Socialism and the Bible

An Address by

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Socialism And The Bible

An Address delivered in many of the towns of Great Britain,

By

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Socialism and the Bible.

"And I shall shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come"—Haggai II, 7.

A FEW years ago, Socialism was advocated only by theorists. It was merely an academic question, and practical men smiled at it. To-day it is a living and actively-growing international force.

What is the reason of this? Are there grounds of complaint against the past and present modes of government and social order? The answer is undoubtedly in the affirmative. There are many grounds of discontent, but they can be gathered together into *three main lines of argument.*

The first main line of argument is the argument from justice; the second, the argument from economy; and the third, the argument from necessity. First, as regards the

Argument from Justice: Socialists point out that those who possess honour and riches are not by any means always the most worthy. Very often they have less ability and honesty than many less fortunate in the struggle for existence. This ought not to be. Every man should start life alike in opportunity; society should not show favouritism at the beginning nor in any period of life. If a man is to be rewarded in any way, it ought to be on account of his merits, and not from mere accident of birth, or because he has more backstairs influence than his neighbours. On the other hand, if a man is to be poor and of low station in life, it ought to be as a penalty for wrong-doing, and not because he cannot get a living wage, or on account of failure to find employment though anxious for it. That is the argument from justice. Then the second argument, the

Argument from Economy: What wastage there is in the present competitive system! Besides the enormous ex-

penditure in advertising and touting for orders, there is the deterioration of goods owing to over-production, and the manufacture of shoddy materials to cut prices. Again, consider the waste of money, time, and labour involved in the present overlapping both in the manufacture of goods, and in their delivery. Compare, for instance, the delivery of letters with that of stores. If, in place of the present competition, there was only a joint and orderly system of production and distribution, what an immense saving would be effected! That is the argument from economy. Thirdly, there is the

Argument from Necessity: We see, as we look around us, that the *social conditions* are not right. Hundreds of thousands are badly clad, badly fed, badly housed. When we turn to the *labour conditions*, we see thousands out of employment, and tens of thousands overworked, and underpaid. Then again, when we consider the *physical and mental conditions* of the people, we see much distress and suffering. The asylums and hospitals are growing in size and number year by year, yet they are always filled to overflowing; and outside of these institutions there are great multitudes of both rich and poor, who are completely or partially disabled, mentally and physically. No doubt much of this disability is beyond the power of the physician and social reformer to remove; but some of it, at least, could be overcome by proper laws and regulations, more especially if the wealth of the country was in the hands of the nation. Again, when we look into the *moral conditions* of the people, we find that the present system is accountable for much. In all large cities thousands of families are compelled to live in houses of one apartment, and the poor are crowded into districts badly ventilated, badly lit, and badly drained. The result is that countless children grow up amidst the moral and material filth of the slums, and, sad to relate, these evil influences are not confined to the slums, though most noticeable there. Such demoralising conditions ought not to be, and if proper regulations

were enforced, many of these evils could be eradicated.

These are the arguments, dear friends, and the last is the most important. The more we study the whole question, the more we see the need for drastic reform. *Deliverance from the present order of things is a necessity* recognised by all humane and right-thinking people.

Having thus briefly stated the three main lines of argument in favour of Socialism, let us now ask the question: Is Socialism practicable? Socialists say that if their principles were adopted, everyone would experience peace and contentment, and that thus the desire of all nations would come.

There are two questions involved here: (I) Are there any difficulties in the way of Socialism being established? (II) Should it become established, will the desired ends be gained?

(I) *Are there any difficulties in the way of Socialism being established?* Yes, there are two chief difficulties. (*a*) The first is the *indifference of the people*, mostly due to the natural mental lethargy which opposes all change. But this is being rapidly overcome. The people were first awakened to a sense of their rights by the Reformation, and later by the French Revolution. Both of these great events were largely due to the invention of the art of printing, and consequent diffusion of knowledge. Within late years education has become general in all civilised countries, and the cheap literature now flooding the world is enlightening the people as never before, and rousing them thoroughly to a sense of their rights as men.

Because of this, and also because of the ready means of intercommunication, the people of different countries, even though widely separated, are getting acquainted with each other in a way that was not possible in former times; and they are gradually realising a great deal in common between them. The prejudices which divide people from people are being broken down, and the cry is now becoming widespread: "The fatherhood of God and the

brotherhood of man!" The indifference to Socialism is consequently being rapidly overcome. Very soon it will be completely dissolved, and then, as Daniel foretold when writing prophetically of this period as "the time of the end"—the time when "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased," that is to say, the time when there will be free intercommunication between the various peoples and a general increase of knowledge—there will be "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation"—Daniel XII, 1-4.

(*b*) The other difficulty is an even greater obstacle to Socialism becoming established. It is the *opposition of vested interests.* By vested interests I mean everything which certain people believe to be their rights, whether it be rank, or property, or land, or money. The man who happens to be a king or peer, considers the rank his by right. The man who has inherited or bought property or land, claims that it belongs to him by right; and the same is true with regard to money. More and more opposition will be offered by those who possess vested interests, for very few will give up what they believe to be their rights simply that the community may benefit. *All men do not yet love their neighbours as themselves.* Before such a change can be effected, there must be a moral revolution. Men's hearts will first require to be changed.

It is the poor who experience most the hardships of the present system, and it is they, as they get enlightened, who who are daily swelling the ranks of the Socialists, because they think they see in Socialism their only hope of relief. The poor say to the rich: "It is all very well for you to speak about your rights; but look at us, see how we are suffering! You have no moral right to the land, or to so much money. It is not fair that any man or woman should possess so much when we are denied even the necessities of life."

While the Socialists are increasing in number, and the outcry against the rich is swelling in volume, the men with

rested interests—the aristocrats, land-owners, property-owners, and capitalists, and also the church—resent the proposal to change the existing social and political arrangements. They would like, indeed, to see the people more contented. To this end they are willing to grant certain measures of reform; but only so long as they can retain their wealth and honours and keep the people servile in some degree. The day is past, however, for the people to be content with things as they are. As well attempt to stem the ocean's flowing tide, as try to check the advance of knowledge and truth!

Within recent years a new political party, the Socialist or Social democrat, has sprung into existence in every civilised country; and we should expect that very soon all politicians will be either Socialists or Anti-Socialists, although they may form themselves into sub-divisions. Every thinking man sees this at hand. The Anti-Socialists —the aristocrats, the capitalists and the church—have the support of those whose interests are bound up with theirs, and also of such peace-lovers as fear to entrust themselves to the will of the people. But the Socialists are demanding and securing reforms, and every success makes them eager for greater victories. We cannot suppose that those now in authority will long continue to meekly submit; and after abortive attempts to obtain their greater desires by peaceful means, the people will get impatient at the opposition and slowness of reform. Becoming imperative in their demands, they will ultimately have recourse to force, and general revolution will break out. The people are now bound together to that degree, that the war between the masses and the classes will be world-wide. The governments will confederate together against their common enemy the *people;* and the people, having tasted the sweets of liberty, will break away from the restraint of their chosen leaders. Anarchy will ensue, and in the end all the present kingdoms and institutions will be overthrown in a time of trouble such as never was since there

was a nation. [The present world-war, which broke out in August 1914, is making possible privileges for the Social-democrates, which were scarcely hoped for in Great Britain.]

The people have been likened to a great giant who, while slumbering in ignorance and superstition, allowed himself to be put into bondage. For some time he has been slowly wakening, and has already broken several of his fetters. Soon he will be fully roused. When he *realises* his mighty strength, he will burst the remaining bonds in anger, and, rising to his feet, will crush the powers that bound him.

Having considered the two chief difficulties in the way of the establishment of Socialism, and having seen what will occur if the desires of the people are not granted, let us now consider what will result should Socialism be established.

(II) If Socialism is established, whether by peaceful means or by force, will it work? With human nature as it is will the desire of all nations be realised through Socialism? In order to consider this matter fully and clearly, let us see what Socialism is in its main features. In 1906, Mr. Robert Blatchford, the well-known Editor of "The Clarion," a Socialist paper, printed and circulated a leaflet setting forth first what Socialism is, and then what Socialism is not. The contents are as follows:

What Socialism Is.

Great Britain is ruled by the wealthy in the interests of the wealthy. We propose that it should be ruled by the people in the interests of the people; for class rule brings conflict of interests, which bring hatred, while community of interests breeds fellowship, and fellowship is life.

All the means of existence in Great Britain are owned by individuals. We submit that things which are needful to make a nation and maintain a nation should be owned by the nation.

The nation owns the navy, the government factories, the public buildings, the arsenals, the forts, and the barracks. We suggest that the nation should own ALL the ships, ALL the railways, ALL the factories, ALL the buildings, ALL the land, ALL the requisites of national life and defence.

The nation manages the Post Office, the Telegraphs, and, through the local Councils, it manages many of its gasworks, waterworks, and tramways. We contend that the nation should manage ALL its business and ALL its work.

The nation directs the people's morals through a State Church, which once a week teaches the wickedness of grinding the faces of widows and orphans. We claim that the nation should establish social conditions which will make oppression and injustice impossible all the week round.

That is what Socialism is. Then the leaflet goes on to say what it is not:

What Socialism Is Not.

Those who do not wish you to be Socialists have given you very false notions about Socialism, in the hope of setting you against it.

The men who have tried to smash your unions, who have written against you, and spoken against you, and acted against you in all the great strikes and lock-outs, are the same men who speak and write against Socialism.

They say that Socialists want to get up a revolution, to turn the country upside down by force, to seize all property, and to divide it equally amongst the whole people.

But to-day, there are very few Socialists who believe in brute force, or who think a revolution possible or desirable.

I have always been dead against the idea of revolution, for many reasons. I do not think a revolution is possible in Britain. Firstly, because the people have too much sense; secondly, because the people are by nature patient and kindly; thirdly, because the people are too free to make force needful.

Revolution by force of arms is not desirable or feasible; but there is another kind of revolution from which we hope great things. This is a revolution of thought. Let us once get the people, or the big majority of the people, to understand Socialism, to believe in Socialism, and to work for Socialism, and the real revolution is accomplished.

As to seizing the wealth of the country and sharing it out amongst the people. First, we do not propose to seize anything. We do propose to get some things,—the land, for instance,—and to make them the property of the whole nation; but we mean that to be done by Act of Parliament, and by purchase. Second, we have no idea of "sharing out" the land, nor the railways, nor the money, nor any other kind of wealth or property, equally amongst the people. To share these things out—if they could be shared, which they could not be—would be to make them private property, whereas we want them to be public property, the property of the British nation.

"Make all men equal in possessions," cry the Non-Socialists, "and in a very short time there would be rich and poor, as before."

It is quite true that, did we divide all wealth equally to-morrow, there would in a short time be many penniless, and a few in a way of getting

rich; but it is only true if we suppose that after the sharing we allowed private ownership of land and the old system of trade and competition to go on as before. Change those things: do away with the land system which leads to poverty and to wealth, and we should have no more rich and poor.

Now, dear friends, suppose that Socialism is established, will the three main lines of argument in its favour be satisfactorily met? You remember the three arguments in favour of Socialism: Justice, Economy, Necessity. (I) What about

The Argument From Justice?

Socialists say: "It is not right that some should be born with a claim to the good things of life, and others to poverty or worse with little hope of betterment. Let all men start alike in opportunity."

But is it possible to arrange social conditions that all men may start alike in opportunity? The answer is undoubtedly in the negative; for people are born with *natural differences* which it is not in the power of man to adjust. In health, in physical capabilities, and in mental ability the differences are such, that those naturally favoured would soon gain advantage over their fellows. There are also differences in morals, and this is the chief difficulty with which Socialism would have to contend. Some men are good, honest, and trusting. There are others who endeavour to take advantage of these and of one another, and to get the best of everything, by honest means if they can, but if not, then by dishonest means.

But supposing that all were started alike in the matter of wealth and position in life and in every other possible respect, would it be possible to get lasting peace and contentment? No. To ensure peace and contentment, which is the desire of all nations, would necessitate that those in authority must be endowed with such keen perceptions and accuracy of judgment, that they could weigh and judge everything exactly, and be able to discern whether any advantage some might gain was duly earned,

and any loss that others might suffer was truly deserved. More than that, these officials would require to be possessed of unlimited powers, that they might exercise their authority to the best advantage for the community; and, finally, they would require to be so wise, loving and just in all their words and actions, that the people would eventually be perfectly satisfied and bow to their decisions.

That would be a consummation to be desired, would it not? If such conditions were established, then indeed the desire of all nations would to a great extent be realised. But with human nature as it is, how hopeless for us to expect so glorious a consummation! Men have not that keenness of perception and accuracy of judgment, which would enable them to fulfil the duties of such unerring authorities; and even if some with more than ordinary acumen were elected to office, the people, having tasted the sweets of liberty and individual judgment, would not allow them to exercise unlimited power. Indeed, it would be necessary for the officials to be in an unassailable position, that they might successfully defy the will of the people should occasion demand. This, however, would not be a Socialist government.

With human nature as it is, acts of injustice would be inevitable on the part of the authorities, some of them intentional due to moral obliquity, some of them unintentional due to lack of judgment, thoughtlessness, or carelessness. The result would be much grumbling and discontent. No board of officials, however well-intentioned, could satisfy all, or even the majority. The people would eventually break away from restraint, and anarchy would certainly follow.

(II) Let us now consider

The Argument From Economy.

Under this head there are four main difficulties in the way of Socialism proving successful. (*a*) There is the *difficulty of organisation.* Efficiency would require one

central government, with district councils for local affairs. To ensure harmonious working between these councils and the central government would be extremely difficult; and as great authority would necessarily require to be placed in the hands of a few, clever schemers would seek the prominent positions for the sake of the power they could wield. Once they obtained the power, the people would suffer.

(*b*) There is the *difficulty of supply*. In order to deal out the various necessities of life, officials would require to be appointed; and these, eager to get through with their work, would chafe at the need of attending to individual peculiarities, and incline to shirk their duty. Hence the people would suffer from this cause also. How different it would be, however, if the officials in charge had perfect minds and perfect hearts.

(*c*) Then there is the *difficulty of employment*. Each individual would require to have employment suited to his capabilities. But sooner or later many would desire a change. They would say: "I am rather tired of this kind of work; I would like something different"; or: "I am tired of being in this place; I would like to go somewhere else." It would be impossible, however, to allow every individual to change his employment or locality as he pleased; for this would certainly mean an over supply of labourers in favourable positions and districts, and inconvenient scarcity in the unfavourable. Hence, the people would require to be forced, more or less against their wills, to remain where they were placed; and discontent and trouble must be the outcome.

(*d*) Lastly, there is the *question of wages*. Some suggest that money should not be used to pay wages. But the people must get food and clothing, etc., which would be a form of wage. Either all would receive alike, or else, if graded, the wages would be more or less at the discretion of the officials in charge. Suppose everyone received alike, what would be the result? Those with ability would lack the incentive of greater remuneration to put forth their

best efforts; and the majority, who are without special ability, would attend their work only because obliged to. (This is what obtains in some measure at the present time, where Trades Unions insist on a minimum standard rate of wages.) I am speaking of the natural inclinations of men in general. There would certainly be noble exceptions; some who loved their work for its own sake, or who were conscientious and unselfish and worked for the sake of others. But we have no reason to suppose that there would be many of this class; and if it is claimed that the new Socialistic conditions would multiply such noble examples, peace and contentment could not reign so long as even a minority of the other class existed.

If, on the other hand, the wages were graded, would not that delegate a great deal of power to the officials? What an amount of wire-pulling there would be to obtain the best situations! It would be impossible to prevent many of the evils of the present competitive system. Those in authority would require to be perfect both in mind and heart; but even if they were, do you think the people would be satisfied? Generally, those who are discontented and cause trouble, are the indolent and incompetent.

(III) As regards the third argument,

The Argument From Necessity,

much might be done to alleviate present conditions; but to remove all the social, physical, mental, and moral imperfections which abound, is beyond the power of man.

And so we see, dear friends, that whether Socialism will, or will not ultimately be established, there is certain to be trouble in the near future. The people are rapidly wakening out of their mental lethargy, and their superstitious reverence for kings, aristocracy, and church. They see that while they have not their fair share of this world's goods, others are rolling in luxury. Their natural appetites and desires prevent them from agreeing that a bare exist-

ence is all that is necessary. They know that happiness is needful to make existence desirable. In the meantime, some form of Socialism is the only remedy which seems to offer relief.

All men recognise the signs of unrest everywhere manifest. Many console themselves with the thought that the nations are passing through a period of transition, but that though experiencing some changes perhaps, peace will ultimately be attained, and the world will continue essentially as before. This is a delusive hope, for *whether Socialism is established or not, anarchy is bound to ensue.* If the people are thwarted, they will not rest content till all the present kingdoms and institutions are shattered. The giant is now too wide awake to permit himself again to be put into bondage. If, on the other hand, Socialism is established, there will require to be armies of public employees, and the individual will sooner or later become the slave of officials even more than at present he is the slave of the wealthy. Politics will be still more of a trade than it is now. Rings and general corruption will be the order of the day. With human nature as it is, force will be necessary to carry out the various measures intended for the public good; and the people, having once tasted the sweets of liberty, and finding their aspirations and desires for freedom and happiness frustrated, will break away from all restraints, and anarchy must follow.

But what avails the kindly ways of yore,
The sacred customs and the old-world cries,
If we are linked in heartfelt love no more.
By old-world ties?

The envious nations and their rulers keep
Armed watch upon each other all the while;
They prate of friendship, lulling fear to sleep
With treacherous smile.

Oh! finer souls of penetrating ken,
Poets and preachers, in our hearts instil
Humility afresh, and bring to men
Peace and goodwill.

—*Alfred Austin (Poet-Laureate).*

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES.

You will agree, dear friends, from what we have seen thus far, that under present conditions of sin and selfishness we cannot reasonably expect peace and contentment to result from Socialism; nor can the world hope to escape a great time of trouble in the near future.*

Is there any hope, then, of deliverance from the distressing chaos into which the world is about to be plunged? Is there any truth in the old adage that man's extremity is God's opportunity? If there is a God above, He will foreknow all things. He must surely have revealed in His Word sufficient to help and sustain those who believe on Him, in order that they may intelligently co-operate in the means which He will have directed for the good of man.

World-Wide Trouble Followed by World-Wide Blessing.

There are many Scriptures which teach that, in God's order, the world must first pass through the great fire of trouble before they can hope to have their desire of good government, peace and contentment realised.

This thought is expressed in our text, Haggai II, 6, 7—"For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once it is a little while, and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come." And in Zephaniah III, 8, 9—"Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms"—that is what is taking place now; we find that all the kingdoms are associating together against their common enemy the

[*NOTE: The trouble here referred to by the late Professor Edgar (who died in June, 1910), is not the present (1915) great European war but the more terrible *civil* strifes which will follow. Because of the apparent evidences of the Scriptures, Professor Edgar consistently proclaimed his belief that great trouble among the nations was due to break out in Autumn, 1914, the date indicated by the prophetic period named the "Seven Times of the Gentiles"—See Vol. II, of "Great Pyramid Passages."]

people. The Lord goes on to say why He has determined to gather the nations and assemble the kingdoms. It is—"to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured by the fire of my jealousy. For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent.'

Turn next to the 12th chapter of Daniel. There we see in the 4th verse regarding "the time of the end"—the time of the end of the present kingdoms, the time of the end of the present reign of evil—that "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." We know from history that this prophecy never was fulfilled in the past; but when we look around us and consider our modern locomotives, steamships and motor cars, our schools, technical colleges and free libraries, etc., we cannot doubt that we are even now witnessing the fulfilment of the prophecy. *It is evident that we are now living in "the time of the end."*

In the first and second verses of the chapter, we read: "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people; and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time." Our Lord in quoting these words in the 24th chapter of Matthew, 21st verse, says: "For then shall be great tribulation such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be [again]." The coming trouble is to be greater than was even the French Revolution, though that was very terrible. It will be the greatest time of trouble that has ever taken place, or ever will take place, in the history of the world.

Why will the Lord require to bring the world through such severe trouble? In the book of Proverbs (XVIII, 14) we are told: "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" So long as a man can keep up his spirit, it does not matter how weak he may be, he is more or less self-reliant; but once his spirit is

broken, all the stamina is taken out of him, and he is helpless. In the present, as in the past, men think that by their own efforts they will bring about the desire of all nations. The Socialists say: "Just let Socialism get into full swing, and we shall soon renovate the whole earth." The Anti-Socialists say: "Let us alone. We shall bring about reforms gradually. Only be patient and by-and-by there will be peace and contentment throughout the world." The spirits of both parties will require to be broken in order to teach them the folly of self-reliance; and to this end the Lord will bring them through the great trouble, as He has foretold by His holy prophets. When it is over, men will acknowledge their own helplessness and their need of a Saviour. They will turn to God and implore His aid; and, His name be praised, the Lord will help the helpless. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." —Psalm XXXIV, 13.

Thus we see that the Scriptures corroborate what we have observed from the signs of the times, namely, that there is to be world-wide anarchy at an early date. Let us now enquire of the Word of God:

Who Will Bring About the Desire of All Nations?

It is important to notice that in the Scriptures alone is there an indication of hope for the world escaping out of the dreadful conditions which will shortly prevail; and the Scriptures were written by Jews for the Jewish nation. When, therefore, Christ comes again to take His great power, He will reign as "King of the Jews," and the Jewish nation will be the foremost at that time. As Jesus said, "Salvation is of the Jews." The other nations will gradually be merged into the Jewish nation, so that all will ultimately have the one great King, who will rule over and bless them, and so bring about everlasting peace and contentment—"the desire of all nations."

There are many passages of Scripture which prophesy that after the kingdoms of this Dispensation are overthrown, Christ will reign with an autocratic rule upon the earth. I shall briefly refer to a few of these prophecies.

Daniel (XII, 1) says that "at that time [the time of the end] Michael shall stand up." The word Michael means "One like unto God"; and can only refer to Jesus Christ, the one who is the express image of the Father. He is the great Prince which stands for Daniel's people, the Israelites; and Daniel was told that when He manifests His power on their behalf, "at that time thy people shall be delivered." The Jews have been persecuted all through this Gospel Age, but they will soon cease to be "trodden down of the Gentiles," and God will return His favour to them, and they shall be His chosen people. We see this beginning even now. Palestine is being opened up, and the Jews are fast returning to their native land; they are also now opening their ears to the comforting words of Isaiah XL, verses 1 and 2; but it is not the due time for their complete return of favour.

The prophecy continues: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." When Christ's Kingdom is set up on the ruins of the present kingdoms after the time of trouble, and the Jews return to their own land and to God's favour, the general resurrection of the dead will take place. This is also shown in Revelation XI, 18, which reads: "And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come"—there is to be world-wide trouble among the nations, due to the wrath of God,—"and the time of the dead, that they should be judged,"—the awakening of the dead is to take place at the same time,—"and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth."

During that long period known as the "times of the

Gentiles," the Jewish nation has been trodden under by the Gentile kingdoms. This was foretold by Ezekiel, who, as the prophetic mouthpiece of the Lord, said to Zedekiah the last king of Judah: "And thou, profane wicked Prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, thus saith the Lord God; Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same; exalt him that is low [the Gentiles], and abase him that is high [Israel]. I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it [the kingdom of Israel]; and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him"—Ezekiel XXI, 25-27. The kingdom of Israel was the kingdom of God; its kings were always spoken of as sitting upon the throne of the Lord. Consequently when the crown was removed from the king of Judah, God's kingdom upon earth ceased.

In this prophecy the Lord declared that His kingdom would be no more until one came whose right it is. In the interim of waiting, the Gentiles, who were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope and without God in the world" (Ephesians II, 12), were exalted to hold the dominion of the world; but when the "times of the Gentiles" have expired (Luke XXI, 24), *He* whose right it is will take to Himself His great power and reign. Who is this? Undoubtedly it is our Lord Jesus Christ, the greater Son of David. How did He acquire the right to God's kingdom upon earth? He gained it by His voluntary death on the cross. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of the dead and living"—1 Corinthians VI, 19, 20; Romans XIV, 9.

The same great truth is taught in Daniel II, 31-45, where it shows how the successive Gentile nations, which have held universal sway since the overthrow of the kingdom of Israel, were symbolised by a great image seen by

Nebuchadnezzar in a dream. The head of this image was of gold and represented Babylonia; its breasts and arms of silver, Medo-Persia; its belly and thighs of brass, Greece; its legs of iron, Pagan Rome; its feet of iron and clay, Papal Rome; and its toes, the present divisions of the Roman Empire.

In the dream, this image was smitten on the feet by a little stone cut out without hands, and was demolished into dust and scattered till no place was found for it. The stone then grew into a great mountain which filled the whole earth. Daniel explains that this great mountain which will fill the whole earth is the Kingdom of our Lord. The seventh chapter of Daniel refers to the same four universal Empires under the figure of four beasts, and describes how one like the Son of man, together with the saints of the most High, comes with the clouds of heaven to take possession of the kingdom.

In Micah IV, 8, the Lord Jesus is spoken of as the "Tower of the flock"—"And thou, O tower of the flock, the strong hold of the daughter of Zion, unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion." The *first* dominion, which was granted to Adam, and subsequently to Israel, is His by right; and soon He will shatter the present kingdoms, and take the dominion to Himself. At the same time, as we have seen, He will cause the Jews to return to their own land and to the favour of God, and will bring about the resurrection of the dead.

Before considering the method by which Christ's rule will bring about the desire of all nations, which man's rule has failed to accomplish, let us see what are

The Fundamental Reasons of Man's Failure to Govern.

(1) The first and chief reason is that *men are sinners, not saints,* and this not through any individual fault of their own, but through heredity and environment. "There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that doeth

good." Selfishness prevails instead of love. The world, the flesh, and the devil are too strong for men, however well-intentioned they may be, unless God is on their side. Even the Communism of the saints in the time of the Apostles, failed from this very cause (Acts IV, 34-37; VI, 1); and if such men and women failed, how certainly will the world at large fail! Sin and selfishness must be eradicated before men are capable of successfully ruling themselves or others. This reason may be named the *imperfect moral nature of man*, due mainly to heredity and environment. His *heart* is not right.

(2) A second important reason is, that no one, ruler or subject, is perfectly sound in mind. We confine a certain section of mankind in asylums and label them "insane." As a matter of fact, however, there is no one perfectly sane or sound of mind. What is insanity? Insanity simply means lack of judgment; and I do not think anyone will claim that he is perfectly sound (sane) in judgment. However wisely a man or a body of men may rule, occasional errors in judgment are sure to occur. The principal reason for this is the inability to read motives. Men can judge only by the hearing of the ear, and the seeing of the eye; they cannot read the heart. Thus "to err is human" has become a proverb. This reason of man's failure to govern successfully may be called the *imperfect mental nature of man*, due mainly to heredity. His *head* is not right.

(3) A third reason, no less important than the others, is that everyone is more or less physically imperfect. Some are a little stronger than their fellows, but all are more or less weak and prone to disease and accidents, and sooner or later everyone goes down into death. So long as death reigns, there can *never* be everlasting peace and contentment. Though every other cause of sorrow were removed, the loss by death of our nearest and dearest, and the knowledge that sooner or later we also will require to die, must necessarily mar happiness. This reason may be called the

imperfect physical nature of man. Like the other two, it is mainly due to heredity. His *body* is not right.

Thus, moral imperfection, mental imperfection, and physical imperfection ending in death, will require to be removed before the desire of all nations can come. Men have been constantly endeavouring to remove these imperfections and to improve their environment, but without success. Christ alone is able to accomplish this great work; and we are assured in the Scriptures that He *will* do so; it is for this purpose that He comes again.

The Cause of the Present Imperfection.

What is the cause of the fact that all men are more or less imperfect mentally, physically, and morally? Clearly for the most part, their frailty is due to heredity. Some say: It is all very well to blame heredity, but a man's imperfections are due to his own fault. While this is true, it is so only to a small extent. No children are born physically perfect; some are disfigured with gross deformities. The same is true of the mental condition; and as regards the moral nature, you have not exercised your powers of observation, if you have not noticed the evidences of moral imperfection in children even before they are able to reason. The man who denies the influence of heredity is mentally blind. The Scriptures are in entire accordance with all this. The Psalmist says that we are born in sin, and shapen in iniquity—Psalm LI, 5; see also Job XIV, 4. "The fathers have eaten a sour grape [of sin], and the children's teeth are set on edge"—Jeremiah XXXI, 29.

As it is evident that we are all imperfect, and therefore all sinners, mainly through the law of heredity, it is necessary to inquire: *How did sin enter the world?* If we trace the law of heredity backwards, we come to the first man. Is it that the first man, as the Evolution theory claims, was only a little removed above the ape, and, therefore, with most of the mental and moral infirmities

of the brute? If so, then God is the author of sin. Reason and the Word of God both declare the falsity of such a view.

But the Bible account is not that man was made in the image of the ape nor a little above the ape, but that he was made in the image of God (Genesis I, 27), *a little lower than the angels*—Hebrews II, 6, 7. All God's works are perfect—Deuteronomy XXXII, 4. According to the Scriptures, then, man was perfect in the beginning and through sin fell from this perfection. I have heard some argue: "If Adam was perfect, how could he sin?" The reply is that, he was not created with a fully developed character; his perfection implied perfect mental and moral faculties in a perfect body. His character was a blank; but God implanted in him a conscience or moral sense, that is, the faculty or power of discerning between right and wrong, to enable him to form character. Adam was also allowed the liberty of his will, in order that he might be free to choose good or evil, and so develop a good or wicked character.

Some think that God should have created Adam so that he could not sin, and thus have avoided all this misery and sickness and death which we see around us, and which every one of us experience. Was it not wrong for God, they ask, to permit Adam to sin? God cannot do wrong. To have created man without freedom of will, would have made him a mere machine. God purposed to bring an earthly being into existence who would love Him spontaneously; and who would worship Him in spirit and truth—John IV, 23. Man had nothing whatever to do with the formation of his body and brain; that was his Creator's work. It is character which decides destiny, and it is the formation of character that God has left in our hands, as we read: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life"—Proverbs IV, 23.

According to the Scriptures, Adam chose the wrong course—I Timothy II, 14. Was God taken by surprise?

Not at all. He had His plan of redemption arranged from the beginning, for "known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world"—Acts XV, 18. He had foreordained from before the foundation of the world that the "Lamb" should be slain—1 Peter I, 18-20. God sentenced Adam to death; and by the law of heredity which He brought into operation, all the descendants of the first man have been born in sin, and share the sentence to death with him, as it is written: "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"—Romans V, 12.

The Satisfaction of Justice.

The foregoing shows the stern justice of God; but the Scriptures declare that "God is love." Let us now, therefore, consider evidences of His love, that true love which is both wise and just. God, having condemned all in Adam, in due time sent His only-begotten Son into the world in order that He might become Adam's substitute, and take upon Himself the death penalty. First, however, the Lord allowed an interval to elapse, because He foresaw it would be necessary to prove to men their need of a Saviour. If God had sent Jesus Christ sooner, it would always have been open to question whether men could not have saved themselves; but by the method which He adopted, it was proven conclusively that "none of them by any means can redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Psalm XLIX, 7), that "there is none righteous, no, not one"—Romans III, 10. To satisfy perfect justice which demands an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life, the ransom price to be paid must be an exact equivalent, namely, the life of a perfect man. This man would require to be absolutely without sin, because justice *demands* a sinner's death. No descendant of Adam has been born free from sin; nor has any since merited life in his own right in order that he might lay it down in sacrifice as a ransom or corresponding price for

Adam, neither the Jew who had the written law to guide him, nor the Gentile who had the light of his conscience and reason as a guide. Even the angels, whom the Scriptures indicate were permitted by God to attempt the uplift of man during the first Dispensation before the flood, were unable to reverse the sentence of death passed upon the human race. On the contrary, instead of raising men from sin and degradation, many of the angels fell from their first estate, as we read in Jude 6.

Thus God demonstrated that His way of salvation is the only possible way. His only-begotten Son, Jesus Himself, left the glory He had with His Father in heaven, and partook of flesh and blood that He might die as a man; that through death He might destroy him that has the power of death, that is, the devil—Hebrews II, 9, 14. It was love that dictated the sacrifice, and He obeyed the dictates of love. As Jesus has paid the price, the first man will in due time be set free, that he may have a second opportunity for life or death. But not only will Adam be set free from the prison-house of death, but the whole race also, which was condemned in him. That is what Paul declares in Romans V, 18, 19—"As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift shall come upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

The Reign of Christ.

When Christ begins His glorious reign, he will destroy the works of the devil—I John III, 8. These works are *Sin and Death*, with all that these imply. I Corinthians XV, 25, 26—"For he [Christ] must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. And the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." What are the enemies of mankind that obstruct the establishment of good government, peace and contentment? They are moral imperfection, ment-

imperfection, and physical imperfection. These result from sin and end in death, and must be put under Christ's feet before the desire of all nations can be realised.

In the book of Revelation (XX, 1, 2), we are assured that *the first enemy that Christ will subdue will be Satan.* As the "prince of the power of the air" Satan now rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience, and as the "god of this world" he "hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them"—Ephesians II, 3; 2 Corinthians IV, 4. Satan is "the prince of this world" (John XIV, 30), and must be deposed; then *Christ will become the Prince of Peace.* Satan will be bound for a thousand years, to prevent him deceiving the nations during their process of uplifting under the beneficent rule of Christ. But when the thousand years are expired he must be loosed for a little season, in order to finally test the loyalty of the people to God and to righteousness. When all the enemies of God and righteousness have been destroyed, then, indeed, the desire of all nations will have come. That glorious condition, however, will not exist till the end of Christ's Millennial reign.

During the thousand years of Christ's rule, the moral, mental and physical imperfections which have rendered man helpless in his attempt to govern the world, will be removed. Of the three, the condition of the heart is the most important. Will men's heart's be put right? Yes. In Ezekiel XXXVI, 26, 27, we read: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Through the prophet Jeremiah (XXXI, 28, 29), we are informed that the law of heredity will cease after the Israelites are restored to their land and to God's everlasting favour: "And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched

over them to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict: so will I watch over them, to build and to plant, saith the Lord. In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge." This means that in those days, *i.e.,* during Christ's Millennial reign, no man will suffer mentally, morally, or physically through heredity.

How will this change be accomplished? Simply by bringing in a new order of things, *a new Dispensation.* Those in the grave will come forth, and those who survive the great time of trouble which will bring the present Dispensation to a close, will live on. There will be no births as we have now, because so long as procreation continues, the law of heredity will operate. Jesus Himself said: "In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage"—Matthew XXII, 30. The prophet goes on to declare (Jeremiah XXXI, 30)—"But everyone [who dies] shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape [of sin], *his* teeth shall be set on edge." Each one will suffer, or die, for his own individual misdeeds. This is in accordance with the Apostle's statement, recorded in Acts III, 23—"Every soul which will not hear that prophet [in the sense of obeying him] shall be destroyed from among the people." The Psalmist also declares (LXXII, 9)—"His enemies shall lick the dust."

But the extreme penalty of death will be only for wilful persistent disobedience. There will not be any at that time who will be ignorant of God's glorious character, and His wonderful plan of salvation. "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah:.....After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know

me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"—Jeremiah XXXI, 31-34. Again, in the 35th chapter of Isaiah, we read regarding the reign of Christ, the time when the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert."

The Resurrection of the Unjust.

Thus the testimony of God's Word, dear friends, is that all moral, mental, and physical imperfections will be removed by Christ, not suddenly, but gradually. With the exception of the saints, who have died in faith, everyone will be raised from the grave with the same imperfect character such as he has now. If a man is vicious in this life-time he will be raised with the same vicious character. Moderately good men will rise moderately good. It will not profit anyone to say: "I am to get another chance. I will do as I like now." Solomon, speaking to such, said: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment"—Ecclesiastes XI, 9.

In the resurrection, just as it is now, the development of character will be gradual. In the present Dispensation, evil is permitted by God and is prospering. "Now we call the proud happy: yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered"—Malachi III, 15. The consequence is that the people are pursuing the downward course of sin; for it is apparent to every right thinking man that the world, left to itself, is not learning righteousness. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the hearts

of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil"—Ecclesiastes VIII, 11. Business men declare that there is dishonesty in all commercial concerns; that no business can succeed on lines of strict integrity. In these times it is much more difficult to do good than to do evil. Frequently when you do a kindly action for anyone, you do not even get thanks; and if you are gentle and loving, people think you soft and try to take advantage of you. If you endeavour to lead an honest, straightforward life, you are certain to meet with opposition. "All that will live godly in Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution"—1 Timothy III, 12. The development of good character in the present time meets with opposition at every turn. Need we wonder at this when Satan is the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air?

It will be very different when Christ takes His power to reign. He will judge the people with righteousness, and evil will no longer be permitted. Of that time we read: "When the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world *will* learn righteousness"—Isaiah XXVI, 9. When Christ is reigning, every time a man sins the penalty will follow swiftly and surely, and, on the other hand, every time a man does a righteous act he will be rewarded immediately. Thus the righteous will be encouraged, and the sinner will be discouraged; the people will soon find that it will pay to do good; that the better they are the more they succeed, and the worse they are the greater they suffer—the very reverse of what obtains at present. The inhabitants of the world will *then* learn righteousness, and will flourish (Psalm LXXII, 7); as their moral imperfection disappears, their mental and physical imperfections will also disappear, until finally they will attain to that perfection lost by Adam.

Christ's Reign Autocratic.

At first, the people will require to be forced to obey, but the necessary punishment will be of a reformative

nature, and will be accompanied by evidences of love and impartial justice. Everyone will recognise that any punishment he may receive is deserved and intended for his good. He will have the best guarantee that this is so, for the judge in that day will be the meek and gentle Jesus, and associated with Him will be the saints—Acts XVII, 31; I Corinthians VI, 2. Gradually the world will yield that obedience which comes from love and appreciation of righteousness, and will no longer require to be forced.

In Christ's day errors in judgment will not occur, nor mistakes of any kind on the part of the Great Judge. "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and *he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears*"—Isaiah XI, 1-8.

This chapter is one of the best known of these which describe the Millennial reign of Christ. It describes how such ferocious animals as the wolf, the leopard and the lion will lie down with the lamb and the kid, and how a little child shall lead them. It tells, too, how "they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God's holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." In that day Christ will see into the hearts of men; and will discern the *motives* which underlie their every thought and action.

Not only will Christ be unerring in judgment, and His dealings ultimately recognised by all to be just and loving, perfect, but His righteous decisions will be backed by the almighty power of God. He has full authority from God to execute His wise, just and loving purposes when the time comes. When He rose from the dead, He said: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth"—

Matthew XXVIII, 18. He will not require to consider whether His laws and judgments are popular or otherwise for He will have no fear of an election or revolution by which He might be unseated from power. His Kingdom will be an everlasting Kingdom; and His authority will be absolute, for "he has been highly exalted and given a name above every name." His decisions will be so just and loving and wise, and will be executed so effectually and with such good results, that ultimately every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father—Philippians II, 10, 11. Thus we see that *Christ's reign will be autocratic.*

The Desire of all Nations shall come.

At the end of the thousand years, those who love iniquity will be destroyed in the second death (Revelation XXI, 8); all others will continue to live during the Ages to follow. Sin and selfishness, and all forms of mental and physical imperfections will be completely eradicated, and there will be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither will there be any more pain, for the former things will have passed away." *The earth will yield its increase* (Psalm LXVII, 6), and nothing will be allowed to exist which could hurt or destroy. The dominion over the perfect earth will be given to the human race under God's sovreignty, because man will then be perfect not only in body, but also in heart, in character. They will have perfect communion with God and with each other, for all will love the Lord their God with all their heart, and mind, and soul and strength, and their neighbour as themselves. As the guiding principle will no longer be selfishness as at present, but love, the form of government which will be successfully adopted may be on the lines now advocated by Socialism. There will be nothing to mar the world's everlasting peace and contentment when

Christ "shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father"—1 Corinthians XV, 24-26. Thus do the Scriptures reveal how at last the "desire of all nations shall come."

The Purpose of the Present Dispensation.

I have dwelt principally on the hope which will be offered to the world, and have not enlarged on the hope held out to the Church, the followers of Christ. In closing, therefore, I would urge upon you the desirability of believing in Christ now, and of accepting the gracious privilege of becoming members of His Body—1 Corinthians XII, 12. If we follow in His footsteps now when evil is permitted, we shall share in His resurrection, and shall be associated with Him in His glorious reign. As we read: "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him"—2 Timothy II, 11, 12. This will mean a life of self-denial and sacrifice, doing good to all men as we have opportunity, but especially to the household of faith. It will bring much persecution and contradiction of sinners. But though we shall have tribulation, the peace of God will rule in our hearts, and we shall have the joy of the Lord. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." I trust that all of us who take up our cross and follow Jesus, will overcome evil with good and endure to the end; that for the joy set before us we shall endure the cross, and despise the shame, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. If we do, we shall be counted as overcomers. Let us pray for one another that we may be faithful unto death, so that we may obtain the crown of life, and be privileged to share with the Lord Jesus in His glorious work of realising the desire of all nations, peace on earth, and good will toward men, to the glory of God the Father. *Amen.*

Note New Address:

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27 Aytoun Road

Glasgow, S.1

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Printed by Bone & Hulley, Glasgow, Scotland