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SOCIAL CURRENTS

FOR JOURNAL

Canadian Socialist League, No. 67, (known since July 15, 1903, as Fredericton Socialist League), was organized on July 28, 1902. For platforms, applications, blanks, &c., apply to the Organizer, Henry Harvey Stuart, Hopewell Hill, N. B.

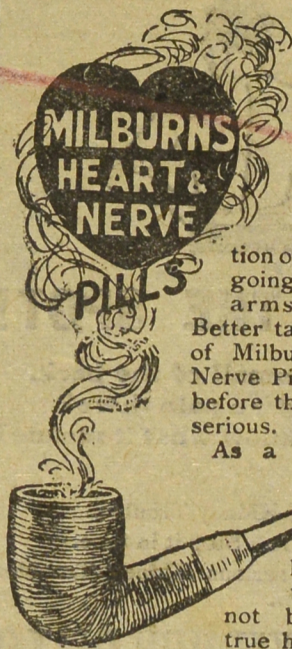
Christ, Socialism and the Church

(By Henry Harvey Stuart, Methodist Local Preacher, Hopewell Hill, N. B.)

An overwhelming majority of the adult population of North America profess to believe in the teachings of Jesus Christ, and most of them are actually members of some branch of the church that bears his name. But while a large and rapidly increasing number of Christians are also socialists, the church, as a body, holds aloof from the co-operative commonwealth, the officials with few, but notable, exceptions, being either indifferent or hostile, and the bulk of the membership following their natural leaders. In many quarters, where more knowledge should be expected, socialism is still looked upon as an evil and dangerous theory akin to robbery and allied with the propaganda of the deed.

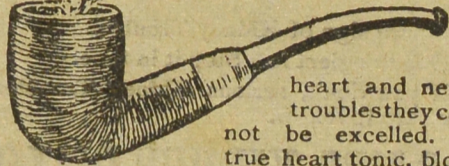
To a student of the New Testament this opposition to socialist philosophy is amazing. Now the writer does not claim that socialism and Christianity are identical. The former, as a merely economic and political faith, has nothing at all to do with religion as religion. Good socialists may be sincere Christians, Jews, Mohammedans, or Freethinkers, according to their individual preference. Other political parties are composed of persons of many different religious persuasions. So with the socialist organization. Neither does this article discuss the proper attitude of socialists towards Christianity or any other religion; but it does endeavour to show what position every true Christian should occupy in relation to the socialist party.

No follower of Jesus can consistently uphold the competitive system that at present obtains. For, although Jesus founded no political party and commanded to give Caesar, or the government of the day, his due, yet no one can live up to the law: "Whatever ye would that men should do to you, do even so to them," and at the same time believe in the doctrine of unlimited competition. It is simply impossible to think of the industrial rivalry of the age as being consistent with the Golden Rule. No man Christian or otherwise, likes to be crowded out of work or cheated in a property transfer; but our methods of doing things compel us to displace our competitors or be ourselves displaced. This fierce and incessant struggle, so persistent and so deadly, is the very opposite of the kingdom of God preached by the meek and lowly



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Jesus, and should not for a moment be tolerated by his followers. Jesus taught his disciples that all they were brethren, and that he that is greatest shall be the servant of all. The bending of all one's energies towards ousting any fellow-mortal from a position of advantage or the spending of one's time and labor in merely defending one's position from a horde of hungry assailants, is as far from the ideal social service which Jesus enjoined as heaven from hell.

When the master said: "Take no thought for the morrow," he commanded what then was, and still is, impossible to perform. For a man now to absolutely throw away all anxious care for the future would be to seriously endanger his industrial and social standing and invite financial and physical disaster. But Jesus never mocked humanity. When he said to take no thought for the morrow He expected his followers to exert all their influence to bring about such industrial and social changes as would enable the world to literally obey his commandment. Only the triumph of the co-operative commonwealth will make obedience to that command possible. Only socialism offers to establish the conditions that will insure to every man and woman the sense of security necessary for proper rest and relaxation after toil.

Christ's teachings tending so decidedly and plainly towards the carrying out of socialist ideals, it logically follows that the professed disciples of the Messiah are in duty bound to ally themselves with the Socialist party to hasten the time when it will be possible for Christians to live as their Master desires.

Fredericton Junction, N. B., July 10, 1903.

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