

# FOREIGN MISSIONS AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS

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## I

THE movement which excites the most interest in Europe and perhaps in America to-day, whether it be regarded with hope and enthusiasm or with distrust and terror, is the labour movement, which is substantially a movement for the emancipation of the labourer. It has been found out by the workers, throughout Europe and America, that political emancipation is but a small part of real liberty. You may put an end to the arbitrary power of monarchs: you may clip the wings of aristocratic privilege or destroy aristocracies: but you have not thereby made men free: the strong are still found preying upon the weak; the few are still found exploiting the many. The industrial tyranny of capital is quite as manifest as the more ancient tyrannies of kings or privileged classes. The Liberals of the nineteenth century who fought for equality and political liberty were in the main of the middle class of employers and capitalists, and it is they who have exploited and are exploiting labour for their own enrichment. This is what labour seems to itself to have discovered. Doubtless its propaganda is one-sided and its statements often exaggerated. Doubtless it is apt to ignore the faults on its own side. So it is with all movements. Doubtless, also, there are and have been many individual capitalists and employers who have been not only just but generous, self-sacrificing, and truly philanthropic. But the individual is, more and more, part of a system. And substantially it cannot be denied that the great industrial movement which characterized the nineteenth century and is still upon us, has exploited and is exploiting labour in the interest of capital. Of the vast proceeds of industry, in the vast increase of wealth, labour has had much less than its fair share.

Of the vast mass of labourers, the majority still live their lives on the very confines of destitution, ready to fall into the gulf in any period of unemployment : there are multitudes of men and women whose labour is sweated, who are underpaid and underfed, who live without security or prospect of security : and there are multitudes of young people who are being continually brought up under conditions which offer them no prospect of an opportunity to make the best of themselves.

Thus the labour movement makes throughout Europe a great claim for justice. And in spite of the faults and exaggerations which attend upon the movement, it ought in its broad lines to enlist the sympathy and co-operation of all who call themselves Christians. The Bible shows an extraordinary care for the worker. The believer in the Bible will hold that the first charge upon any industry is the proper payment of the labourer. The inspired prophets of God denounce the divine judgments upon all those who "grind the faces of the poor," that is to say, who use sweated or inadequately remunerated labour to accomplish their own enrichment. It ought to cause the Christian Churches the gravest anxiety to find that they have been, on the whole, so indifferent to the claims of labour : on the whole so much more anxious to defend the rights of property than to protect the poor : so much more ready, at the best, to comfort the fallen and bind up the wounded in the industrial struggle than to assert their rightful claims against the tyranny or injustice of the strong. It is indeed sometimes said that our Lord had His eyes fixed upon the spiritual interests of the Kingdom of God and paid no attention to social or political conditions. But it has to be remembered that He had behind Him the Old Testament, and that He identified Himself with its message. He came to supply what the Law and the prophets could not give : but He took his stand on the level to which the Law and the prophets had raised the people of Israel. He came not to destroy but to fulfil. In other words He identified Himself with all that the prophetic denunciations and appeals, with all that the divinely sanctioned legislation, had secured, or sought to secure, in the way of a morally and justly ordered community, lived in the eye of a God who loved righteousness and hated oppression, and who had always declared Himself the friend of the poor. "Now for the comfortless troubles' sake of the needy and because of the deep sighing of the poor, I will up, saith the Lord." But more than this no teacher of men has ever affirmed, as our

Lord affirmed it, the essential equality of men and the value of every single life. No doctrine could ever be so destructive of the right of any man to sacrifice his neighbour's interests to his own—that is, to exploit another—as the doctrine of the Son of Man, who requires us to love our neighbours as ourselves, who would have us believe that it is better for a man that a millstone should be hanged about his neck and that he should be drowned in the depths of the sea than that he should cause any one weaker than himself to stumble, and who measures the worth of a man by his service of his brethren. The teaching of the Son of Man is indeed the charter of the rights of the poor, and the corner-stone of the fabric of human brotherhood and liberty.

## II

Now let us turn our eyes to a still wider field than the field of white labour. Let us look to the coloured races. Here, also, there has been for centuries an exploiting of the weak by the strong. The record of the relations of our Christian communities, of European origin, to Asiatics and Africans and the aborigines of America and Australia, in spite of many noble and generous achievements, is on the whole a terrible one. The enslavement of the Africans, the opium traffic with China, the trade in spirits with barbarous peoples, the treatment of the inhabitants of the Congo, the slaughter of aborigines—these are only chapters in a terrible indictment of Christian nations. Now the cry has arisen, world-wide in its extent, “Japan for the Japanese,” “India for the Indians,” “Africa for the Africans,” “China for the Chinese,” “Egypt for the Egyptians,”—“We will not be any longer exploited for the interests of others.” Now here again, in some at least of these nationalist movements, there is a great deal that is unreasoning and exaggerated. Neither Indians, nor Africans, nor Egyptians could at present govern themselves without the supervision of Europeans. The European governments have been instrumental in securing for them enormous benefits and rescuing them from enormous evils. On the part of our governing classes and civil servants especially, there has been shown an amount of self-sacrificing care and incorruptible justice which it is indeed a comfort to think about. Still, the indictment on the whole is a true one. The white nations went to America and Africa and the East after wealth, and in the pursuit of wealth they have been strangely unscrupulous. They have exploited the weak peoples, or

dispossessed them, or abused them, as suited their own interests. And in the eye of God we neither had nor can have the right to do this. The African or the Asiatic is of the same worth in the eye of God as the European, and has the same rights as the European to be an end to himself, and to live so as best to realize his own being, and to become all that God made him capable of becoming. Whether any nation has a right to conquer or control in any manner any other nation against its own will is a question which perhaps we need not consider in this connection; for the abandonment of any great district of Africa or of India by one European nation to-day would, in the present condition of European politics, mean no more than its speedy transference to another. But we may lay it down for certain that a nation has a right to govern another nation only for the interests of that other nation, and, except with its goodwill, so long only as that nation has not the strength or unity to be independent and to govern itself. Thus fundamentally the nationalist movements in Asia and Africa can claim the sympathy of Christians—a sympathy which at present they are far from having won. I have several times sat on missionary platforms at home, where I have heard the missionary cause pleaded on the ground that the propagation of Christianity is necessary to the maintenance of the British Empire. This is, all things considered, as bad an argument as it is possible to use. Partly because it is probably untrue. The conversion of India or Africa to Christianity would probably give the Indians, or even the Africans, such solidarity and capacity for progress as would make their independence a certainty. But much more it is a bad argument because there is nothing more certain than that Christianity can show no preference for one nation over another. “With God is no respect of persons.” “There is neither Greek nor Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free.” They are all one man in Christ Jesus.

For this principle we must appeal not to the Old Testament but to the New. In the Old Testament the divine principles of justice and righteousness, and even of brotherhood, were developed within a narrow area, the area of one divinely chosen race, only in order that, having been fostered there, they might become the heritage of all the world. But meanwhile during the fostering period, “thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” applied only within the limits of Israel. Israel had a right to speak of “lesser creeds without the law.” They had a right, though a temporary right only, as some of

their prophets saw, to exploit other nations for their advantage. But it is one of the most certain of facts that Christianity made all men "neighbours," and refused to recognize any other chosen people than the Church of all nations, the catholic brotherhood into which all were to be welcomed on equal terms. Nothing is more interesting than to watch the careful way in which our Lord introduces this principle to His disciples in His dealings with the Roman centurion, with the Syro-Phœnician woman, and with the inquiring Greeks. Its full realization we owe specially to St. Paul. There is no expression of the catholic meaning of the Church, no prophetic vision of the brotherhood of man in Christ, so noble and far-reaching as is to be found in St. Paul's great epistle to the Ephesians.

### III

Here then are two great, world-wide movements for the emancipation of man, which can claim the sympathy of Christians. And they are really the same movement showing itself under different circumstances. They are two phases of the movement of men against being exploited in the interests of those stronger than themselves: two phases of the claim, which every man has a divine right to make, that he shall be an end to himself, and not merely an instrument to another man's end.

But it is something much more than sympathy which this movement, or pair of movements, can claim of Christians. If "the powers that be," the actual forces which sway mankind, "are ordained of God," then as surely as the Roman Empire and the British Empire, so surely the democratic movement and the nationalist movement are ordained of God. It is our co-operation as Christians that they should claim, and our great contribution as Christians should ultimately be the demonstration that it is only through the faith in Christ that either movement can realize itself.

Every missionary worker worthy of the name is consciously training a young Church for independent life. He must believe, and it is no tax upon his faith, that a vigorous, believing, self-propagating, and self-governing Church of the Chinese or Japanese or Indians or Africans would be not only the greatest conceivable boon to the old Churches of Europe and America, but also the greatest possible instrument towards the realization of the divine purpose for China and Japan, for India and Africa. Negatively he will feel

sure that, unconverted to Christ, no one of these great peoples, or aggregates of peoples, will ever realize itself. If we want to keep these nations weak, we should keep them pagan. If we want to make them strong and progressive, with something more than a superficial progress, we must help them to become Christian, and to enter in their own right into the community of Christian Churches, into the one catholic fellowship of Christ. "Neither is there salvation in any other"; for there is none other name given among men wherein they must be saved than the name of Jesus. Salvation is for life eternal: but the life eternal, once gained, must show itself here and now, as it did in the first Christian Church, in a new vigour and solidarity of social life in the world. Socially as well as personally, to-day as well as in the eternal world, Christ must be their salvation.

So we believe. This is our missionary motive. But it applies as much in the other phase of the movement for human emancipation—the labour movement at home. Of this, too, the Christian must believe that it is only in Christ, in Christ consciously believed in and followed, and in membership in His Church, that the labour movement can realize itself. The danger of materialism in aim and outlook: the danger of an embittering and enfeebling jealousy and hatred of the rich: the danger of disparaging and overlooking the need for moral conversion and sanctification, if men are to attain and exercise real liberty: the danger of the workers' own solidarity being rent asunder by mutual mistrust as soon as ever they cease fighting against capital—these dangers in the labour movement are evident. The gospel of our Lord, with all its penetrating discipline, is what they need. Only in Christ Jesus, under His discipline, and in His school, can they realize themselves or bring their movement for emancipation to any adequate effect.

#### IV

I have sought to make it plain that, in the nationalism of Asia and Africa and in the labour movement at home we have really one movement, not two, one movement for the emancipation of man with which the Christian Church ought to be in the profoundest sympathy, which indeed is so wide, and comes from such deep sources, that it cannot but be believed to be of God, and which yet, apart from the Christian faith and discipline and Church, cannot realize its divinely intended aim.

But if this position is substantially true, have we not the gravest cause for anxiety? Must we not contemplate the actual relation of these two movements, or this one movement, towards the Christian Church or Churches with something like dismay?

Take the labour movement in Europe and America, and leaving out of account for the moment the Roman Catholic communion, which in Ireland or Belgium and some parts of Germany could in this respect give a better account of itself than most other Christian communions, let us ask ourselves what is the relation of labour to the organized Churches of Christendom? On the whole it is a relation of aloofness or suspicion. In England at least the labour movement is not anti-Christian. Nay, it has an ever profound sense that Christ is the friend of labour and the saviour of man. There are quasi-religious organizations such as the Adult Schools, which have a large membership and are simply organizations of the workers in some sort of Christian fellowship. But the Christianity is vague without theology and without sacraments, without religious depth and thoroughness; and this group of organizations does not add appreciably to the membership of Churches, whether Anglican or Nonconformist, in England. Of course if you begin to count heads the exceptions to my generalization become evident. There are parishes which I could name where the Church mainly consists of the workers, where they feel at home in it. There are few parishes where they are not more or less in evidence. Let us make the most of the exceptions. Still the generalization remains, alas! true on the whole. Go to any representative council of any of our great Christian communions in England and America, and it is not the representatives of the working classes you meet there, or the point of view of the workers which you there hear expressed. The "workers," in fact, suspect the "Churches" as upper-class or middle-class organizations, and on the whole with how much truth! It is the upper-class or middle-class atmosphere which is breathed there. It is patronage or charity rather than brotherhood and justice that we have offered to the workers.

Now let us consider our relation as Churches to the other part of the great movement. It is notorious that the national movement in India regards the Indian Christians as denationalized or Europeanized in sympathies. The same is true to a certain degree in Japan and China. The nationalist movement does not think of Christianity as its friend. It views it with suspicion, and we know why. We are

always deploring the extent to which we have Europeanized our converts. We know the reasons which have contributed to this result. But on the whole the result is acknowledged. It is closely connected with the slowness, unparalleled in Christian history, with which the Churches of India or Africa are growing towards independence and self-government.

We need, then, to make a great act of reasoned repentance. And if it be true that the labour movement at home and the nationalist movement abroad are parts of one movement, we shall train our imagination more easily and more effectively to a new point of view if the unity of the two problems is constantly before us.

"Why do ye not discern the time," or "the signs of the times?" said our Lord to the teachers of Israel. He directs the same question to us to-day. May God grant us such measure of the Spirit's wisdom as shall enable us to direct our efforts aright before it is too late.

## V

There is one other word which I would add. I have used the phrase "the Christian Churches," in what I have written, without raising any question as to what constitutes a Church. But I write as a catholic Christian, who believes Christianity to be, according to the intention of Christ, embodied in one actual and visible society with creed, organization, and sacraments to maintain its unity. I know very well the causes which have led to a break up of the unity. I know very well the obvious repartee to any claim made or suspected on behalf of the Anglican communion, which lies ready to the hand of any offended Protestant in the attitude towards us Anglicans of the Roman Catholic and even of the Orthodox Church. But I believe that we are growing tired of our divisions and of our individualism: and if I look to the future I see the hope of unity in a return to the principles of the primitive Church, which I believe to be the best expression of the principle of the apostles. I wish therefore, before I have done, to make one more point, or perhaps I should rather say to ask one final question. The principle of the early Church, which is, I believe, the principle of St. Paul, is expressed in the maxim, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. The Christian salvation, that is to say, lies in the visible community, and the obligation of membership in the one community in every place is what is to discipline men of all kinds or classes into real Catholicism. Jew and Gentile, Greek



and Barbarian, the educated and the uneducated, the slave and the free, must be members of the one body in each place receiving the same sacraments at the same hands, professing the same fundamental creed, and hearing the same message of God. They would not have tolerated the idea of different organizations suited to different classes or different races, each with its own sacraments, its own version of the Gospel. If we are to come back to a true Catholicism, in which alone the brotherhood of men, whether rich or poor, whether dark of skin or yellow or white, can at last be realized, must it not be through our coming back, along our different lines of divergence, towards the principles of the first Church? Is not Catholicism the true hope of democracy? Is there along any other lines any real hope of realizing the brotherhood of man?