? Now, it is hardly to be expected that an economic system which periodically projects nations and peoples into armed conflict would be productive of only peace and harmony and happiness in the periods between wars. That ancient writer of the apocryphal book, The Wisdom of Solomon (14:22), in treating of the problem of religion and economics, referred to "that multitude of evils they call peace". In perhaps a little sense, we can refer to our economic system which is productive of "that multitude of evils they call peace". For in the periods of comparative international peace, our capitalistic economy demon-

strates its inherent evils of inequitable income, an unbalanced purchasing power, and the exploitation of the masses.

We shall consider briefly first of all the social and economic consequences of grossly inequitable income upon human beings. Mr. W. I. King, in his thorough study of "The National Income and Its Purchasing Power", points out that in 1928 the average per capita income for all the inhabitants of the United States was \$749. For the typical American family of five members this would indicate a gross family income of \$3,745 for the year. "If, then, all the income of the United States were equally divided among the inhabitants, and if this process of equal division did not reduce the productivity of the nation (an assumption probably contrary to fact), it is clear that there would be income enough for all the families of the country to live comfortably, but that, according to American standards, none would be affluent. As a matter of fact, the total realized income is far from being equally divided, some families receiving extremely large amounts and others being in poverty". (\*). King further adds that the average annual earnings or income ranges from \$530 for agriculture to \$1232-\$2705 for workers receiving salaries (\*\*). In an article in *The Christian Century* a Congregational minister, the Rev. Thomas H. Wright, shows that in the years after 1928 (King's basis) the earnings of workers in industrial plants were markedly lower than those indicated by King. To quote just one story from this article, that of a skilled metal finisher: "In 1929, I made \$800. In 1930,

(\*) *ibid.*, pp.87-88.

(\*\*) *ibid.*, pp.87, 146, 159.

working three days a week, I made \$900. In 1931, working four days a week, when I worked, I made \$500. In 1932, I worked from March to September and made \$750 for the year. In 1933, at \$4 per day, I worked from March to September and have made about \$450 to date". (\*). The distress of a family endeavoring to exist within such income limitations can scarcely be imagined. Such income is considerably below the poverty line. The utter inadequacy and injustice of such rates of yearly family income are glaringly revealed when compared with a composite family total budget including the minimum necessities. Such a composite budget may be fabricated from the results of several original investigations by responsible parties, ranging from that of Professors Agburn and Chapin to that of the employers' National Industrial Conference Board; these investigators established their minimum standards between \$1480 and \$1410 per year. The requirements of this composite budget indicate a minimum of \$1465 per year for health and decency. (\*\*).

The "Iron Law of Inequality" has been declared to be as inflexible as its designation. But let us not overlook the fact that iron can be made into an infinite variety of shapes by the use of heat, the hammer and the anvil; in terms of human progress or regress, this process applied to human life and human institutions means revolution and reconstruction, a constantly recurring fact in human society. Paeans of praise have been widely sung extolling the virtues of inequality. However, it is noticeable that these paeans are sung usually and most vigorously by those who have done

(\*) The Christian Century, November 29, 1933.

(\*\*) Page, The United States Steel Corporation, pp.14-16.

well by themselves. They are rationalizations after the fact. A certain amount of inequality may indeed stimulate individual initiative, may serve as a powerful incentive to human progress, but "progress or no progress, extreme inequality of income is the source of most of the attitudes and behaviors that make man's life a sorry picture. Envy, over-reaching, lick-splitting, double-dealing, desire for revenge, keeping up with the Joneses, the surrender of one's integrity,-- all of these are born in a world in which some have a great deal and others have much less. Extreme inequality of income makes the striving for money an obsession of present-day individuals, so that all other values become incidental. It makes it possible for them easily and consciencelessly to go the way of crime in an effort to raise themselves to a higher level of monetary power. But above all, it distorts the social vision, so that, for the most part, people are unable to see the human issue clearly. If they possess, they wish to hold on to what they have; if they do not possess, they wish to overturn the possessors. In almost no case is there the power to see life steadily and whole in terms of its essential problems and possibilities". (\*)

The natural concomitant of gross inequality of income is a mass purchasing power that is heavily unbalanced in the face of human needs, and in the light of an industrial system of high potential productivity. The masses of the people are so restricted in their income that they find it virtually impossible to purchase more

(\*) Overstreet, We Move in New Directions, pp.60-61.

than the basic necessities of life, while the efficient industrial machine requires a very broadly distributed income among the masses in order to its continued operation. Barring some differences of quality in goods desired and the luxuries in all except the lower cost brackets, the essential life-needs of rich and poor are astonishingly similar. The families in the lower income brackets must spend all or practically all for the barest necessities of life,- food, shelter and clothing; and of these three items, food requires most of the family budget. In the income brackets of those more fortunate, a lower percentage of the net income is spent for food; while in the case of the rich, only a small percentage of the net income is needed to supply all the necessary food and to provide for an abundance of food luxuries as well. The lower income brackets permit nothing to be spent for those products of mass industry the purchase of which, under our system of production for profit, provides the further motive power for our productive industrial machine. The outcome of this process is that the effective demand of the people for mass-produced goods is stringently limited, leading to restriction of output; and this restricting of output means further limitations upon the average family income, which sets in motion a vicious circle of industrial deceleration, lowered income, economic depression and financial bankruptcy. By no means are we overlooking the truth that other factors enter into the making of an economic debacle known as a depression,- such as our individualistic banking system that puts a high price on our freedom, the inflation of credit by the

banking institutions, the speculation and manipulation of the stock market by brokers and gamblers, the process of deflation in its effects upon real wages, and the chaotic world trade conditions further complicated by excessive tariff walls. What we are interested in at this point, is that income is not widely nor equitably distributed, with the inevitable result that modern production constantly outruns effective purchasing power. Profits and savings concentrated in the hands of the few make it impossible for the many to buy mass-produced goods in significant quantities. This accumulated capital is then invested for the further expansion of an already over-expanded productive plant, which in turn makes for more unemployment and lowered average income, and thereby a greater vicious circle is created. This outlook is further darkened when we consider that the consensus of opinion of economists, such as Hobson, Chase, Fisher, Anthony, Tawney, Henderson, Salter, is that technological unemployment increases faster than the absorption of workers into new industries. Shorn of its verbiage this simply means that, confronted with a surfeit of the machinery capable of producing an economy of abundance, we seem largely to be forced to the position of accepting the anomaly of our making adjustments to an ever-lowering standard of living.

The third of those "evils called peace" which our production-for-profit system foists upon us is the exploitation of the worker. To Sherwood Eddy we are indebted for his vividly drawn portrayal of the exploitation of the worker of the far East. At the same time that Japanese firms were



reporting profits which ran the gamut from a paltry 6% to a magnificent 3,000%, Eddy found that "one of the labor leaders was trying to support a family of eight on a little more than a dollar a day. He had been forced to give one child away because of the pressure of poverty". Another was working "long hours for twenty-five cents a day....At times on a change of shift he had to work for thirty or more hours at a stretch. For two weeks he worked twenty hours a day with only four hours for sleep". And another whose health was broken after fourteen years of work said to Eddy: "My body was broken, my mind dulled, and my whole character was disintegrating. I had no time for my family, No interest in production or in anything else. I lost my skill. I had sunk with the masses into poverty and had become like a part of the machinery". (\*). These cases are paralleled by the exploitation of the Koreans by Japan, the South Africans by England, the Congo natives by Belgium; in the net product of human misery and unhappiness and injustice even these are essentially no different from our own economic exploitation of the Negro, the tenant farmer, the share-cropper, child labor and the unemployed. This making of profits at the expense of the unmaking of man is not peculiar to Japan, nor to the far East, nor to South Africa, nor to the Congo, nor to the Imperial Valley. This economic exploitation is only part of the acquisitive, profit-seeking, pagan business system which operates in Japan and America and Korea and South Africa and Belgium, and wherever selfish and ruthless capitalism is unrestrained in the exercise of its power.

(\*) Eddy, *The Challenge of the East*, pp.125-126.

Ours is a land that has long boasted of its tolerance, economic as well as religious. One might well inquire, Did we ever really have economic tolerance? Until very recent times it was greatly to our economic advantage to develop the resources of this continent with the labor of "foreigners". But when that importation became an economic disadvantage to us as a people, we began to impose more and more restrictions upon the entry of the peoples from other lands into our own. Hence it is proper and pertinent to ask, Were not much of our economic philosophy and many of our catch-phrases about the "land of opportunity and freedom" largely convenient rationalizations? Mr. Herman Feldman, onetime Professor of Industrial Relations in Dartmouth College, has made a thorough study of this problem, the results of which are incorporated in his book, "The Racial Factors in American Industry". This is a disturbing book; it disturbs our complacent philosophy concerning the industrial opportunities for other races in our country. We may have shut our doors on further immigration, but by the same token we are shut in with 11,000,000 Negroes; 2,000,000 Mexicans; 175,000 Japanese and Chinese; 50,000 Filipinos; and 18,000,000 "foreigners" who have come to the United States since 1900. The evidence which this book presents in respect to prevailing practices of discrimination and injustice against human beings is far from being a message of reassurance. The portrayal of our economic exploitation of the Negro and the Oriental, of the racial prejudice which determines the work and remuneration of these and other racial groups, of the careless assump-

tions which tend to fix their status, of the easy-going indifference regarding their home and community environment,- to say the least, this portrayal is not one of which we can be proud. As the author suggests, it is a comparatively simple thing to close the gate, but it is quite another problem to harmonize the relationships among those who are already inside. He attributes the prevalence of racial prejudice in industry to "some of those unfortunate but not rare human situations in which common beliefs and group attitudes are an impediment to free human associations and fair dealing". As part of the solution of this critical problem in industrial relationships he holds that "the most reliable power for creating a better world lies, not in the wide adoption of any given doctrine, but in the intelligent and social sense of the common people when wisely led to evaluate their own experience". He recognizes that this task is a large one, even when we admit that most immigrants could make notable contributions of industriousness, perseverance, thrift, strength and honesty to our national life. For "even if the tangible basis for racial discrimination in industry were entirely gone, attitudes would persist unreasonably for a long ~~while~~. The force of public tradition is a difficult one to resolve. Only by doing what we can now to bring such attitudes before the bar of objective and rational consideration, will the solution of an important social problem be brought within sight". As an objective and rational treatment of this problem, Feldman's book is excellent. With the emotional phase of the problem, we must in all justice affirm that his suggested solution

rests too heavily on the intellectual plane to be finally effectual for the practical realization of the greatly-desired end. (\*)

Let us not, however, condemn our industrial economy out of hand; rather let us hear the case for the defendant so ably stated by Sir Ernest J. P. Benn in his book, "The Return to Laissez-Faire". In this book, subtitled "The Case for Individualism", the author makes an impassioned plea for a return to sanity, which to him is none other than our American brand of the sturdiest kind of rugged individualism. He holds that the various types of socialism and collectivism are "heading us straight into black doom". He thinks that the world has become very irrational, "gone batty", over social reform. He complains that "Ever since there was a vote it has been used to house the working classes, to make the miner's life a comfortable one, to provide employment, and generally to abolish poverty. This movement, slow at first but constantly increasing in ignorance and strength, has reached its zenith in demagogues like Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Winston Churchill who openly and unashamed offer benefits in exchange for votes, and have so far been able to gain increasing power by blaming the widespread poverty which their quackery produces upon the remnants of sanity that remain with us".(\*\*). It is difficult for us to understand why the alleviation of the depressing working conditions and the making more wholesome the life of the working man is anti-social, but perhaps his glorification of the religious function of hardship in life (that is, of course, for the lives of

(\*) *ibid.*, pp.2, 8, 179. (\*\*) *ibid.*, p.10.

others) gives us a glimpse into the working of his mind. "Religion and ease have little in common", he observes. "Apart altogether from the economic truth that life is not, and never can be, easy, there are surely some deeper, truer, more ennobling aspirations to be found in the endeavor, the service, the work, the triumph over difficulties which are inseparable from the struggle for existence so unfortunately termed Capitalism". (\*). Since when has hardship in itself become religious in its effect upon human life? Since when has Capitalism become identified with life and its higher values? Is Capitalism essentially and practically more virtuous than Socialism or Collectivism? Sir Ernest Benn gives away his entire case when he comes to the point of assigning the real reason for his plea for a return to Laissez-Faire. After a discussion in which he reveals a complete disregard for the practice of concerted action by business combines and all the wage-depressing technique of predatory interests, he continues: "In my view, if every worker would accept the first job at the best price obtainable, and if every business man would apply the same principle to the purchase and sale of products, wages and prices in real values would rise much more quickly, but from natural causes. The workers and the price-ring mongers would not only achieve their respective objects much more rapidly, but while so doing they would confer inestimable benefits on all the rest as well". (\*\*).

(\*) *ibid.*, p.72.

(\*\*) *ibid.*, p.64.

Even if we grant Sir Ernest his plea for the resumption of the productive enterprise through the method of Laissez-Faire, without engaging in any dispute regarding the detailed processes whereby that resumption is to be attained, what is the most probable result? With a periodicity of business cycles that is heart-sickening, we endure a great deal of human suffering and insecurity and we experience the periodic dislocation of life and business because we continue with a distributive system which is almost hopelessly incommensurable with our powers of mass production. Every time these powers are given any inducement to serve humanity with a reasonable degree of their capacity, the system of distribution goes to pieces. When our productive mechanism is set in motion and gains momentum towards its full capacity, the result is not what a sane man naturally has every right to expect, namely, an enrichment of life with supplies of necessities and somewhat of ~~the~~ luxuries; instead, he witnesses an economic depression in which the forces of disaster and bankruptcy compel the productive enterprise to restrain the mistaken notion that its intrinsic purpose is to produce for the supplying of human wants. And the keepers of the ledger remind us that if we foolishly attempt to use these productive powers and resources for such purpose we shall violate the sacred tenets of political economy! Yet all of the economists and sociologists with whose works we are acquainted reserve some of their choicest invective for the castigation of the outmoded distributive system that we

tolerate in our modern world. Fred Henderson, for instance, in his "Economic Consequences of Power Production", is more temperate in this respect than many others, but his language is not less forceful. Regarding the situation above described he avers that "all of which procedure, while it may be very sound and orthodox political economy, sounds uncommonly like lunacy; or at any rate somewhat lacking in that broader sanity of purpose to which we shall have to equate our economy if we are to survive as a civilization at all... Our distributive arrangements are not serving the purposes of distribution;...they are obstructing and thwarting the intentions of a distributive system instead of performing them... As it thus works out in practice it ceases, in short, to be a distributive system at all and becomes the exact reverse; a hold-up system by which the life of the world is condemned to poverty and want in the midst of abounding resources".(\*) Out of this perversion of our distributive system has come the outstanding problem which civilization must everywhere face,- unemployment on an increasingly larger scale, the final proof of the failure of the capitalistic economy to secure social justice.

One of our poets, James Norman Hall, has given voice to this tragedy, a tragedy whose tones are almost too deep for utterance:

"The thing that numbs my heart is this:  
That men cannot devise  
Some scheme of life to banish fear  
That lurks in most men's eyes.

(\*) *ibid.*, pp.71-74.

"Fear of the lack of shelter, food,  
 And fire for winter's cold;  
 Fear of their children lacking these,  
 This, in a world so old,

"Where man has lived so long, so long,  
 Finding no way to share  
 The bounty of a world so rich  
 That none need suffer there". (\*)

Thus does one man feel the economic pain of the world. But in all honesty the outlook does not seem to be so dreary and hopeless as he portrays it. For we have before us a large number of plans whereby this pain might be markedly relieved. These plans range all the way from Autarchy to Social Credits, from Communized Socialism to Functional Organization of Industry, from Laissez-Faire to Cooperatives. It may be true for certain human problems that "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety";<sup>(\*\*)</sup> but in the problem before us the multitude of counsellors might be productive only of confusion of tongues, were it not for the fact that there are certain broad Christian principles which we can use as touchstones.

The Consumers Cooperative Movement embodies some Christian principles which are highly commendatory. Three of these principles are: 1) One man, one vote, regardless of the amount of stocks he holds; 2) Goods are produced for use, not for profit, and the surplus is turned back to the participators; and 3) an acceptable commercial honesty

(\*) Quoted by Woodward as his Foreword in Money for Tomorrow.

(\*\*) Proverbs 11:14.



which assures confidence in buying. The second named principle is a practical application of Stuart Chase's principle of the functional organization of industry. (\*)

The broad Christian principles to be used as touchstones may be expressed in many different ways, as they relate to the present or future course of our economic life. Of economic planning we have had a surfeit; we have had precious little of genuine planned economy. The former is the way of laissez-faire; the latter is that of a higher order of ministering to human welfare. The laissez-faire economic theory of glorified selfishness may well be expressed thus: "Let every man seek his own ends with all the freedom possible, and then the maximum wellbeing for all will be realized". The capitalistic slogan of "He profits most who serves best", may be a slight improvement over bold laissez-faire theory; the technique is altered, but the ultimate motive remains unchanged: it is an idol whose feet are of iron mixed with clay. (\*\*). The Christian principle of economic pursuit is very different: "Let every man minister to the needs of his fellows, and in so doing he will attain his own highest good as well". (\*\*\*) . Expressed more specifically, this Christian principle means: 1) The ideal of mutual aid and the sharing of burdens; 2) The maintaining of the integrity of personality in the midst of group life; 3) The subordination of the needs of the individual to those of the group; and 4) The collective action for the good of all, which is the essence of Christianity. (\*\*\*\*)

(\*) Cf. Overstreet, *We Move in New Directions*, pp.69-70.

(\*\*) Daniel 2:34. (\*\*\*) Mark 8:35.

(\*\*\*\*) FCCCA, *Our Economic Life*, pp.117-118.

The Golden Rule of Jesus is almost universally accepted in principle. Ideals are essential and techniques are necessary to the richest fulfilment of the hope of life. It is only through the effective union of spiritual ideals and economic techniques that ideals attain their fullest significance in our present world and techniques become the means for the greatest achievement of social justice.

With righteousness shall he judge the  
earth,  
And decide with equity for the meek  
of the earth.

Isaiah 11:4.

Judge righteous judgment.

John 7:24.

## V

## CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

It now becomes imperative to consider the unity of life and faith involved in the practical application to the problem of social justice of the essential principles of ethical religion. An ethical religion sets a goal of human striving towards the Divine, and is a criterion by which to evaluate attitudes and conduct in life. This criterion may be applied to the individual or to the social environment in which the individual must find expression. Our immediate interest is in the ethical evaluation of the capitalistic economy, its manifestations and implications, in order to ascertain its bearing upon the problem of securing a more just order of society. We shall make this evaluation in terms of the principles of the ethical religion proclaimed and practiced by the great prophets of Israel and by the Master, Jesus of Nazareth.

When we apply the ethical standards of Jesus and the prophets to the characteristic practices of the capitalistic order today, some very astonishing truths are revealed. Through mechanization we have developed the processes of production to their present high level of marvelous efficiency. So efficient is the productive plant which we have developed that we can now produce in about four months time all the manufactured goods we normally

need for the entire year; and not only that, but we are able to accomplish this task with a more or less drastic reduction of the working force, as compared with fifteen, ten, or even five years ago. So efficient has become the productive machinery that for five years we were in the throes of an economic debacle. In regard to productive plant and equipment man certainly has put to intensive use his God-given powers of mind and the God-given natural resources in ways marvelous to behold! We have been busy, very busy, seeking more and more efficient productive capacity, to the end that we might gain still larger profits, or retain the present scale of profit-making,-- so busy, in fact, that in our diligent application to one portion of our task as a society of human beings, that to a large extent we have overlooked or ignored what is, after all, the more important part. We have employed literally hosts of people to produce things with the machines we have built, but we have not made it possible for those same people to secure, use and enjoy any fair or equitable portion of the things they have made. We, that is, those of us in control of the machine, have been so enamoured of the intricate Calculus of Production for Profit, that we have set ourselves up as a kind of demi-gods and have sinfully neglected the Human Equation of Distribution.

The industrial revolution has been hailed by its proponents as the greatest economic advance that man has ever made. We raise no question respecting the capacity of our industrial order to produce more goods and to make available a larger variety of goods that might be used to

satisfy human needs and desires than could be secured in the hand-craft stage. However, we do wish to raise some questions regarding the costs of this widely hailed boon to humanity.

Our industrial system has been credited with operating with a high degree of efficiency. Upon inquiry we discover the efficiency to be located in cam and cog, in shaft and wheel, and to bear little reference to the total material and social costs of the machine. The writer has seen in his own boyhood community in the bituminous coal area of Pennsylvania the manner in which the natural resources of timber and coal have been ruthlessly and wastefully exploited under the assumed compulsions of technical progress. The bare, pitted hills testify eloquently to the shamefully wasteful manner by which the original coal mining company removed the virgin timber and the more easily available sections of the rich coal deposits. The past half century of experience by the people of this community is a grim realization of the judgment that Stuart Chase affirms is pronounced on our "efficient" industrial system: "We are living on our economic capital where other ages have lived on their economic income. Our children and grandchildren will have a bitter bill to pay".(\*) The oil fields of Pennsylvania, the Southwest and the Pacific Coast bear similar testimony. In our haste to be comfortable and to make quick profits we are prone to overlook the fact that the fundamental moral law, "Thou shalt not steal", applies just as incisively with respect to our responsibility to

(\*) Chase, A New Deal, p.82.

future generations as it does to contemporary humanity.

Wasteage of good foodstuffs is another practice of our capitalistic economy. The Brazilians deliberately dumped some 2,000,000 bags of coffee into the sea in 1931 alone, in order to keep up the price by producing an artificial scarcity. William Z. Foster, in his "Toward Soviet America", lists the following facts regarding deliberate waste of foodstuffs: Forty thousand salmon destroyed in Ketchikan Bay, Alaska; one hundred thousand gallons of milk dumped into the river at Oakland, California; and a neighboring California Rotary Club played ball with a shipment of sixty thousand eggs to keep them off the market.(\*). But we need not go to California or to Alaska to find such practices, for right in the proud city of Cleveland, Ohio, the same destructive principle operates. Garden truck growers have repeatedly informed the writer of the deliberate destruction of large quantities of perishable produce in good condition by its being allowed to rot in the warehouses of the commission merchants or else hauled to the city refuse dump,- simply to prevent such produce entering the open market. And during a public hearing in 1933, the assistant manager of one of the largest milk distributing firms in Cleveland area admitted that in one week alone his company had dumped into the sewer more than three thousand quarts of good milk. When asked the reason why this milk was not made available for the poor children through the intermediary of the School Milk Fund, he replied that "such practice would interfere with our market". Detestable and self-condemnatory as are the above

(\* ) Foster, *ibid.*, pp.156-157.

examples, they shrink to diminutive proportions when we compare them with the grand economic blunder of a national Administration in Washington that sought to clothe the needy by plowing under ground one-third of the cotton crop, and that attempted to solve the problem of human hunger by destroying an equivalent part of the corn crop and by turning millions of food animals into fertilizer. Thus in private practice and in public administration does the capitalistic system for its own selfish ends blindly condone and encourage waste of socially useful products.

The motives which prompt to such waste may be varied, and may be mixed in any specific instance. The urge may be compounded of ignorance, carelessness, ostentation, a desire to dominate. But fundamentally, as Professor Tawney shows, the most powerful motive in an acquisitive society is greed. In our present economic order "the concentration of authority is too deeply rooted in the very essence of capitalism for differences in the degree of arbitrariness with which it is exercised to be other than trivial". It is breaking down "at what was always its most vulnerable point, the control of the human beings whom, with characteristic indifference to all but their economic significance, it distilled for its own purposes into an abstraction called 'Labor!'. Education and experience have destroyed the myth of the "intellectual superiority of many of those who direct industry, and....the morality of the system". The claim of the capitalist to be the "self-appointed guardian of public interests (is) a piece of sanctimonious hypocrisy. For...every day that efficiency



is sacrificed to shortsighted financial interests"(\*). In another book by Tawney, "Religion and the Rise of Capitalism", and in Ward's "Our Economic Morality", the same theme of the power of greed is affirmed.

Now greed is not a characteristic peculiar to the economic order of Great Britain, for that order is but a sector of the world economic order. Greed is an ugly word, and we shy from the term avarice. We will readily admit that in the Middle Ages avarice and Greed were prevalent in high and low places; it is important to observe, however, men then called these vices by their right names. They had not yet "learned to persuade themselves that greed was enterprise and avarice economy".(\*\*). Even back in the Eighth century, B.C., greed was producing its uncomely results upon the people. In words overflowing with scorn, Amos likened the cultured women of Samaria to a herd of cows, heedless, trampling in their anxiety for food upon every frail and lowly object in the way. Amos' scorn is all the more withering in that he was not addressing a group of Jezebels, but the leading matrons of Samaria. Greed, through thoughtlessness and love of luxury, makes brutes out of women of gentle birth, with culture and a home and a religion.(\*\*\*). And in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, The Carpenter noted that there were men whose lives exemplified a sterile pietism which permitted them to rob a widow of her home and then to pray "long prayers" standing on the chief corners of the streets.(\*\*\*\*).

(\*) Tawney, The Acquisitive Society, pp.129-142.

(\*\*) Tawney, Rise of Religion and Capitalism, p.61.

(\*\*\*) Amos 4:1-3. (\*\*\*\*) Mark 12:40.

Greed builds up huge reserves for the business enterprise and refuses to do the same for the workingman. Greed develops the private trade in arms through the ramifications of an international armament "ring", which creates in the "country of every great Power an outside diplomacy, acting apart from the chancelleries, sometimes without their knowledge, always without the advice or parliaments; and as this action is necessarily exercised in violation of official treaties (otherwise it would not be secret) it creates among governments and peoples a state of tension and constant suspicion, forcing them to further armaments".(\*) In the late War greed of gain led to an extensive trade in potential war materials by the warring nations through the intermediary channel of the neutral nations. Greed, therefore, is utterly callous to human needs, human welfare, human happiness,- and to be concerned only with its blindly selfish ends.

Does not this "sickness of an acquisitive society" (Tawney's phrase) constitute the greatest hindrance to the growth of the Christian religion? Nations as well as individuals become ensnared in its tentacles and share in its sin and ultimate undoing. "When the desire for gain becomes the dominating motive and the mainspring of life, respect for personality ceases. When men recognize no law superior to their desires, industrial conflict is inevitable. When nations are animated by the selfish spirit, they will go to war when their selfish desires conflict".(\*\*). The pitiful

(\*) IPULN, Character of a New War, p.196.

(\*\*) Stidger, The Pew Preaches, p.147.

sight, the tragic reality grieves one as he sees that Christian and non-Christian alike seem to be helplessly enmeshed in the net of greed that encloses our capitalistic order. The Christian and many non-Christians believe in honor and integrity, but in practice they find it to be exceedingly difficult to maintain them in the midst of an intensely competitive struggle where "gentlemen's agreements" are such uncertain quantities. How can even a modicum of justice be mediated through a social order so dominated by the spirit of greed?

Another significant quality of our capitalistic order is the assertion of a very broad claim to the right of personal property. Much confusion has been engendered in the mind of the average citizen by the disputations of rival schools of economic thought regarding the rights and limitations of private ownership. The simple communism of the early Christian group (Acts 2:44; 4:32) and the "rugged individualism" of the "roaring twenties" of the present century will exemplify two extremes of these varied opinions.

When in the beginning of the Eighteenth century Church and State alike abdicated the realm of social ethics, the natural consequence in the economic area was the elevation of private property and its interests. The doctrine of Adam Smith that interested self-interest would evolve to the higher public good, in reality gave impetus to the enlargement of the rights of private property and private ownership. In course of time the rights of private ownership became the practical basis of modern economic

thought and practice. The social function of property was lost sight of, and the social responsibilities of private property were increasingly resisted and denied. The net result un humanly religious terms of this doctrine with its concomitants of competition and combination, was that many men become more wealthy but not more religious.

Private property, as an institution, rests upon the "ideas, attitudes, sentiments and practices pertaining to the ownership of wealth which have the sanction of society". The elaboration of these rights came gradually following the breakdown of feudalism and the rise of nationalism. In these recent years the right of unlimited personal acquisition has been seriously challenged, and in a measure successfully challenged by way of taxes on income, excess profits and inheritances; this trend is in the interest of the larger public good, for the unrestricted right to private ownership tends to place in the hands of the owner an increasing power over the lives and fortunes of people, until the poorer man becomes entirely dependent upon the patronage of the richer man, which means to have the evils of feudalism in a Twentieth century form. A gesture in the direction of alleviating some of the grosser evils of a modern feudalism has been made through the device of "public ownership of stocks". Such a gesture is a feeble one, and to a large extent is not sincere; for the purpose is to achieve the semblance of public ownership, and hence the suggestion of public control, but to retain the reality of private control. Only the uninformed and the credulous will accept as truth the fiction of public control

through public ownership of stocks. For example, the Inter-Church investigation of the United States Steel Corporation in 1921 revealed the fact that, although there were about 100,000 shareholders in that corporation, less than two per cent of this number owned the majority of the stock; and, further, that on April 19, 1920, Judge Gary declared at the twenty-first meeting of the stockholders since the organization of the Corporation: "I have had the honor of presiding at every one (of these meetings), and of voting the major part of all the outstanding capital stock". (\*). Is this public control, or is it highly concentrated private control of the means by which the community lives? Such an actual situation, which can be duplicated widely in our economic arrangements, compels us to face the need of focusing attention on the peculiar tyranny now exercised in even the most advanced countries, democracies included, by a relatively small group of rich men over the lives and activities of the masses of ordinary men and women.

Nor is this all. We need seriously to deal with the question of the current philosophy of success. The children of Israel were not the last of the sons of men to bow down to a golden calf. In a letter written near the end of his life, Professor William James protested against what he termed the American worship of the "Bitch-Goddess Success". John Dewey, Francis J. McConnell and Harry F. Ward in their published writings have quoted with high approval this scathing word of James. It is not only on Wall Street that the ritual of this cult is observed. Mr. A. J. Muste confessed that the aim of the labor movement is "to get on

(\* Page, United States Steel Corporation, p.25.

in the world". (\*). In "The Pew Preaches", Henry Ford posited service as the highway to prosperity; and J. C. Penny affirmed that success "is a spirit first. When I see a young man or a young woman doing more than is required, identifying herself or himself so closely with the task of the office that a lunch hour may be overlooked, my heart warms, for I recognize the beginning of success. These young people are doing more than is required-- that is, more than the office requires-- but not more than conscience requires".(\*\*). We will affirm this judgment if it represents the honest and truthful interpretation of all the relevant facts of a specific case. Yet in all sincerity we suggest that there may be other possible reasons for the extra time given to the task: It may indeed be conscience; or it may be lack of skill to do the necessary work in the regulation time, or it may be fear of the loss of a job. What if such conduct were universalized? Would such practice of working overtime tend to better the condition of the worker, or open more avenues for his further exploitation? If the cult of success can so slyly intrigue a man of integrity like Mr. Penny, what must it do to a man whose life is not modified by the spiritual sanctions of a loftier worship?

If it be true that we do tend to become like the god we worship, it were wise for us to consider the worthwhileness of the worship of Success. The American gospel of Success means nothing less than "Win, win, even at your neighbor's expense". "Take and keep and exploit for your own private gain", is the guiding slogan. We are assailed

(\*) Davis, Labor Speaks for Itself on Religion, p.101.

(\*\*) Stidger, The Pew Preaches, pp.46, 105.

on every side to accept a philosophy compounded of two inconsistent and contradictory principles: To defeat our fellows, but to love them. The American slogan of "He profits most who serves best", is a continuation of the capitalistic fallacy in another form; as has been indicated in the previous chapter, this slogan reveals a changed technique but unaccompanied by any real change of the capitalistic heart.

This contradictory philosophy becomes very significant when we consider its probable effects not only in the contemporary scene, but also for the future social wellbeing. The unwholesome social products of such a philosophy do not become fully evident in the generation in which such doctrine is promulgated, but rather in the maturing of the generation that is young when such doctrine is openly and widely proclaimed. The present rising generation would seem to be on the way to suffer most acutely in the days ahead. Harold Rugg, an American educator of no mean ability and standing, in a very discerning manner sums up the situation thus: "The outcome of such a pernicious philosophy is the widespread adoption by young people of the 'getting something for nothing' attitude. In this, youth is merely reflecting the milieu of exploitation and self-aggrandizement which their elders have set up around them. If, faced by enforced idleness, millions of youth become degenerate racketeers, we can charge the dreadful debit to our inability to design a sound social order. Indeed, never to this day has any large number of thinking Americans considered the real implications of the success theory of life".(\*)

(\*) Rugg, The Great Technology, p.192.

This philosophy is a serious handicap to the realization of the more abundant life. Recognizing that the mental and spiritual life of this age is cramped and distorted by the philosophy of material success, the minister cannot sit idly by and "let events take their course"; for this philosophy seriously hinders the fulfilment of his calling as an ambassador of the life more abundant. It is to the interest of the minister and his work that he endeavor to comprehend the seriousness of the impediment which such a philosophy imposes upon him. In order to this, as one step in that understanding needed, let us consider the ethical evaluation of the modern slogan of "Profit through Service".

The contemporary watchword of the capitalistic system is "Service". The business concern boasts of its service for the convenience and comfort of its customers. The corner "gas station" has become a "Servicenter"; and the capitalistic-minded business-dinner clubs are hailed as "Service Organizations". One could heartily wish that this widely heralded ideal of service were a genuine infusion of the spirit of Christ into the business life of today. In respect to isolated individuals this ideal may be sincere. But is it a generalization founded upon well established facts? The belief in the sincerity of this proclaimed ideal breaks down when there is introduced the frank testimony of America's leading industrialist, that the highway to prosperity is paved with service, thereby positing "service" as the convenient means to reach some desired end. The service is indeed rendered, but the end-product cannot honestly be indicated as service. To state



this observation conversely: It is repeatedly asserted by defenders of the profit system, and rather tacitly accepted by the unthinking masses of the people, that the mere fact that profit is being made, without demonstrated violation of the criminal laws, constitutes prima facie evidence of an equivalent in socially desirable service. Well might a Du Pont Powder Company official protest to the Senate Investigation Committee regarding the patriotism of his Company and its service to the American Government. For that man could tell a success story, with Success spelled with a big capital letter. During the War years the profits of his Company were as follows: 1915, \$57,840,000; 1916, \$82,000,000; 1917, \$49,000,000; 1918, \$43,000,000,-- a grand total of \$231,840,000 profit in four years for a concern capitalized at \$58,000,000 common stock and \$60,000,000 preferred stock! Little wonder, then, that a man, an important banker in a large mid-Western city, moved by a sense of social responsibility, with sarcastic humor should remark: "Loyalty has her mansions, not altogether of the soul; and the spirit of service does lead to a bigger bank account".(\*)

Lest the charge of the essential insincerity of the service motive in the profit economy be attributed solely or largely to some biased attitude of the writer, it will be well to note what one high priest of modern business, Mr. Owen D. Young, has affirmed. First, he admitted that "the moral standards of business have been advanced. A certain amount of astuteness and cleverness and sharpness of the earlier day has disappeared". He went on to state: "They would not work well in large business. A storekeeper

(\*) Woodward, Money for Tomorrow, p.69.

may short-measure or short-weigh his customer and make a little by that method. He may even induce his clerk to short-weigh or short-measure, but he cannot organize a vast department store on that basis. Either his employes are honest people who would refuse to do it, or he would soon have as employes a vast organization of crooks who would beat each other and soon ruin the proprietor himself. Big business does not lend itself readily to dishonesty and crookedness. Great organizations of human beings cannot be built on that theory. You cannot teach an organization to steal from your customers and object very much if your cashier takes money out of the till. Honesty and uprightness must exist in great business organizations on the simple grounds of expediency, if no other. And so, as our business has grown larger, I think we can say that moral standards have improved. It is safe for you to buy today under great trademarks almost anything you wish without previously examining the package. You will find quantity, quality and price right. It may be no moral tribute to the managers of business. It may be only the result of their intelligence, for they know that any other practice spells ruin. So here, certainly, simple honesty has its own rewards".(\*). If we ask, "Simple honesty, or calculated?" we find a significant part of the answer in the man's own words,- "intelligence" and "expediency".

It thus becomes increasingly clear that there are two motives operating in the capitalistic economy. One is an artificial device for show-window dressing; the other is away from public view, yet is the real intention. The.

artificial motive is, public service; the real motive is private gain. Instead of honestly admitting that they are in business for profit, the corporation executives and the "front" men for capitalism squirt atomizers filled with the rank perfumes of "service", "goodwill", "public duty", in all directions until the atmosphere of the nation is choked with alien gases. It is no mere rhetorical flourish when Stuart Chase asserts that "many Americans, and others, cannot afford the luxury of integrity". Like all other luxuries it can be secured if we will pay the price. But how many today, moguls of finance, captains of industry, and the "hoi polloi", are "forced to traduce our honor to cling to what we have"? In our capitalistic economy it is an open secret that for the "sincere milk of human kindness the most obvious substitute is soft soap".(\*)

With regards to the initial success of the capitalistic system, due to the powerful incentive for private profit, there is no doubt. With geometric progression it has created highly efficient machinery of ever-increasing productive capacity. The latter, more mature strength was betokened in the ruthless destruction which capitalism wrought upon the former order of life. Capitalism was the Wandal, the Bolshevist of the late Eighteenth century. It battered and smashed the social institutions in its way. It has operated and still operates for the primary purpose of private profit-making.

Now the profit motive does act as a powerful incentive for action by men. There is no urge to efficiency that seems to operate with such directness as that of the

(\*) Chase, *Nemesis of American Business*, pp.28-30.

possibility of private gain. The profit motive calls to its aid all the more primitive and commoner passions of men,- acquisition, fighting, competition, domination, family security and private privilege. When it comes to the matter of selecting the means to the real end of the capitalistic system, "no competent observer will deny the efficacy of profit-making as a way of stimulating and canalizing the energies of those who practice it".(\*)

In the presence of such a situation wherein the dominating motive operates so powerfully yet so covertly in our economic environment, how can we escape feeling harassed as well as disillusioned? We would seem to be virtually driven to adopt the old Roman dictum, "First secure an independent income, and then practice virtue". For the highest ideals and tenderest emotions which men have felt through the ages, when they become fully conscious of their heritage and possible destiny as human beings, will seem to be considerably a luxury. We are under a moral disadvantage because they appear to us as a luxury, which only those are able to indulge who are comfortable enough to be oblivious to the anti-ethical character of our contemporary social order. "We live in an age in which personal moral idealism is easily accused of hypocrisy, and frequently deserves (the charge). It is an age in which honesty is possible only when it skirts the edges of cynicism. All this is rather tragic. For what the individual conscience feels when it lifts itself above the world of nature and the system of collective relationships in which the human spirit remains under the power of nature, is not a luxury

(\*) Webb, Decay of Capitalist Civilization, p.88.

but a necessity of the soul. Yet there is beauty in our tragedy. We are, at least, rid of some of our illusions. We can no longer buy the highest satisfactions of the individual life at the expense of social injustice. We cannot build our individual ladders to heaven and leave the total human enterprise unredeemed of its excesses and corruptions".(\*)).

By way of illustration, we shall take note of some of the "excesses and corruptions" that sap the foundations of a sound social structure. Many leading economists affirm that for the first time in history, a nation, and more specifically our nation, has within its grasp a potential economy of plenty. But instead of this potential plenty being widely distributed among the people, we find the overweening luxury flanked on all sides by the most distressing poverty. Inequality of the grossest kind characterizes our social order. Millions of our people live close to starvation and huddle together in the slums, urban and rural. A small fraction of our people get the large fraction of the national income. The Hoover Committee on Recent Economic Changes reported that in the "normal" year of 1925, of the 27,000,000 families in the United States, the richest ten percent received \$27,000,000,000, or about one-third of the national income, while the rest, or ninety percent, received only \$54,000,000,000, or two-thirds of the income. It was further reported that 1) Ten Americans had received \$5,000,000 or more each; 2) 283 Americans had received \$1,000,000 or more each; 3) 11,000 had received \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 each; 4) 33,000 had received \$50,000 to

(\*) Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p.277.

\$100,000 each; 5) 82,000 had received \$25,000 to \$50,000 each; and 6) 250,000 had received \$10,000 to \$25,000 each. The income tax report for the year 1929 shows that there were about 4,000,000 income-tax payers, or roughly one-tenth of the number of workers. Of these, 1/10 of 1% received 5% of the total income reported, or \$2,000,000 per reporter; 2 1/2% received 28% of the total income, or \$68,000 per reporter; and 75% received 33% of the income, or \$2,700 per reporter.(\*). Over against this picture are those repeated reports in *The Christian Century* for the early months of 1936, reports which showed that the great portion of the people have extremely slender possibilities of facing the necessity of paying any income tax, even in the lowest bracket of \$2,700 per year. In fact a large part of the people presumably had no income. After making brief mention of some of the significant and ominous trends in the business and economic areas, the editor commented: "But it is the unemployment figure which should disturb the nation's sleep. Twelve and a half million people out of work means a quarter of the working population!"(\*\*).-- From a strictly scientific viewpoint, and taking no account of the Christian view with regard to the above enumerated facts, how can society look upon this situation with any but the most profound concern for its present safety and its future welfare? Certainly honest science cannot recognize the right of any person to take an undue share of the goods produced, or its equivalent in money, until all have received that minimum which the scientific study of physiology and psychology determines is necessary for the maintenance of the greatest

(\*) Rugg, *The Great Technology*, pp.84-85.

(\*\*) *The Christian Century*, March 11, 1936, p.387.

degree of health and general wellbeing, and which a critical study of the natural resources shows is possible.

Again, a little comparison reveals a close kinship between the sanctions of the criminal mind and those of the capitalistic business mind. Of the two types of crime, impulsive and intentional, the latter bulks large in today's life. The racketeer is not ashamed when he is caught, he regards his apprehension as "just a bad break, that's all". The burglar is a business man who gets as much as he can in as artful a way as he can; if in the conduct of his business he hurts someone, that is "unfortunate", but one must not let others stand in the way of one's own success. The gangster is a member of a monopoly which defends its property rights against all invaders. The seller of worthless securities is simply more clever than his buyers. Thus it is that today almost any criminal can make out a case-- not recognized by law, of course-- based firmly on known business practices. Hence we are led to the conclusion that a vast amount of crime today is the logical outcome of the each-man-for-himself philosophy. "To get more for less is most successful when one can get everything for nothing. It is not a far cry, therefore, from the adulterator of goods to the snatcher of purses, or from the company that demands high tribute for its monopolized products to the racketeer who asks for his monthly contribution. Fundamentally they are from the same cloth". We profess a belief in living under the Ten Commandments, but to a large extent we live under the Spartan Code: "Steal, but don't get caught!" After all, it is rather difficult to distinguish

between outright stealing and the more covert and refined processes by which the seller takes more than equitably should be taken from the buyer, or the employer gives to the worker less than he actually earns. Is not the essence of stealing the taking what rightfully belongs to another without making an equitable return? If so, then all the above practices come under this definition, and we put our finger on the spring of our crime situation today. Professor H. A. Overstreet has rightly estimated the situation in his declaration that "the disease of crime is rooted in the average processes of our life...The real issue lies in the motivation involved in our profit economy. As long as we are content to be a civilization based upon the principle of getting as much for ourselves and giving as little as possible, we have set a pattern for life which must inevitably produce chicanery and crime".(\*)

We arrive at the most critical point, as regards the involvement of the Christian minister, when we come to a realization of the effects of the doctrine of laissez-faire upon the moral defenses of life. We shall presently show in various ways, how the practices of the capitalistic economy have to a greater or less degree weakened these moral defenses.

In his masterful treatment of the relationship of Religion to the Rise of Capitalism, Tawney maintains (as against Troeltsch) that Puritanism was not the direct producer of individualism and capitalism. The capitalistic

(\*) Overstreet, We Move in New Directions, pp.106, 109-110.



spirit is not the child of Puritanism; but the type of character esteemed and cultivated by the Puritan has made a notable contribution to the triumph of the economic virtues, a triumph secured at the price of invaluable ideals of the religious tradition. The philosophy of Adam Smith had divorced economic and religious interests. In the Puritan view, work was by the will of God. There was no conflict of business and religion. To produce was to be pious. In essence, activity, business or otherwise, became a tenet of religion. The development of this idea logically came to be such that later Puritanism added a halo of ethical sanctification to the appeal of economic expediency. For it came to be the rule that sufficiency for the day was no longer the end sought, but limitless increase of economic activity. Not consumption needs, but productive capacity became the controlling motive. The world was not to be enjoyed, but conquered. Forthwith in the growth of our American life we arrived at the point where, by continued feeding on the "milk of lions", acquisition became a religious duty. (\*). When thus it is that economic sanctions have largely replaced religious sanctions for moral conduct, the Christian minister cannot find in this fact much spiritual encouragement or elation of soul.

The moral defenses have suffered in the competitive struggle. They have been further weakened by injustice, by public charity, and by a growing sense of insecurity. The writer has lost count of the number of men, men of ordinary, good moral character, who in the past half-decade and more

(\*) *ibid.*, pp.212-253.

have vigorously declared to him that they would assure their families enough to eat, honestly by work if they could, but if not so, then by some other means; for job or no job, they would not allow their families to suffer privation. The sense of insecurity has broken down the moral defense of gaining a living only by means of some sort of honorable toil. The stark reality which a large portion of our American families must face is that only a very few weeks of unemployment lie between them and want. This ought to make us keenly alive to the flimsy character of the moral defenses of modern society. Whether we like it or not, the tendency is strongly for moral idealism to fade and moral inhibitions to break down when security vanishes. Moreover, the real havoc of injustice is the moral havoc. How well we know that many who have wealth, art, patriotism(?), and religion(?), have neither heart for the poverty nor conscience for the wrong done to the people. They live well, have their political zeal and exuberant patriotism, talk grandly of commerce and national welfare and defense of the Constitution; but for the real woes and injustices which the common people suffer, the poverty, the overwork, the denial of the right to work, conditions which most adversely affect a nation's life, "They have no pity and no care".(\*)

Then when the common people learn the lesson of disregard from their teachers, they not infrequently take the bloody sword of revolution and execute or exile those who should have led them into a more just social order. With regard to charity, public or private, too long we have emphasized

(\*) Smith, Book of the Twelve Prophets, p.175.

that phase which relates to the virtues engendered in those fortunate people who are economically able to practice acts of charity; and we have almost entirely ignored or have been unaware of the unfortunate results which accrue to those who are the recipients of that charity. We have loudly sung the praises of that self-satisfied feeling which comes to the benefactor; we have scarcely noticed the anti-social results of decreased initiative and lowered self-respect which increasingly are being recognized as the all too sure concomitants of a person's receipt of charity. What chance is there for the growth of wholesome social attitudes and vigorously moral conduct when one-fourth of the working population of a nation is denied the right to work for a living, and when such unemployment shows a marked tendency to increase rather than to decrease?

Our moral defenses break down through the emphasis upon the pecuniary standard for success. We have already paid our respects to the worship of the "Bitch-Goddess Success". We simply desire to indicate some of the practical moral implications of such votive rites. The pecuniary ideals which flow therefrom tend to lower the standards of business dealings of individuals with each other; simple contract honesty breaks down. Men become unwilling to respect legal obligations to business associates and to society. The penalties of the law act as only slight deterrents in this direction. For where "wealth is power; and wealth, and therefore power, to evade and to resist law is unequally distributed"; and whenever the "legal system is unable to function with a reasonable degree of evenness,

there is likely to develop among all classes and individuals an ever growing disregard for the most basic maxims of legal rectitude". (\*). Yet in the midst of so scathing an arraignment of the morally blasting effects of pecuniary ideals, the author is not without hope. He suggests that the most effective solution of this problem lies in an educational system that is kept free from complete domination by the pecuniary ideal. Had he included in his suggestion the prophetic voice of the Christian Church, he would have given expression to a far stronger hope for the moral undergirding of our social order and of the individual life.

The present economic order with particularly devastating power tends to break down the moral defenses of youth. The present adult generation having given heavy mortgages on its own future earning power through over-expansion and deferred payments has added insult to injury by robbing the rising generations of the birthright of adequate education. During the past decade, with more people out of work and thereby more in need of the stimulus of further education, the politicians of government and of business, instead of seeking to provide for the widening and extending of educational opportunities, have appeared to be doing all within their power to further restrict them. They have without mercy reduced the teachers' salaries, cut the teaching staff, shortened the school term, and, by and large, have proceeded to eliminate the more progressive elements of the curriculum. This process, as Harold Rugg so

(\*) Anthony, Economic and Social Problems of the Machine Age, p.38.

forcefully declares, has resulted in the "disintegration of disillusioned youth". Rugg is especially concerned for the present and future mental and moral welfare of the school children. "The facts show that the depression is breaking down the morale of millions of American youth and children. Undernourished children are growing up in an environment of physical poverty and mental worry. Convincing reports show that American childhood is in serious danger resulting from the conditions created by the parents being out of work, by an atmosphere of worry and fear dominating households, and by the fact that millions of mothers are away from home, working or seeking work. This is far from meeting the requirements set up by the Children's Charter-- namely, "To every child the right to grow up in a family with an adequate standard of living and the security of a stable income as the surest safeguard against social handicaps".(\*)

Further, our moral defenses have been sapped by what we may term a creeping paralysis of cynicism with respect to the application of Christian principles to the international situation. Repeatedly in the two decades since the War the hopes of the common peoples have been raised by the possibility of continued peace through such channels as the League of Nations, the Locarno treaties, the Pact of Paris, and Disarmament Conferences. Gradually as "military experts" took the place of statesmen on the committees appointed to examine principles and the possibilities of practical peace, we have noted with growing dismay that the "dis-armament conferences" have become more

(\*) Rugg, The Great Technology, pp.240-241.

and more farcical as they have been distorted into actual "re-armament conferences". Heated and long-continued discussions about quantitative and qualitative armaments, about weapons for aggression and defense (which changed from one to the other category in some mystical manner according to whether they were favored by one power of another), have obscured the issue and provided a smoke screen for the connivance of the militarists with the "merchants of death". The net result has been a blighting cynicism regarding the peace hopes of the peoples of the world, and the launching of a naval and armaments race the like of which the world has never before witnessed. The wages of such a race, like the wages of sin, is death.

Hence, capitalism as an economic system fails to make the purpose of an economic system in an intelligent social order a practical reality. How can we possibly escape this logical conclusion after the consideration of the data presented in the preceding pages? The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America in "Our Economic Life", the Webbs in "The Decay of Capitalist Civilization", Stuart Chase in "A New Deal", Sir Arthur Salter in "The World's Economic Crisis", Oswald Spengler in "The Decline of the West", and others mentioned in this paper agree in the conviction that "laissez-faire" has become a heavy liability in the world's life. In the interest of definitiveness and brevity we will condense the summary of the assets and liabilities of laissez-faire as presented by Stuart Chase. As regards assets the policy of laissez-faire was a healthy revolt against the regimentation and restrictions of feud-

alism; it removed the economic power from pope and prince and gave it to the entrepreneur; accumulation of capital was expedited; generous assistance was given to science and technical progress; it made for resourcefulness and independence to successful entrepreneurs; and paved the way to an economy of abundance. But the liabilities in human importance heavily outweigh the technical assets: In its blundering, vigorous aggression, laissez-faire never stopped to inquire the true purpose of an economic system; all sense of the social function was lost in the scramble; and the chief ornaments became safes and counters and lost and homeless men. By regarding 'labor' as a commodity and making a religion out of production, it encouraged a sublime disregard for the worker. Through its emphasis upon greed and acquisitiveness it exalted the baser elements in human nature: acquisition was rationalized into a virtue; money became a moral force; the balance sheet replaced the Bible as a criterion of conduct; Jesus was presented as a hustling "go-getter"; and to hurt business became an act of moral delinquency. By its encouragement of specialization to the nth degree, insecurity for the worker was greatly increased. And security of human welfare was wantonly sacrificed in the interest of increased production.(\*).

In a manner even more significant, the profit economy proves itself inadequate and unworthy as a way of life. Briefly, we may state the charges against capitalism as three: economically, it is inefficient; socially, it is unjust; and religiously, an ignoble way of life;-- and that

(\* ) Chase, A New Deal, pp.61-64.

of these three the third charge is by far the more serious. During the Nineteenth century the capitalistic system was sprinkled copiously with holy water, but at heart it still remains irreligious. It lacks public spirit. It consists chiefly of possessors and would-be possessors; this condition gives rise to constant internal strain and warfare. It adopted as its basic principles the competition of the jungle and exalted as the chief economic duty that of selfishness. At heart capitalism is the antithesis of the Christian way of life whose basic principles are the cooperation of human beings in friendliness and exalting as the supreme duty of man the genuine love to God and their fellowmen.(\*).

The ineptness of the profit economy to rise above the plane of private gains in the interest of social welfare results in the condemnation of millions of human beings to poverty through the virtual denial of the right to work. Implicit in the entire working of the system is the denial of the right to live. Such a view of the relation of human life to the material resources is incoherent. To scrap human beings because the financial arrangements of our economic system do not provide for them in a world of ample resources is to put the machine in control of human life. That hosts of men, women and children should cease to have any claim or right to live when our science has given us ample power of producing ever-increasing satisfactions for human life, is a proposition that has but one human or Christian answer. The implied suggestion that because our system denies persons the right to work, that thereby they

(\* ) Matthew 22:36-42; Luke 10:25-37.



must forfeit their right to live, is a suggestion quite outside the range of ordinary human sanity. A system that logically issues in such a conclusion has by virtue thereof brought upon itself the judgment of being already obsolete. The establishing of the Community Chest and the various private, State and Federal agencies to provide relief to needy persons, is a welcome and simple testimony to the fact that the heart of the people is far greater and nobler than the economic system under which they live.

Therefore, we may take courage from the anticipation that the profit economy as such will be superseded, if for no other reason than that it is not great enough for what is great is us. The interested self-interest philosophy has seemed to many people to be justified by its superficial achievements. But man must not only be justified by the works of his hands; he must be justified of himself as well. We are not altogether happy as we contemplate what such a philosophy has done to the spirit of man. We behold men, energetic and resourceful, but we see them by that resourceful energy using the money and lives of others to their own selfish purposes. In other words, they show a narrow spirit, aggressive, frequently without pity and having only the most slender connection with the welfare of their fellowmen. When we consider these blighting effects upon the spirit of man, man who was made in the image of God, we are compelled to affirm that fine insight of one who asserts that "It can hardly be said....that the spiritual products of the profit economy have been an outstanding success. Even when we grant it success as an energy-arouser we are

compelled to confess to its relative failure as a cultivator of spiritual qualities. We are made the more uneasy, since, in our Christian civilization, the profit economy has compelled us to live within two conflicting systems of motivation. Our religious culture has stressed a love that goes beyond self; our economic culture has stressed a love confined to self. We experience increasing difficulty in reconciling these two, and we begin to suspect that many of our troubles arise out of the fact that self-interest can no longer serve as the chief motivating force even of economic life....The profit-economy, in short, is passing away because it is not great enough for what is great in us".(\*)).

(\*) Overstreet, We Move in New Directions,  
pp.14-15.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy  
statutes,  
And I shall keep it unto the end.  
Give me understanding, and I shall  
keep thy law;  
Yea, I shall observe it with my  
whole heart.

Psalm 119:33-34.

My meat is to do the will of him  
that sent me, and to accomplish his  
work.

John 4:34.

## VI

## WHAT SHALL THE MINISTER DO?

Confronted by a social system which, according to the standards of Christian ethics, is adjudged grossly guilty of social injustice, the Christian minister must determine what he should do regarding that system and its inherent injustices. There are four possible attitudes which he may take towards this problem. We might designate them as asceticism, indifferentism, agitation and education. The first two emerge from motives which prompt primarily to one's immediate personal welfare; the last two originate in the urge for the achievement primarily of the social wellbeing, out of which will flow the fuller life to the individual.

The minister may stand on the side in ascetic aloofness. He may regard the existing social injustices as in their very nature the sphere of unrighteousness, from which men may escape, from which, if they regard the salvation of their souls, they will escape. In a world of evil, men may hope to escape the injustices and evils thereof only by flight. Granting the sincerity of their earnest desire for the purity of the soul's life, we note that these have literally followed the exhortation, "Come ye out of her, my people". In ascetic aloofness from the world and the evils thereof they have sought development of spiritual life. The effectiveness of the monastic ideal

in the Middle Ages is eloquent testimony to the power which this attitude can and does assume over the lives and activities of men who have sought the realization of Christian ideals.

Again, the minister may take these injustices for granted, and then proceed to ignore them, as matters of indifference that belonged to a world in which religion has no concern. An ancient moral philosopher observed the personally prudential character of this attitude; the writer of Ecclesiasticus (8:1-2) thus urged his readers:

Contend not with a mighty man,  
Lest haply thou fall into his hands.  
Strive not with a rich man,  
Lest haply he overweigh thee.

Not only in the case of the priest and the Levite on the road to Jericho, but rather generally in human experience in all ages the prudence of looking at unpleasant situations and then passing on, has appeared as such a self-evident commendation that needs no other justification. Such indifferentism in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries caused the Church to cease thinking on social morality. Religion abdicated the realm of social ethics, and thereby in reality capitulated to the world, from the meshes of which the Church is awakening to the necessity of extricating herself. The trumpet blast of the social concern of religion (Luke 1:51-53) is unheeded by the one who chooses the way of indifferentism.

The minister may choose the way of agitation for definite social reforms. By establishing legal or other

social penalties for wrong-doing he may seek the restraint of the wrong-doer, and thus help to make the world a better place in which to live. The most recent example of this attitude and method is the Church campaign which issued in the writing of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America. This intensive, political method of changing the social mores at vital points has not met with the success anticipated by the proponents, to which fact the Twentieth Amendment is ample testimony. The logical development of this type of social reconstruction is in the promotion of some sort of final revolution (Marxian or otherwise) which will inaugurate the reign of righteousness on earth.

Or, finally, the minister may adopt the educational attitude towards the problem. He may at once accept and criticize, tolerate and amend diverse elements in the total situation. He will welcome "the gross world of human appetites as the squalid scaffolding from amid which the life of the spirit must arise, and insist that this also is the material of the kingdom of God. (This attitude) finds its most sublime expression in the words of Piccardi: 'Paradise is everywhere, though the grace of the highest good is not shed everywhere in the same degree'" (\*). This is the attitude which commends itself to our consideration.

The recognized interpreters of the Christian gospel have not been, and are not now in agreement with respect to the scope of its meaning and application. Troeltsch,

(\*) Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism, p.17.

for example, could not bring himself to accept the social implications of the gospel. He could find in the teachings of Jesus and in early Christianity no social program and no direct social teaching. He did admit that a revolutionary element was hidden in the words of Jesus, but with no revolutionary intention. But, as McCown points out in his "The Genesis of the Social Gospel", Troeltsch reinforces the "lines of the pietistic and mystical interpreters of Jesus. The fundamentalistic evangelists who insist that the Christian pulpit should proclaim only the simple gospel of individual salvation without reference to the social and economic problems and all the capitalistic company who resent any application of Jesus' words to the maladjustments and injustices of acquisitive society, have a right to appeal to authority of the highest rank for their rejection of a social gospel....(For the emphasis of Jesus) is always first upon the inner life. He laid down no 'Law of the kingdom', he proposed no social program. But are there no social principles, no fundamental ethical and spiritual postulates in his thinking which affect group life and which he intended should transform it? And are not these principles and postulates primary and essential in the same degree as his emphasis on the inwardness of religion?" (\*).

Harnack, however, finds ample and significant emphasis on the social implications of Christianity in the teachings of the New Testament. In his "What Is Christi-

(\* ) *ibid.*, p.29. Cf. Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Church*, V.I, pp.51-54.

ianity?" he sets forth what he regards as the three essential principles of the Gospel of Jesus. There is the conviction that the Christians possess life eternal, and thus can afford to be indifferent to the temporal changes and chances of life on earth. There is the two-fold mental attitude suggested by Jesus' oft-repeated exhortation, "Fear not", and the Johannine dictum, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world". A third essential is the socially active tendency expressed in Jesus' words, "Love thy neighbor as thyself".(\*) A Special Committee of the Department of Research and Education of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America vigorously endorsed this social concern of the Gospel on the grounds that 1) Christianity is committed to the principle that human life is of incalculable worth and that personality outweighs all other values, and 2) that because of the social quality of Christianity itself, the element of fellowship, Christianity is a religion of brotherhood.(\*\*).

Some will object that, although Christianity is truly a religion of brotherhood, it is a brotherhood of those who accept that way of life. In the narrow sense this is true. There is, however, a wider sense and meaning of such brotherhood, a sense in which the Christian religion increases in ethical effectiveness, namely, when it enlarges the circle of the fellowship and increases the basis of justice in the social order. An ethical religion

(\*) Cf. John 3:16; Luke 12:32; I John 2:15;  
Matthew 22:39.

(\*\*) F666A, Our Economic Life, Introduction, ix-x.



opens the way for an attack upon the evils that infest life. It is the ethical content of the religion of Jesus that comprises its challenging characteristic. The history of the Christian religion attests the ethical vitality of the Founder's faith in God and in man. Jesus was not a mere teacher of ethics; he enunciated and demonstrated principles rather than precepts. The prophetic ancestry of the religion of Jesus is clear,--the prophets insisted upon the conjunction of ethical religion and social righteousness, as, for example, Amos and Isaiah.

The coalescence of ethics and righteousness forms a great moral resource for religion. This religious emphasis upon the wide application of the Great Law of Love is a virtue and strength of the highest order. A rational ethic aims at justice; a religious ethic goes beyond that and makes love the ideal. A rational ethic seeks to bring the needs of others into equal consideration with those of the self. The religious ethic, and more particularly the Christian ethic, insists that the needs of the neighbor shall be met without a careful computation of the relative personal needs. It is therefore ethically purer and grander than the justice which is prompted by reason; yet this may not necessarily mean that the application of the religious principle of love will at all times be socially more valuable than the rational principle of justice. "In part the religious ideal of love is fed and supported by viewing the soul of the fellowmen from the absolute and transcendent perspective. Your neighbor is a son of God, and God may be

served by serving him. 'What ye have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done unto me,' said Jesus". (\*).

In essaying the delimitation of the task of the minister in the realm of securing a larger measure of social justice, it must first of all be noted that the religious prophet is very likely to be a rebel against the spiritually unwholesome presuppositions of the status quo. The appearance of the rebel in religion, as, for instance, Jeremiah, Amos, Luther, Rauschenbusch, to mention only a few of the greater ones, and even Jesus, is ample refutation of that school of thought which regards religion as only a sanction for the established social conventions. Out of the heart of religion repeatedly springs the rebel who smashes the conventional idols around him, and going down with their fall he clears the way for spiritual pioneering. Out of the vital soul of religion there springs the flaming spirit who rebels against entrenched wrong, who rebels even unto death, but in whose rebellion there is the tang of life for men's souls. A counsel of prudence and caution, such an one may heed, but to the world's great loss. There is this that we may learn, that "every pioneer of a new idea must needs be a rebel, or else that glowing thought must die in the hour of its birth". (\*\*). But in our modern rebellion against the abuses of a social order we must not be unmindful of the constructive contributions which capitalism has made to the world. In other words, the minister must not only be a rebel against the social wrongs of the day; he must

(\*) Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p.58.

(\*\*) Gordon, The Rebel Prophet, p.123.

be a conservator of the good as well.

One question, therefore, which forces itself upon us is, How can we seek the elimination of the social injustices through methods that offer some fair assurance of abolishing what is evil and at the same time of conserving what is worthwhile, and without the risk of establishing new abuses and injustices in the place of those removed? From the viewpoint of the Marxian there is nothing good in modern capitalism which deserves preservation, and he waxes quite romantic regarding his projected substitute. The thoughtful Christian minister, however, cannot afford thus to be romantic about the effects which may occur to human beings made in the image of God, by way of a transformation or a substitution of an economic system. He is loathe hastily to consign capitalism en toto to the limbo of forgotten and worthless things. He is reminded that in a very stimulating chapter on "Rethinking What We Have Accepted" one of our constructive modern thinkers has recounted many of the achievements under capitalism which are most worthy to be conserved for future human use. Some of the factors on the credit side of the ledger are: 1) Technological expertness in handling the problems of life situations by means of arduous observation, experimentation, and rigorous verification. 2) The organizing of power has taught us to think in larger units and areas, and hence increasingly less provincial of mind. 3) The profit economy has taught large aggregations of people how, through mutual accommodation, to live together peaceably. 4) Advertising has made us health conscious. 5) Larger educational preparation

has contributed to the prolongation of youth. 6) It has bred in us the idea of welcoming the new, at least in material things, even if we still retain a generous degree of senseless social timidity. 7) A greater ~~x~~cultural enrichment has been made possible. Through the media of books, films and radios, and perhaps we soon shall have television available to the public, the profit economy has made possible a result far finer than its purpose. With a great deal of truth, tinged with humor, this author adds: "When the profit economy stands at the gate of Heaven, begging for entrance into Paradise, this at least will have to be said in its favor: that, despite the vulgarization which it effected in its mercenary stimulation of many of our lower impulses, it nevertheless made possible for millions of us access to the triumphs of man's spirit, and in so doing raised the level of our appreciations".(\*) The outspoken appreciation of what is worthwhile is certainly as imperative for us as the condemnation of that which is debasing and worthless and harmful to life.

The minister can go beyond merely conserving what is good in capitalism. He can seek to encourage through all the means at his command the substitution of some worthy, socially constructive motives in the place of the unworthy features of the profit-motivated system. A number of socially-minded, high-principled writers have sought to suggest to society in general what some of these substitutions might be. Noteworthy among these authors

(\*) Overstreet, *We Move in New Directions*, Chapter V, and p.87.

are Sidney and Beatrice Webb in "The Decay of Capitalist Civilization," and Harry F. Ward in his "In Place of Profit". It is worthy of noting here that there are whole professions which have repudiated the profit motive, namely, teaching, social service, medicine, nursing; and in this movement the Christian ministry has long been in the vanguard. We might substitute the motive of fellowship and sharing for pecuniary self-interest, and public service for the craving after riches. Economic and industrial organizers might be persuaded to make as modest claims for a compensation of livelihood as teachers and scientists. For the "Court of Profit" we might substitute the twin courts of "Efficiency Audit" and "Professional Honor". The attainment of such substitutions will be no easy task, but tremendously worthy of the best efforts to that end. The Christian minister can ratify with clear conscience what the Webbs have so finely stated: "The state of mind that is produced by fellowship and the pursuit of knowledge, the society in which fellowship is the dominant motive, and scientific method the recognized way, is,- whether or not it is materially better provided,- infinitely preferable to that produced by the economic war of man against man, and the social rancors, national and international, which are the outcome of such warfare".(\*)

Another problem that the minister must face in the world of today relates to the content and motivation of Christian citizenship. In the beginning of the Christian era the Gospel writer reports that a nation refused the

(\*) *ibid.*, p.231.

call of Jesus; this refusal inspired one of the greatest laments of all history.(\*). The tragedy of that refusal by the generation of Jesus' own day is, that instead of accepting the challenge to become the ambassador of the kingdom of God to the world, the Jewish nation chose rather to cling to its material hopes and its wild dreams of an earthly empire. Essentially the same call comes to us today, both as individuals and as nations. The choice is, whether the nation is to live to itself or to give itself to the purposes of the kingdom of God, whether to acknowledge that its life is held as a trust for the God in whom all the families of the world are one. The choice confronts us today most insistently whether we shall erect the State as the supreme arbiter in human affairs, or whether we are to acknowledge God alone as that Supreme Ruler.

One would like to share the conviction of Edward Shillito, expressed in his "Nationalism: Man's Other Religion", that two ages of world development lie behind us, namely, those of Augustine and of Machiavelli. In the Middle Ages the "City of God" was the controlling thought; the Church was supreme; and the civilization was one built by the love of God in contempt of self. In more modern times the controlling thought has been "The Prince", who ruled the city of earth; the State is supreme; and the civilization has been one built by the love of self in contempt of God. This is assuredly an oversimplification of the facts of history; but it does bring into clear focus a much needed recognition of the differ-

(\* ) John 1:11; Matthew 23:37.

ence between two types of citizenship. "The political theory of the medieval world contemplated Christendom as a whole. The political theory of the last four centuries contemplated each country as consecrated to a tribal god. To that extent the political religion of the Middle Ages was Christian, that of modern times pagan in character".(\*)  
With these general observations and conclusions we are in accord. One who has come deeply to appreciate the irenic spirit, the prophetic insight and the thorough scholarship of Mr. Shillito will not lightly raise any question regarding his affirmations. Today, however, one cannot but believe that this eminent man shares the conviction that the contemporary developments of the relations of Church and State indicate that the Age of Machiavelli has not yet reached its culmination. Italy, Germany, and our own country through its Supreme Court, supply abundant testimony respecting the increasing claims of the State over every other claim on human life. What will issue from this relationship? Such a citizenship does not unite, but rather divides men. It leads to conflict, either with economic weapons or with military ones. Truly the shadow of Machiavelli rests darkly upon men today.

Now nationalism, however spurious a brand of true patriotism it may be, does have this commendable feature, that it calls forth that within a man which prompts him to give his service or his life in defense of something greater than himself. I here record a confession, which,

(\*) *ibid.*, p.82.

once having made, I found that many others are timid about making a similar confession. When I perused Stall-  
ing's book of Photographs of the First World War, my  
initial reaction was a feeling of revolt against the  
senselessness that brought about such devastation of  
nature and human life. Presently, however, I felt welling  
up within my soul a bit of envy,- "Would I have had the  
physical and moral courage to go through what so many men  
endured in that conflict?" But this incipient envy is  
washed out as with a flood when one reads such realistic  
and revealing books as Erich Maria Remarque's "All Quiet  
on the Western Front", or Richard Aldington's "Roads to  
Glory". When the hearts of men who have suffered the loss  
of all that men hold dear in the futility of modern war-  
fare speak as the heart speaks in these books, one cannot  
refrain from bowing the head and breathing a prayer to  
Almighty God for strength to fight the greater fight, to  
rid the world of the spirit of hatred and militarism, and  
to put in its place a vigorous, manly, world-Christian  
citizenship. Long, too long has the world been ruled by  
fear, and for too long have the nations of the world  
erected as their first duty to make themselves feared by  
all others. It is for us Christians to preach boldly the  
doctrine of love. For the first duty of a nation is not  
to make itself feared, but to make itself loved.(\*).

The Christian minister and the Christian Church  
have a heavy responsibility in this area of human life,  
namely, the duty of helping to educate the people, and  
especially the new generation, in the larger meanings of

(\*) Jefferson, Christianizing a Nation, p.50.



Christian citizenship. There can be and there must be an end to the selfish nationalisms which think only in terms of antitheses. The youth of a nation, if it be given the right proportion of values in education will not think it necessary to hate or to despise the peoples of other lands in order to show its loyalty to its own country. The key to the future may be in the satchel of the school-boy, but the key to the satchel is primarily in the hand of the minister and in the potential control of the Christian Church. Youth is entitled to know all the relevant facts, all the memories,- political, economic, social, racial, educational, religious, spiritual. "It is not a favor demanded of historians when the claim is made that these memories shall not be omitted. It is unscientific to ignore them. This at least the Church of Christ can demand of the nation, that in the handing down of its traditions it shall not forget the spiritual treasures of the past....Education is the initiation of the new heir,- the new generation; it cannot be complete if the heir is told the economic, social, political and literary memories, and is not permitted to know how his fathers had walked with God and drawn from Him the wisdom to know the way, and power to tread it unto the end". To achieve this the minister and Christian Church must perform their duty beyond that of the educational task. They must stoutly and without fear affirm their deep interest in the welfare of the souls of men; must refuse to be chaplain to the modern State; and everywhere must raise up leaders who will publicly, thoughtfully and fearlessly

apply the test of Christian principles to the doctrines and deeds of parliament and market-place. Thus everywhere and always shall the life and witness of the Christian faith be manifested.(\*).

The world and society move onward. From the strictly scientific point of view it is essentially immaterial whether such change records progress or whether it simply means that life has entered a sort of mundane merry-go-round. But from the viewpoint of the Christian minister the problem is vital. In other words, the minister must beware of calling all change progress. Many of the modern social movements seem to proceed on the assumption that man can be saved by changes in the environment. A man of religion and insight into human nature cannot accept such superficial judgment, nor receive acceptably the declaration of the principle that some manipulation of circumstances will effect salvation of man and of society. With Robert Browning we are in full and hearty agreement: "It takes a soul to move a body". Social movements concern themselves largely with the quantity of the changes; religion must be concerned with the quality of the life within the movement. Christianity has a vital interest in progress, for lack of progress is the second worst calamity that could befall; the worst calamity is retrogression. Lack of progress, stagnation, is a deadly enemy of the Christian faith in the world. For the Christian religion is not a creed nor an organization; it is a "life" and a "Way".(\*\*). And because Christianity is fellowship with the living God, it is

(\*) *ibid.*, pp.126-131. (\*\*) John 20:31; Acts 9:2.

progressive. This progressiveness of the Christian faith is not simply an appropriated correspondence with a progressive era; it arises out of the inherent vitality of that faith. Christianity is religion of the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus Christ; and that Spirit, both within and without the limits of the organized Church, is forever leading men into wider spheres of thought and action. By this same token it behooves the Christian minister to insist that in having social progress we shall have purposeful progress. "I am come that you might have life, and have it more abundantly", is one of those dynamic sentences by means of which the Founder of our faith stated the purposefulness of his life.(\*). In order to be esteemed worthy to be called his followers it behooves us to have a similar purposefulness in our life and work.

In this area of our task it will be well for us to take kindly and appreciatively the seasoned counsel of one who has been a tireless pioneer in seeking to apply the religion of Jesus Christ to the social needs of the day. Likening social progress to a vine, he affirms that social movements are customarily rated on the basis of the trellis on which the vine grows; but that religion is concerned primarily with the quality of the vine. Hence in its relations with social progress, the ministry of the Christian Church must preserve certain fundamental emphases that are characteristic of its genius. First, it must stress the possibility and the necessity of the inward transformation of the lives of men. Our most

(\* ) John 10:10. Cf. Mt.5:17; Lk.19:10; Jn.12:47.

important concern is with the world within us. The primary question is whether human nature is thus transformed, so that men are turned around, loving what they once hated, and hating what they once loved. The spiritual transformation sought is infinitely various because it is so infinitely vital. "Upon this master fact that men can be inwardly transformed Christ laid his hand and put it at the very center of his gospel. All through the New Testament there is a throb of joy, which, traced back, brings one to the assurance that no man need stay the way he is....Throbbing through the whole book (is) the good news of an illuminated, liberating, transforming experience that can make men new". In the second place, Christianity has a social message which, for the sake of its very life, it must deliver to the world. Religious ideals inevitably find their way to social application. How high and ennobling must those religious ideals be kept in order that the resulting social product may be a worthy expression of the Christian hope! And those New Testament ideals are high and ennobling. Christianity took the old emotional idea, "I am as good as you are", and transformed it into the noble idea, "You are as good as I am". Upon this rests the best hopes of the world. Old caste systems and chattel slavery have gone down before this ideal. It has wrecked many old aristocracies. It made equal suffrage a fact. Now it is rocking the foundations of old racial and international and economic ideas. "The redemption of personality is the great aim of the Christian gospel; and, therefore, to inspire the

inner lives of men and to lift outward burdens which impede their spiritual growth are both alike Christian service to bring in the Kingdom".(\*)

The minister does well to be a conservator of the good amid the changing human scene, to help develop noble Christian ideals of citizenship, and to urge and lead onward in purposeful social progress. But he needs more than these. In all, through all, and beyond all else, he needs to have a conception of God that will be equal to, nay, greater than the demands of any human need.

We cannot find this conception in the "bitch-goddess Success". In fact it is a signal advantage to our moral good as a people that we have discovered, or have had discovered to us, the clay feet of this idol. Or was it that a great stone hewn out of the mountain without hands-- the Depression-- smote the idol and revealed to us the idol's shoddy and ephemeral existence?

Nor can we find such in Science, termed by one writer as the False Messiah. At least one great people of the world-- the Russians-- might be said to worship the machine which science has set up. They look to the machine to manufacture the comforts and luxuries of life, leisure and happiness. What will happen to this people, and indeed to the world, when this machine gets going at full speed and power? With home markets full, they in turn will have to look for markets abroad-- and then, What? Behold what a terrible Frankenstein monster this Russian machine can become! Yet in a world where competition and profit-making are the accepted order, what else

(\*) Fosdick, Christianity and Progress, pp.96-125.

can we expect other than the logical results of economic imperialism in the days to come?

We need human welfare and happiness; we need economic goods. But far greater is our need for dependence upon, and proclamation of, an ethical God. The God whom the ethical prophets of Israel and Jesus of Nazareth revealed is such a God. The God they revealed is a God of justice and love. The secret of the power of the prophets and Jesus was their vigorous, robust faith in a moral God. The prophets, we readily admit, spoke of judgment and of love. A popular sentimentality attaches to the name of Jesus only the espousal of love. Jesus had much to say about the love of God; love was central in his life and teaching. But he likewise spoke strong words about the judgment. In the midst of the Sermon on the Mount occur these startling words of judgment: "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses". "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord....And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity". The Sermon closes with doom pronounced upon the house built on the sand.(\*). And the "day of judgment" is repeatedly mentioned, either directly or by inference, in many other of Jesus' teachings(\*\*).

To a large extent we have become enslaved to the philosophy of evolutionary change. We have applied the theory of evolution to every ramification of our world life. We had almost persuaded ourselves that God works

(\*) Matthew 6:15; 7:22-23; 7:27.

(\*\*) Cf. esp., Matthew 11:21-25; 12:36-37; 13:30; 25:31-46; Mark 9:42-48; Luke 16:23-26.

only through evolutionary processes. Then came the Russian Revolution (or rather series of revolutions) in the midst of the World War and in the dark days that followed that conflict. Before our very eyes a great people of some one hundred sixty millions of persons overthrew the long-established political-economic-religious system, and established a radically different system in its stead. The fundamentalistic minded and the unthinking have sought to call down the judgment of God upon the new system. They are forgetful of the historic fact that the judgment of God has already been visited upon the former grossly unjust order. For of that event we can say, as G. A. Smith has said so forcefully of the judgment upon Israel that Amos prophesied: "If conscience and history (to the prophets these were both witnesses of God) thus combine to announce the early doom of a civilization, neither the religion that may have helped to build it, nor any remanent virtue in it, nor its ancient value to God, can avail to save. We are tempted to judge that the long and costly development of ages is cruelly thrown away by the convulsion and collapse of an empire; it feels impious to think that the patience, the providence, the millenial discipline of the Almighty are to be in a moment abandoned to some rude and savage force. But we are wrong. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities'. (Amos 3:2). Nothing is too costly for justice. And God finds some other way of conserving the real results of the past".(\*) (The underscoring is mine).

(\*) Smith, Book of the Twelve Prophets, pp.152-153.

Lest we might be tempted to feel overrighteous, and to believe that such a judgment could not possibly be visited upon us, it will be well for us to recall what happened in the world in those fateful years of 1914-1919. It will further be well for us to ponder carefully the significance of the situation portrayed by G. A. Smith in his book above quoted, published in 1900. When we consider these words in the light of the contemporary situation, we will hardly be so positive that the judgment of God will not likewise be visited upon us for our iniquities. Smith wrote: "It will scarcely be denied that our civilization tolerates, and in part lives by, the existence of vices which, as we all admit, ruined the ancient empires. Are the political possibilities of overthrow also present? That there exist among us means of new historic convulsions is a thing hard for us to admit. But the signs cannot be hid. When we see the jealousies of the Christian peoples, and their enormous preparations for battle; the arsenals of Europe which a few sparks may blow up; the millions of soldiers one man's word may mobilize; when we imagine the opportunities which a general war would furnish to the discontented masses of the European proletariat,-- we must surely acknowledge the existence of forces capable of inflicting calamities, so severe as to affect, not merely this nationality or that type of culture, but the very vigor and progress of civilization herself; and all this without our looking beyond Christendom, or taking into account the rise of the yellow races to a consciousness of their approach to



equality with ourselves. If, then, in the eyes of the Divine Justice Christendom merits judgment,-- if life continues to be left so hard to the poor; if innocence be still an impossibility for so much of the childhood of the Christian nations; if with so many of the leaders of civilization prurience be lifted to the level of an art, and licentiousness followed as a cult; if we continue to pour the evils of our civilization upon the barbarian, and the 'vices of the young nobles', to paraphrase Juvenal, 'are aped in' Hindustan,-- then let us know that the means of a judgment more awful than any which has yet scourged a delinquent civilization are extant and actual among us. And if one should reply, that our Christianity makes all the difference, that God cannot undo the development of nineteen centuries, or cannot overthrow the peoples of his Son,-- let us remember that God does justice at whatever cost; that as he did not spare Israel at the hands of Assyria, so he did not spare Christianity in the East when the barbarians of the desert found her careless and corrupt. 'You only have I known of all the peoples of the ground; therefore will I visit upon you all your iniquities'"(\*).

God, however, must be more than One who is identified with Justice, in order to be adequate to meet the needs of the people to whom the minister speaks and whom he endeavors to lead. God means more than justice, just as life means more than justice, That "plus" which life needs, religion supplies from its fountain-head, God. "God..... just and right is he", might well and tersely express the

(\* )ibid., pp.153-155.

essence of the prophetic teaching concerning God.(\*). But in the Christian view there is needed the something more, the "plus". "God is love", might well summarize the New Testament view of God(\*\*). But there is justice in the New Testament; and there is love in the Old Testament: it requires the testimony of the entire Bible to give a complete, balanced view of God that is most efficacious for meeting the problems of social justice.

The love of God was no stranger to the prophetic souls of Israel. The love of God was known among a people who had the experience of the Deliverance from Egyptian bondage, the Exodus, the provisions of the Wilderness, and their settlement in the Promised Land. But the love of God had not yet had a great voice to declare it unto the people until the coming of Hosea. To this man belongs the honor of being the first to see clearly the foundation place of love in religion. He is the one who first gave vocal expression to love as the chief element in the character of God, and indeed in the conduct of man. From him men dramatically learned that love is basic in all true religion. Jesus made love the supreme expression and soul of true religion. But Hosea is the man who gave the first fulsome and clear-cut expression to this mighty truth. The Father love of God is most beautifully expressed in Psalm 103. Yet because of the pathos of his life, the profound emotion that stirs through his book, and the deep hunger of love that was back of the spoken and written word, Hosea is the most powerful figure of the Old Testament in his proclamation of the great love

(\*) Deuteronomy 32:4.      (\*\*) I John 4:8.

of God. To him it is the deep determining fact in religion. "Justice" was Amos' watchword; Hosea adds the other keynote of spiritual religion, "Love". Each is incomplete in itself; each needs the supplement of the other. God comes into control truly only when justice and love blend in union. "It is a great message which Amos brings: 'God is just and requires righteousness'. It is a deeper and richer message that comes from Hosea! 'God is loving and requires lovingkindness'.....Hosea is a great soul, one of God's own, who added to the strong word, 'Righteousness', so sternly and nobly proclaimed by the earlier prophet, the tender and winsome word, 'Love', which has become the very heart of true religion".(\*)

This high estimate of the important place which Hosea holds in the revealing of the greatness of the love of God is thoroughly justified. This does not detract from the radiance of Jesus Christ, who was "full of grace and truth".(\*\*). It does testify very eloquently to the so great love of God, so great and abundant, that He could not wait until the coming of his Son to give mankind a glorious revelation of his great love for man. Unto this testimony to the greatness that was Hosea's, G. A. Smith adds his commendatory word: Isaiah of Jerusalem was a greater statesman and a more powerful writer, but he had not Hosea's tenderness and insight into motive and character. Hosea's marvelous sympathy with the people and with God is sufficient to foreshadow every grief, every hope, every gospel, which make the Books of Jeremiah and the Great Prophet of the Exile exhaustless in their

(\*) Merrill, Prophets of the Dawn, pp.83, 91.

(\*\*) John 1:14.

spiritual value for mankind. The others explored the kingdom of God; it was Hosea who took it by storm. He is the first prophet of grace, Israel's earliest Evangelist; yet with as keen a sense of Law, and of the inevitableness of ethical discipline, as Amos himself.....Hosea's love steals across his whole land like the dew, provoking every separate scent and color, till all Galilee lies before us lustrous and fragrant as nowhere else outside the parables of Jesus. The book of Amos when it would praise God's works, looks to the stars. But the poetry of Hosea clings about his native soil like its trailing vines.... For the love of Hosea was as the love of that greater Galilean; however high, however lonely it soared, it was yet rooted in the common life below, and fed with the un-failing grace of a thousand lonely sources".(\*)).

Out of this prophetic movement, in the fulness of time, came the complete human expression of God in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us". Jesus spoke of God as "My Father", and taught his disciples to address God as "Our Father". In him we see justice tempered by love: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel", and "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand". We see in him love tempered by justice: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses". Jesus terms those who work for social harmony, which surely means a just and equitable arrangement of human relationships, the "children of God". One

(\*) Smith, Book of the Twelve Prophets, pp.230-233.

revealing thought suggested by this Beatitude is that Jesus regarded God as the Supreme Peacemaker; hence those who faithfully and wholeheartedly work for the peace and highest welfare of society are in the noblest sense of the word the "children of God". One can be a true child of God only to the extent to which he is endeavoring to establish harmonious relationships among men and the fullest measure possible of wellbeing in the social order. Is it not of the greatest significance socially, to mankind in general and to his followers in particular, that Jesus predicated the supreme test of love and loyalty to God and his cause upon complete, self-forgetful love and service to the fellowman, as he does in the dramatic picture of the judgment in Matthew 25:31-46? "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again".(\*)

"Repent!" This is the trumpet call of the prophets of Israel, of John the Baptist and of Jesus of Nazareth. And their modern representatives perhaps can best begin their message with the same trumpet call to repentance. Not that the world will favorably respond to that trumpet note; it will be more likely to resent such interference with its ease and complacency of soul. But rather that the world of today might be thoroughly awakened out of its lethargic slumber!

We can honor that great prophetic tradition which is traced through Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the prophet of the Exile, John the Baptist, Jesus..... down to us, not by a mere repetition of their messages, but by

(\*) John 1:14; Matthew 25:34; John 15:1; Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2; Mark 1:15; Mt.4:17; 6:14-15; 5:9; 7:2.

genuine sympathy with their spirit and by sincere application of their principles of moral religion to our contemporary problems and situations. This tradition holds that God is more interested in justice than in sacrifice, in honesty than in lavish festivals, in worthy deeds of love than in pretty words. In order to fulfil our commission it is necessary for us to issue to our generation a courageous call to repentance. We owe it to the welfare of future generations that to the pre-future generation, which is our own, we shall make possible the perception of the right way; and more, too, for we owe them the stimulation of our generation's seeking earnestly that right way. We shall achieve this end partly to the degree that we are able effectively to show that errors and falseness in our present order held as truth, are not the truth. Or, to state it more positively, we must seek to focus public attention on the essential ends to be gained. For the real ends of living and of religion are likely to be obscured or shoved aside by men or forces that are interested in some particular ends to be gained. For instance, the last War was acclaimed to vindicate democracy and to establish a new international order based on honest and friendly relations. Like a voice from the mists of a shadowy past, H. M. V. Temperley in the opening sentence of his five-volume History of the Peace Conference in Paris, declared: "The War was a conflict between the principles of freedom and of autocracy, between the principles of moral influence and of material force, of government by consent and of government by compulsion". Is there any

thinking, informed Christian, or pagan for that matter, who today accepts that dictum as truth? Any fair reading of the Senator Nye's Committee report of investigations of the munitions manufacturers' "racket" will quickly dispel any such illusion. And where indeed is the better international order? For today the nationalisms still generate insane rivalries, engender domination over others, and ignore the claims of a genuine national, not to mention international, wellbeing. Fasciam and Naziism are sufficient commentary on the degree to which at least European education equips the millions for living together in the real kind of world which the past fifty years have brought into being. The real object has been deliberately smothered under a smoke screen. The nationalist has vociferously declared his love for his country; what he really seeks is the satisfaction of certain emotions that have little or no relation to the genuine welfare and security of his country. His professed love for his country has misled the people into thinking that he loves his countrymen. Love for one's country has given rise to a Bismarck; love for one's countrymen has produced a prophet Jeremiah. Some day the people will discover the distinction. When the people shall find that again they have been tricked by pseudo-patriots, will they pay the Gargantuan cost involved in another "war to end war", or will they have previously revolted against the demagogues and have established a better world order founded more truly on the principles of social harmony?

We ministers have need for invective in our task. But we also have need of humor. Invective alone is too serious and melodramatic. Jesus used humor on many an occasion.(\*). In the Old Testament there is one unknown prophet whose book is somewhat of an enigma. In that interesting parable of, Jonah the author ridicules Jewish national narrowness. But we are apt to miss the profound meaning of this parable if we laugh too long at the antics of the great fish with a recalcitrant prophet in its interior. The message and love of God are not for nationalistic monopoly. His gifts are to be shared by all people. For his love is as great as the sea, and as urgent as human needs; nay, far greater than these.

Shall the Christian minister keep aloof from the struggle for social justice or plunge into the conflict in a sincere effort to establish an equitable and harmonious order of life? This is a question which the minister today is facing and to which some definite answer must be given. From within the Church there is a strong demand that the minister and Church take a decisive and open stand for "Building a Christian World"; so urgently do some elements within the Church feel that this is the course to pursue today that a widespread interdenominational Youth Program has been constructed around this central theme, and one of the more liberal Protestant denominations with a great Puritan tradition has set up a "Council for Social Action". Large numbers of people in the Church seriously raise the question whether such projects are the peculiar function of the minister and

(\*) Cf. Matthew 6:2,5,16; 23:24; Luke 6:39,41.



the Church. This opposition has served the wholesome purpose of compelling the ministry and the Church to submit such programs to more mature consideration; for we may well be open to the fallacy of assuming that the Church is the only social agency seeking to shape a better order of society, and that if the Church does not take up the task it will not be done at all. The fact remains that the Church, after all, is only one of the organizations and agencies which are constantly working to establish a more just and equitable social order. Social, economic, educational and political agencies and institutions are working towards the same desirable goal. The attainment of such an order involves the use of special knowledges and technical skills which are derived in these various areas of human relationships. The Christian minister is not trained to acquire and utilize these things. Of necessity, if ministers seek the technical achievement of a better social order they will embarrassingly reveal their limitations in this respect. This fact, together with that of the sharply divided opinion of the laymen of the Church, should deter the ministers from engaging in a fore-doomed social adventure.

It is, however, preeminently the task of the Christian minister to create a new spirit, a nobler spirit among men as individuals and as groups. One essential step toward the desired goal is the developing of a more worthy outlook upon life. We need to develop integrity and courage to combat the prevailing culture of dishonesty and the widespread mood of getting something for

nothing, to delve to the bases of controversial issues and to develop a personal life of unimpeachable virtue. As for the individual, we need to urge the integrity of being one's own best self, honesty at the job, the philosophy of "live and help live", admiration for integrity and beauty wherever found, and the appreciative awareness of other personalities and of God. For the group we must encourage the frequent fellowship with others, the glad compromise sufficient to maintain constructive relationships with others, the scientific outlook in maintaining and improving social relations, and the deep-seated sense of obligation to contribute to the welfare of the community and nation and world. It is only through the building up of concepts and loyalties such as these that we shall be able to produce a social order which more nearly approaches the realization of the kingdom of God. "Such a social order will be utterly at variance with the current culture of exploitation, conformity and hypocrisy. In it will be no place for the present gospel of competition and success. In it social forces will make for independent thought and honest personal expression rather than for blind acquiescence. The creative joy of living will take the place of repression and fear. Far from being regimented, life will be as varied as are the personalities of men".(\*) Out of such a process will emerge a culture that encourages and develops the more worthy qualities in men, and will bring appreciatively nearer a Christian social order.

(\*) Rugg, The Great Technology, p.229.

We need also to bring to our task, and to inspire other men to appreciate and appropriate, something like that which Amos took with him from his desert experiences. This preacher of righteousness carried with him "his clear desert atmosphere and his desert eyes. He saw the raw facts: the poverty, the cruel negligence of the rich, the injustice of the rulers, the immorality of the priests. The meaning of these things he questioned with as much persistence as he questioned every suspicious sound or sight on the pastures of Tekoa. He had no illusions: he knew a mirage when he saw one....He was one of those recruits from common life by whom religion and the state have at all times been reformed.....Freedom from dogmas and routine, as well as from the compromising interests of wealth, rank and party, renders them experts in life to a degree that almost no professional priest, statesman or journalist, however honest or sympathetic, can hope to rival. Into politics they bring facts, but into religion they bring vision".(\*). He pleaded for the men of his day to reconstruct their own society in the light of the great vision that ever beckoned him,- "Let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream". Katherine Lee Bates appeals to us in our own land to have a vision "That sees beyond the years". "Without vision a people perish", is as vitally true today as ever it might have been in ancient times(\*\*)

For our purpose we dare not allow "vision" to remain simply as a generalization. We must particularize

(\*) Smith, Book of the Twelve Prophets, pp.84-85.

(\*\*) Amos 5:24; Proverbs 29:18.

vision in order that the more clearly we might see the task before us. Sir Philip Gibbs has shown so admirably and effectively through the prism of his own clear discernment the light of vision of which the world stands in such dire need, that we shall let him speak for us. He makes this mighty appeal for men today with great vision of what the social order can be: "We want men with a glow in their hearts, to burn up the apathy which is creeping over life. We want men of ardor and enthusiasm and courage, willing, if need be, to die for some noble ideal, willing to risk ridicule, defeat, failure, for some splendid purpose. We want men not afraid to lose their jobs in the political arena, not timid before the mob, not flatterers of the mob mind. We want some touch of divine fire in our leaders. We want men who have faith in their own sense of truth, in the willingness of the crowd to follow the best instead of the worst, in the splendor of life's adventure, if it is done for humanity's sake and not merely for private fortune or public fame. We want men who will rally to the standard all the intelligence and goodwill which exists in the modern world, but scattered and disheartened".(\*) We wish that he might have included in his portrayal of the vision so needed today this additional line: "We need men with an unconquerable faith in God, men who are unafraid of anything that other men may do unto them, men with a faith in God that lifts them above the things of sense and time and fills them with the power of eternal values". Then the portrayal would

(\*) Gibbs, *The Way of Escape*, p.274.

have been complete. Sir Philip Gibbs might well have been addressing the members of a graduating class of a theological school, so appropriate and timely are his words in this day. Most clearly do they indicate the great task of inspiring leaders to make efficacious for humanity the vision of constructing a social order that will hold for all men the maximum of justice, truth, and love. Before we can expect to achieve and appreciate a nobler order of social relationships the eyes of the souls of men must be lifted to the high vision.

Be strong and of a good courage;  
be not afraid, neither be thou dis-  
mayed: for the Lord thy God is with  
thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua 2:9.

All authority hath been given unto  
me in heaven and on earth. ..and lo,  
I am with you always, even unto the  
end of the world.

Matthew 28:18, 20.

## VII

## RESOURCES OF POWER

The Christian minister who would fulfil his rightful function in the quest for social justice will have great need to know where to locate and how to use the available resources of power to discharge that obligation. He will be certain to find his task one of difficulty and danger. He will be confronted with such measure of disappointment, doubt and opposition that he will ask many times, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (\*). Unless he has discovered ready access to the eternal springs of courage, wisdom and love, he shall presently be beaten in the struggle, and forced to take refuge in the shell of a "gospel" which he will find it expedient to preach to a generation that is not over-eager to hear the whole Gospel of Jesus Christ. There are such life-renewing springs; they are discoverable to him who earnestly seeks.

One such spring of power is in the deep personal conviction of the righteousness of the cause of social justice. The heavens we envision are not to be gained by a single bound, but slowly or rapidly we must build a ladder by which to rise from the lowly earth to the vaulted skies. Let us keep ever in mind that it is a psychological law that once a conviction is born in our minds, it has a way of working out to its conclusion with

(\*) 2 Corinthians 2:16.

a kind of moral inevitability. Revamping an old proverb, we can say that as a man thinketh in his heart, so he will become. This points to the necessity of having only those ideas, so far as we can humanly determine them, which are socially valid and constructive. For the most powerful agency in the world for the transformation of social life is a valid idea, forcefully expressed and clearly understood. The long tedious struggle to establish the acceptance of the idea of free public libraries is illustrative of this fact. But it also shows the finally triumphant quality of an idea of genuine social worth. The same might be written with regard to public education, art galleries, parks, hospitals and clinics. These, and many others, are now parts of an accepted order of life. We would be deeply impoverished in our civilization if from the corporate life these were taken.

Another source of power is found in the fellowship of kindred spirits of various organizations who likewise are seeking the higher levels of social wellbeing. There are the Committees on Social Relations in the several religious denominations who have dared to pioneer in the application of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to new areas and problems of our social order. There is the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America with its vigorously challenging statement of the "Social Creed of the Churches". And recently there was issued in book form a significant compilation of the official actions by which "The Churches Renounce War". Yet this<sup>is</sup> no more than



we have the right to expect of the Church which is supposed to represent Jesus Christ to the world today. Hence it is with a sense of freshness and new vigor that one peruses the fine symposium of the attitudes expressed by various Labor leaders in Jerome Davis' "Labor Speaks for Itself on Religion". In its pages beats the heart of the labor world. A few leaders are opposed to the Church because she has not, to their way of thinking, fulfilled her social duty in respect to the proclamation of the Gospel. The vast majority of these leaders, however, long for the more active participation of the Christian Church in the social struggle towards a better social order. The similarity of the desires of Labor and those of the Christian Church are strikingly parallel in the social areas. Some years ago by the great Labor leader, Samuel Gompers, the ideals of Labor were nobly expressed: "What does Labor want? It wants the earth and the fulness thereof. There is nothing too precious, there is nothing too lofty, too beautiful, too ennobling, to be within the scope and comprehension of Labor's aspirations and wants. We want more schoolhouses and less jails, more books and less arsenals, more learning and less vice, more constant work and less crime, more leisure and less greed, more justice and less revenge-- in fact, more of the opportunities to cultivate our better natures, to make manhood more noble, womanhood more beautiful, and children more happy and bright".(\*) . What a broad basis of common purposes and ideals for Labor and the Christian Church! The

(\*) *ibid.*, p.69.

Church first of all provided the inspiration; Labor has tried to define the ideal in terms of definite possible achievements. The Labor world, in brief, seeks the practical application of the principles of brotherhood, service, sacrifice and justice, which have their first sanction in the Christian religion. Others bear similar testimony to the spiritual alliance of the Church with the Labor movement: "I cannot conceive of a Labor Movement without spiritual foundations and initiative".

"'Suffer little children to come unto me', might well be the guidon of the labor movement to abolish child labor".

"The Churches are the greatest and most powerful moral and spiritual schools that the world has known". "The Christian Church is the insistent Conscience of Society".

(\*). Thus does Labor reach out its hands asking for more active cooperation of the Churches founded by the Carpenter of Nazareth with whom they feel a deep kinship of spirit in the quest for social justice.

Another resource of power for the minister is the contagious faith of a Sylvester Horne that a "race of courageous prophets of justice" will arise who will fulfil for justice in this day a task comparable to that accomplished in an earlier day by a race of "prophets of freedom". Too often religion has been interpreted as conformity with certain practices and creeds. Horne conceived religion as a reaching out into the future, a pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of vital faith. His was such a faith that ventured con-

(\*) *ibid.*, pp.72, 86, 149, 150.

fidently out into the unknown with God, that "launched out into the deep" places of experience, and that served as a constant source of inspiring a like faith in those whose lives he touched. He was one who urged others with him to

"Haul out; cast off; shake out every sail;

Steer for the deep waters only:

For we are bound where mariner hath not yet

dared to go,

And we will risk the ship, ourselves and all.

O daring joy-- but safe!

Are they not all the seas of God?

O farther, farther, farther sail!"

And sail farther he did. With such triumphant faith in God did he sail that the exuberant spirit of the man flowed to the full in his "The Romance of Preaching", an inspired document which has proved to be a mighty source of strength to others since his day.

The social passion of the ethical prophets of the Hebrews also is a never-failing source of inspiration and courage for the minister in the quest for the highest social good. The words and deeds of these men of God have always retained their power to inspire; they will always stir the minds and inspire the hearts of all true lovers of righteousness. The spiritual insight of these men still points the way to social attainment and moral achievement for us who would seek the same great and high ends of life. They were men who believed mightily in the changeability of human nature. "Return unto God", was the

burden of much of their message; such a return from evil to the pursuit of righteousness meant inevitable change of human nature. With the fact and figure of Jesus standing between us and them, how much more, declares Harry E. Fosdick in his "Christianity and Progress", cannot the true Christian "accept the dictum: 'You cannot do that; human nature is against it'....Human nature is a most changeable thing....It can be brutalized beneath the brutes; it can rise into companionship with angels....Men can be transformed. That is a basic fact, and it is one of the central emphases of the Christian Gospel. Of all days in which the emphasis should be remembered, the chiefest in the day when men are thinking about social reformation". (\*) . Those ethical prophets never fully attained the realization of their aims, for they sought no mean thing. At the end of their lives there was still for them the Challenge of the Unattained. Yet they are the symbols and promise of the day that is to be. Just as G. A. Smith pays this high tribute to Amos: "(H<sub>e</sub>) towers in the distance, like an earth-born Atlas...such a man in such a historical position, standing on the confines of light and darkness, like day on the misty mountain-tops"(\*),-- so might we speak of the others of those ethical prophets of Israel. Theirs was the task of the "Prophets of the Dawn"; ours is the task of the prophets of this day. They and their sons and their sons' sons have pioneered in various areas of social justice,- religion, government, education, human freedom, economic

(\*) Smith, Book of the Twelve Prophets, p.60.

conquest, sex freedom, universal suffrage, worldwide democracy. Ours is the challenge of transforming the traditional motto, "Live and let live", into that of the thoroughgoing Christian cooperation signalized by "Live and help live".

Finally, there is a mighty inexhaustible resource of power in that "spring of water, welling up into everlasting life". (\*). Jesus called men to follow him. As they followed him they discovered that he gave them an utterly new and grander vision of life. All who were cognizant of this new vision of the kingdom of God, truly a social one, found that the teachings of their Master were understandable in the light of a new social order based on his noble conception of justice and warmed by his glowing spirit of love. Edwin Markham discerned the same vitalizing vision when he declared: "The Sermon on the Mount is not a mere rhapsody. Instead of this it is the first swift outline of the Constitution of the New Social Order, the ideal that Christ carried in his heart for the social salvation of the race. This new order was to be the working form for God on earth. It was to serve as a shelter over the race, an organic form for a social providence over the world....In this comrade order, and only in this order, is it possible to rescue the race from its social chaos. In this order, and only in this order, can they find an adequate expression of the suppressed generosities of their hearts, for the sleeping heroism of their souls". (\*\*).

(\*) John 4:14.

(\*\*) Stidger, The Pew Preaches, pp.70-71.

Jesus not only called men to follow him; he called them to majestic service. "Come after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men"; and Jesus confirmed this call with a still larger promise,- "Greater things than these shall ye do".(\*). Still today he calls us: "Follow me". Still today we pray, as he taught the disciples, "Thy kingdom come". Still we seek for and yearn for the consummation of that Divine Event, the Coming of His Kingdom. In this day, as in the days when he was in the flesh, the most effective human agencies in the task of redeeming men and society will be those who have cast away the limited visions for the greater ones which Jesus Christ offers unto men. One of these greater dreams is that social justice can be achieved within history. Such a dream creates within the soul a "sublime madness" for the realization of the vision. Only such enthusiastic zeal dares to press the contest against strong and powerfully entrenched anti-social interests and the accompanying spiritual wickedness in high places. Jesus challenges men to rise up and follow him in the social redemption of the human race. How else dare we answer him than to respond with gladness,- "Lead on, Master; we follow". In the confidence and glory of that fellowship we must serve our generation.

(\*). Mark 1:17; John 14:12.

Keep sound wisdom and discretion.

Then shalt thou walk in thy way

securely,

And thy foot shall not stumble.

Proverbs 3:21, 23.

Behold, I send you forth as sheep  
in the midst of wolves: be ye there-  
fore wise as serpents, and guileless  
as doves. Beware.....

Matthew 10:16-17.

## VIII

## PERILS IN THE QUEST

The Christian minister who enters upon the quest for social justice will meet with many perils and will be confronted with diverse dangers. This is true of any quest worthy of the spirit of man made in the image of the Divine. The sands of the desert always lie between us and the land of our heart's desire. And these sands of the desert might well symbolize for us the age-old significance of loneliness and heat and cold and thirst and many other dangers from man and beast. Hardship and privation and peril are realistic factors of the desert areas; they are as native to the desert as dryness and heat and cold. That which men have found to be true of the relationship of heart's desire and the desert sands, is also an experienced truth regarding the quest for social justice. There are perils peculiar to this realm of the minister's responsibility to society, perils of whose ever-present actual or potential threat we must guard against in our pursuit of the high ends of social justice.

In these days many men have set forth definite and technical outlines for the reconstruction of society and the social and economic order. Many of these are by men of high repute in the world; many of these schemes are built upon fundamental principles that are thoroughly Christian in character. Herein lies one of the serious



perils confronting the Christian minister. In his eagerness and zeal for the establishing of a social order that more justly merits the name of "Christian", he treads on dangerous ground when he wholeheartedly or even provisionally gives his approval to some one scheme or plan which may sincerely commend itself to him as the embodiment of the contemporary humanly practical maxima of the Christian principles of life. In other words, the minister is constantly in danger of becoming a partisan, a special pleader for some particular social scheme or economic policy. The minister owes it to himself, to his profession and calling, and to the Church to keep himself unspotted from any such blemish. He can ethically and successfully defend himself and his pulpit against attempts at misuse by vested rights of the status quo by rigorously and consistently withholding himself and his utterances from the espousal of some particular social or economic propaganda. This is not a new danger in the realm of social ethics. William P. Merrill forcefully declared that the "fatal defect of Professor Rauschenbusch's great book on 'Christianity and the Social Order' was the plea at its conclusion that the Church definitely line up with the Labor Union Movement. The preacher must jealously guard himself against the slightest rightful suspicion of partisanship".(\*) Truly such a course calls for all the grace that a man has, or that can be made available for him. It is so easy to yield to the importunity to become a partisan, so difficult to hold a straight course towards ultimate truth. Running the gauntlet between the radicals

(\*) Merrill, Freedom of the Preacher, p.103.

and the reactionaries means that one must expect to receive blows from both sides. It is an heroic course to pursue; but to veer to one side or the other is to be less than just and fair, and involves the exchanging the ultimate goal of social justice for some contemporary expression of that high end.

Arising out of the determination to hold such a straight course is another peril for those who seek the absolute Christian goal in terms of social justice. Only those who believe in the possibility of a purer and fairer society than will ever be historically realized will dare to move against the stubborn inertia of any present social order. Such an illusion is dangerous because it tends to produce fanaticism; on the other hand, to abandon that illusion is perilous because such a course inclines to establish more firmly the social inertia. To dream of some ideal goal and at the same time to seek not its achievement, is to be guilty of sentimentality and romanticism. One who nerves himself for heroic action by believing in the desirability and purity of his goal and in the possibility of achieving that goal within history, may likewise be somewhat sentimental and romantic,- but he is something more than this. He is more dangerous and more vital, for he is a fanatic. From the viewpoint of the ultimate good accruing to society, he might well run the danger of being termed a religious or idealistic fanatic. For, as Reinhold Niebuhr in his "Moral Man and Immoral Society" cautions us, "There is only one step from a rationally moderated idealism to

opportunism, and only another step from opportunism to dishonest capitulation to the status quo....There is no way of measuring the perils of fanaticism against the perils of opportunism; but it is rather obvious that society as a whole is more inclined to inertia than to foolish adventure, and is therefore in greater need of the absolutist than the sweet reasonableness of the rationalist".(\*). If one must choose between being an opportunist and an absolutist in the pursuit of the Christian social ideal, the course for the minister is that of the absolutist. The absolutist and the fanatic may be dangerous to the defense of the status quo; but he is very necessary in terms of possible progress towards the higher social good. Yet if he chooses this course he must nerve himself for the inevitable persecution that is visited upon the prophet in his own day. Even when he is defeated in his aspirations, he may have the compensation of the sense of a noble tragedy. But when society ventures for the attainment of the absolute there is risked the welfare of millions of individuals. "And, since coercion is the invariable instrument of (socio-political) policy, absolutism transmutes this instrument into unbearable tyrannies and cruelties. The fanaticism which in the individual may appear in the guise of a harmless or pathetic vagary, when expressed in political policy, shuts the gates of mercy on mankind".(\*\*).

His enthusiasm for the absolute may lead the minister into a danger of another kind. He may attempt to

(\*) *ibid.*, pp.222-223.

(\*\*) *ibid.*, p.199.

criticize a situation with which he is not thoroughly familiar. He may be tempted to estimate only in terms of disparagement the contemporary social scene, without proper regard for its place in the historical development of society's practical arrangements for life and work. Such "half-baked enthusiasts", warns Charles D. Williams, "half-informed and often misinformed as to that half of the subject with which they think themselves familiar, gifted with much zeal but possessed of little knowledge,-- such preachers of the social gospel work incalculable harm to the cause they have at heart, bring reproach on the social gospel itself and repel and disgust their intelligent hearers. They drive them either back to the traditional, conventional and outworn conceptions of religion or away from religion altogether" (\*). As a corrective for such ill-informed enthusiasm, the minister or prospective minister should take the most complete and thorough courses possible in sociology and economics. The preaching of the minister should be based on the broadest and most thorough knowledge possible of his subjects in all their aspects and ramifications. Such courses and reading, supplemented by participation in some of the community social enterprises, will assist in equipping him for the most effective preaching of the social gospel, for the most efficacious pursuit of the ideal of social justice. Such thorough preparation will save him from hasty and unwarranted "personalizations" of the responsibility for the wrongs that are characteristic of our present capitalistic civilization. And this

(\*) Williams, *The Christian Ministry and Social Problems*, p.122.

very reserve, fortified by accurate and ample knowledge of the problems of our social order, will render the more effective and weighty such condemnations of wrongs when in his well-considered judgment they are necessary prerequisites for the total social good.

In an excellent chapter on "The Perils of Prophecy", Francis J. McConnell discusses some of the dangers that beset prophetic utterance and leadership in all ages, with particular reference to the Hebrew and Christian faiths. One of the dangers to which he most emphatically directs our attention is, that the prophet is very likely to make himself not clearly understood. The prophet is under serious moral obligation to make himself clearly understood, if that be at all possible. "To be sure", he says, "the prophet ought not to be held responsible for supplying either the intelligence or the moral disposition to hearers which will enable them to understand prophetic messages, but he may be responsible if he misrepresents the truth. He may not be disturbed at the danger of being misunderstood personally, but he has an obligation to the truth itself". He goes on to show that in this respect the example of the Old Testament prophets is full of encouragement. "They dealt with themes whose discussion aroused the wrath of the most powerful interests of their day. There were no such organized groups of evil-doers then as now, but there were 'understandings' a-plenty. Greed of money and power was fully as intense then as now; popular prejudices and mass-inertia fully as real. Yet the words of the prophets which drove the enem-

ies of righteousness to fury leave little to be apologized for....They understate rather than overstate. When they make an accusation against a ruler or a people, they speak in accents of justice".(\*). This faculty of holding strictly to the truth proveable in concrete terms of their everyday life, is what makes these old prophets, such as Amos, Isaiah, Micah, such dependable guides to their modern brethren in the pursuit of the desired social righteousness.

Furthermore, the minister must beware of the sentimental danger of substituting energetic activity for genuine religion. This is what Isaiah spoke of in his scornful denunciation of the ritualistic practices in his day. "Cease to do evil. Learn to do well". At another time he described this same evil in terms of a people that "say in the pride and stoutness of heart, The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones: the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars".(\*\*). It is the situation revealed by the latter reference which prompted G. A. Smith to characterize the age of the prophets of the Eighth century, B.C., as "a marvelous generation-- so joyous, so energetic, so patriotic, so devout! But its strength was the strength of cruel wealth, its peace the peace of an immoral religion".(\*\*\*). In order to bring our quest into proper religious focus we need to perceive the superficial nature of such energetic sentimentality. We need

(\*) McConnell, The Prophetic Ministry, pp.233-235,

(\*\*) Isaiah 1:10-17; 9:9-10.

(\*\*\*) Smith, Book of the Twelve Prophets, p.41.

to include in our religious thinking, purposing and doing, the spiritual sincerity of the apocalyptic note that is sounded by the ethical prophets, by Jesus, by the writer of Revelation, by Barth. There must come a renewed sense of our dependence upon God for the creation of the new heaven and the new earth. One of our outstanding modern liberals emphasizes the same religious need today: "The Cross is the symbol of love triumphant in the world and society....The Man on the Cross turned defeat into victory and prophesied the day when love would be triumphant in the world. But the triumph would have to come through the intervention of God. The moral resources of men would not be sufficient to guarantee it. A sentimental generation has destroyed this apocalyptic note in the vision of the Christ. It thinks the kingdom of God is around the corner, while he regarded it as impossible of realization, except by God's grace".(\*)

Another source of danger in the quest for social justice is the resolution-complex which so publicly plagues the ministry. On one occasion the disciples came to Jesus and requested, "Lord, teach us to pray".(\*\*). Through some strange alchemy we have become accustomed to "repeating" this model prayer of our Lord. By reason of this "repeating" of the Lord's Prayer, we have become rather insensible to the social dynamic and indeed the social dynamite in this prayer which Jesus taught his disciples. Some of this same kind of emasculation has come to characterize much of the formal actions passed

(\*) Niebuhr, Moral Man and Immoral Society, p.82.

(\*\*) Luke 11:1.

by ministerial and church groups. These smaller groups, as well as the larger national religious organizations of which they are a part, seem to take an almost childish delight in the adoption of "ringing resolutions" against features of our capitalistic order and the profit system in general, and in the issuing of "social creeds" which profess to champion industrial democracy. Yet it not infrequently occurs that once the resolution is adopted and ceremoniously ordered to be "spread on the minutes", little or nothing else is done further to make these splendid professions of idealism effective in our social and economic order. Rightly has Jerome Davis complained that "inevitably the effort of the foremost national religious leaders tends to be polarized around the upper and middle-class groups who are not vitally concerned about the translation of 'social creeds' into our industrial life. Even a Harry Emerson Fosdick...is so fortunate as to have his seven-million-dollar church erected by a Rockefeller. This does not take away the minister's freedom, but it does prevent his serving a working-class fellowship".(\*) From the strictly human point of view the minister must go beyond the "resolution" and the "social creed" and honestly endeavor to get these interpreted in terms of personalities and deeds which are in harmony with the vision that prompted the verbal expression of a noble ideal.

Again, an unthinking acceptance of education as a great highway leading to the goal of social justice

(\*) Davis, Labor Speaks for Itself on Religion, pp.23-24.



leaves us finally confused victims of credulity. Education of itself admits of such wide and varying interpretations that we are under moral obligations to take an intelligently critical attitude towards the whole process by which the modern man becomes relatively educated. We need to ask what is comprised in his formal school education; we need also to discover what are the extra-scholastic factors which determine his total mental equipment. For instance, Sir Norman Angell has indicated some of the places where education falls short of producing socially desirable results. In 1914 the world was in the hands of "highly educated people". Evidently much of the education did not tend to produce political wisdom; for in that year and the succeeding years, we find confusion worse confounded in a bewildering maze of ideas: a "war to end war", debts, reparations, and a "peace to end peace". Of a truth men were not taught and skilled in the social meaning of everyday things. The trouble goes far deeper than simply the omission of honest economics from the curricula; it is our failure to understand our own nature and its relation to organized society. As for the press, the editors give the public what it thinks it wants; or perhaps it would be nearer the truth to say that the editors give the public what they believe the powerful economic, political and financial interests desire to have the public accept in lieu of fact and truth. Instead of the educational process teaching us thoroughly to consider and fairly to weigh all the relevant factors, we "obey that impulse" and lynch a man or rape a nation.

It may be that what we need most is not necessarily fresh knowledge, but rather greater skill and more accurate skill in discerning the relevance to our problems of already known facts. We seem unable generally to distinguish between attitudes constructive and those that are anti-social, nor to have the strength of character to determine our conduct by process of deliberate choice. We seem unequal to the task of ascertaining the plain social meaning of facts that stare us in the face. We recognize that anarchy is not admissible on crowded highways, in sewage-disposal, in our relations as individuals. But in the relations of states and nations we act as though this principle can be completely reversed, and that the way of life in international relations is essentially to have no government at all. Why do we suppose that anarchy will serve well in the international area when we absolutely decline to sanction it as between individuals or groups within the nation? Why do we refuse to apply to international relationships the most common, the most universal/<sup>human</sup> experience? The net result of our education in this respect is the practically universal belief in, or at least acceptance of anarchy as the normal condition of international relationships. (\*)

In the quest for social justice the minister is liable to be caught between the twin evils of a shallow defeatism and a superficial optimism. In spite of high ideals and great goals that beckon us, we are in danger of being dragged down by the sheer weight of the psyc-

(\*) Angall, From Chaos to Control, Chapter V.

logical and spiritual liabilities of modern man. In dealing with the spiritual problems of modern man, C. G. Jung declares that "There is a danger that consciousness of the present may lead to an elation based upon illusion; the illusion, namely, that we are the culmination of the history of mankind, the fulfilment and end-product of countless centuries. If we grant this, we should understand that it is no more than the proud acknowledgment of our destitution: we are also the disappointment of the hopes and expectations of the ages. Think of nearly two thousand years of Christian ideals followed, instead of by the return of the Messiah and the heavenly millenium, by the World War among Christian nations and its barbed-wire and poison gas. What a catastrophe in heaven and on earth!....In the face of such a picture we may well grow humble again. It is true that modern man is a culmination...but he is at the same time the most conceivable disappointment of the hopes of humankind....On the whole...modern man has suffered an almost fatal shock, psychologically speaking, and as a result has fallen into profound uncertainty".(\*) On the other hand, the minister is in danger of committing the opposite error of a superficial optimism arising out of an acceptance of a belief in inevitable progress. Such a belief acts as an opiate to many minds; it lulls them into an anticipated Utopia, where by merely wishing long enough all desired things come to one, and where folly and cruelty and selfishness are automatically eliminated

(\*) Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, pp.230-231.

by an evolutionary process. This belief smothers out the lively sense of sin. New Knowledge, New Democracy, New Theology, New Excuses for Sin (to use H. E. Fosdick's comprehensive list), have fostered our self-complacent attitude respecting sin and automatic progress.(\*). As Christian ministers we need to be constantly on our guard lest we mute our message by way of regarding man as part of a universe tacitly and unthinkingly accepted as being automatically progressive. We dare not risk the danger of blowing an uncertain note with our trumpet. It is ours to announce with clear trumpet-like tones that the overcoming of moral evil and the achievement of moral good is still the central problem of mankind.

Finally, we Christian ministers must be keenly alive to the responsibility of proclaiming the comprehensive fulness of the message we are commissioned to deliver to our generation. The failure to comprehend the fulness and magnitude of the message with which we are charged, is by no means the last of the perils that beset the minister in the quest for social justice, but it will serve as an appropriate closing word in this counsel of admonition. The messages with which the prophets of Israel were charged to deliver to their people were the several segments of the Divine truth. To none of them was given the privilege accorded to the preachers of righteousness after the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, that of a comprehensive outline of the divine message of life and love. Elijah, for example, had a

(\*) Fosdick, Christianity and Progress, pp.169-171.

powerful message to the people of his day regarding the worship of the one true God. Very energetically did he proclaim that message. Yet he was "near-sighted" in that he did not perceive until it had been specially revealed to him that he was not alone in a great cause, but that there existed the unnoticed imponderable of seven thousand others who had "not bowed the knee to Baal".(\*). Amos was the mighty voice of the justice of God to the people of his day. The limiting and constricting of his message within the channel of justice made for the proclaiming of this message with tremendous power. But his message did not comprise the whole of the communication of the Divine Spirit to man. Hosea took up the problem that Amos left; he recognized the necessity of justice in the economy of God, yet he mightily affirmed that love is greater still. How true it is that "The prophet of Conscience had to be followed by the prophet of Repentance".(\*\*). Amos can be excused for his failure or his inability to comprehend the wholeness of the revelation of the will and purpose of God; so also can Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophets of the Old Testament period. For us there is no such ground for failure to comprehend the whole of the revelation of God to man. For ours is the treasure of the testimony of Amos, Hosea and those other prophets. Ours also is the testimony of the Word made flesh, who dwelt among men and revealed to them and to us "the way, the truth, and the life". Ours is the responsibility to comprehend and to proclaim the whole counsel of God.(\*\*\*).

(\*) I Kings 19:18.

(\*\*) Smkth, Book of the Twelve Prophets, p.229.

(\*\*\*) John 1:14; 14:6; Matthew 28:18-20.

## THE REASSURING VISION

Of the increase of his government  
and of peace there shall be no end,  
.....to uphold it with justice and  
with righteousness, from henceforth  
even for ever.

Isaiah 9:7.

But now we see not yet all things  
put under him. But we see Jesus.

Hebrews 2:8-9.

And I saw a new heaven and a new  
earth.

Revelation 21:1.

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