Workers World Series
Number 1
Price 10 Cents

THE CHURCH
AND
SOCIALISM

By AUSTIN LEWIS
The Church and Socialism

BY
AUSTIN LEWIS

THE WORLD PRESS
528 TELEGRAPH AVENUE
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA
The Church and Socialism.

Socialism does not concern itself with religion. It is an economic doctrine which expresses itself in political action. It has no teachings to put forward with regard to that which precedes or follows human life on this planet. The life of human society is its theme. The relations of man to the unknown and the unknowable, faith and belief, are matters foreign to it, with which it is not concerned. It interferes therefore with no man's religion. It criticises no man's faith. The relation of man to the Deity, the fundamentals of religion, the destiny of man beyond the grave, the responsibility of the individual soul to the Unseen Powers in whose existence it may believe are not matters within the scope of Socialism. Religion is, in the eyes of the Socialist Movement, a matter of individual concern. The following pages are therefore not concerned with religion. There is no attack or even criticism upon the faith of any man intended by the writer. Religion is considered only so far as it has represented itself in human institutions. Organized religious associations are social institutions and, as such, are proper subjects for the examination and criticism of those who undertake to consider the activities of human society. The Church, then, is here briefly considered as a social institution, not as a teacher of doctrine or even as an expounder of a certain ethical system. What then has the modern workingclass movement of which
Socialism is the expression, to say about the Church?

**Institutions.**

Human relations express themselves in institutions. These institutions are discernible at all stages of human development; in rudimentary stages in rudimentary forms; in more advanced stages in forms more complex. This has led men to consider certain institutions as permanent, such as government, law, the church. But these institutions are constantly changing their form. They rest upon a shifting basis and that basis is the economic condition of the society in which they exist. Thus in savagery, the elementary institutions which pertain to it are such as are sufficient to meet the necessities of human society in that primitive condition. These institutions change their scope and form with the development of human society. They change with the incessant change of nature and of man. They appear to be as solid as the mountains, but even the mountains move. The bastions of nature crumble away and assume ever new forms.

In the primitive stages of human development, then arose religion to express the relations of man to the unknowable, and to perpetuate crudely the history of the tribe. Religions changed and developed with the development of human society, but maintained their places as social institutions. What is still more important, they represented more and more, as the centuries went by, the interests of the dominant economic forces in the communities.
Religious institutions were always, after the dissolution of tribal society, at least, the handmaids of the dominant class. There is no need to elaborate this point, even if the space of a pamphlet permitted. Egyptian priest, Roman pontiff, Christian prelate, they have all been the official upholders of the rulers, the defenders of the ethics and authority of the economically and politically powerful. No victory has been so brutal but it has found priests to sing its praises, no destruction of human liberty so vile but that the official religious institution has blessed it in the name of the Deity. In Servia where a monarch was recently killed under circumstances so conspicuously brutal that one at least of the modern powers refused recognition to his successor, the redhanded murderer who ascended the throne of the murdered found bishops willing to chant his paeans of victory and to sing Te Deums in his honor. Religious institutions have therefore altered their structure and changed their forms as the economic changes of society have compelled such alterations, but they have always been on the side of the dominant class, and where the dominant class has been overthrown, a new form of religion or a new application of an old form has been made to suit the interests and necessities of the new dominant class.

The Church as An Institution.

Christianity which began as the propaganda of certain specific doctrines, concerning the exact nature of which there is much dispute even among the official representatives of the religion, nowadays, rapidly increased in power and influence. Its ramifications spread throughout the whole Ro-
man empire. From a small and insignificant secret society it grew into a great and powerful organization so that a little more than two hundred and fifty years after its inception it was embraced by the Roman Emperor, Constantine, and became a recognized state religion.

There were various very practical reasons (into which there is no need to enter here) for this adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire. Suffice it to say that henceforward the Church instead of being an ethical teacher and the representative of a certain doctrine became at the same time an ethical teacher and the official religious representative of the dominant class. Its chief priest took the name of the former official head of the old heathen religion and to this day is known as the Supreme Pontiff. The doctrine of the Church was systematised in the Nicene Creed, and heresy or disagreement with that doctrine was severely punished. Religion was now propagated by the civil and military resources of the state, and the clergy became officers of state. The clergy were the educators and they had a practical monopoly of the fields of jurisprudence and philosophy. Under the feudal system the very organization of the Church partook of the nature of the feudal organization. The bishop was the religious equivalent of the baron, the priest of the knight, the deacon of the squire. And just as the king was the supreme baron, so was the Pope the supreme priest who exercised his power as the Vicar of God and so claimed superiority to the King. Much of the bloodshed and commotion of the Middle Ages was caused by the
dispute between Church and King as to the mutual rights of each.

In the course of time the economic basis on which the feudal system stood was shaken. The trading class and the guilds of manufacturers increased in wealth and influence and naturally in the course of their development came into collision with the feudal lords. They demanded a religious expression of their interests and mirrored their political and social aspirations in a new religion. Hence arose Protestantism. Then came Calvinism or Presbyterianism and by its conversion of the Church into a republic, practically provided the religion required by the triumphant commercialists. In England, where a compromise religion had been arranged, there arose numerous protestant sects, under the general name of Protestant Dissent, and these mirrored the religious aspirations of the smaller business men and capitalists and are known as the free churches in America, Baptists and the like. These for the most part represent the religious views of the small traders and manufacturers who support them and are in a great many instances representative of petty and local commercial interests.

From the above brief sketch it will be gathered that the Church is regarded by the Socialist Movement as an institution whose history has not differed from that of other institutions. It has like other institutions, adapted itself to the economic environment in which it has been placed. Where a new economic environment has grown up, unrecognized by the Church and to which it has re-
fused to accommodate itself, a new form of ecclesiastical organization has arisen more suited and better adapted to the economic environment, just as the form of government has changed and as the rules and maxims regulating the legal institutions have changed. And this it will be observed, is altogether independent of the religious content, it has nothing to do with the supernatural teachings or the moral sanctions of Christianity, it merely concerns the Church as an institution.

The Church and Economic Classes.

In the sketch just given it will be seen that the relations of the Church to the aristocratic feudal classes which had its source of wealth and power in land and to the commercial and industrial capitalists, the dominant class of today, having their wealth and power in the ownership of the means of economic production and exchange, have been shown. But no reference has been made to the relation borne by the Church to the proletarian class, of whose hopes and philosophy Socialism is the exponent. The reason for this lies in the fact that the proletarian class is a new class. It has developed within the last hundred and fifty years. It is a class which has arisen subsequently to the ecclesiastical changes which have been described. There was no need for the Church to trouble itself particularly about the working people in the preceding epochs. In the feudal system, the serf and the peasant, with all of their hardships, were part of the social structure, and the religion of the society of which they were members was also naturally their religion. So far was this recognized that even
in the most tyrannical periods of medieval times the poorest serf could have an opportunity, by embracing the religious life, to reach the highest ecclesiastical positions which also at that time also implied the highest political and administrative positions. The records of the Middle Ages abound in examples of poor boys who climbed to positions of influence and dignity by way of the Church.

Such modern attempts as missions to the working class and special evangelistic attempts at the conversion of the working class, specifically, were unknown and would have been incomprehensible. The same statement applies to the succeeding stage of industry, known as the domestic, which had within itself the germs of modern capitalism. The village officials, the authority of the master under the apprentice system, and the force of public opinion, all combined to compel the attendance of the working class at places of worship. Laws were made which rendered such attendance compulsory, and in some of the churches in England today are to be seen the white wands with which the church wardens used to sally forth into the street and gather up those who were not attending church, literally compelling them to come in. Evidences of this compulsory attendance upon divine service are to be found in the laws which require the closing of inns during service time. In fact the capitalistic class in its infancy, during the existence of the domestic system, took care that the working people should go to the place where they could be categorically informed of their duties to their employers and where the vanity of the squires and the prosperous traders and employers might be
gratified by the occupation of the chief seats in the synagogues. The mass of the poor was therefore neglected by the church. This institution did not concern itself with the interests of the down-trodden and the oppressed. Where it still represented the interests of an aristocracy, it was proud and exclusive, puffed up with its social position, and neglecting the humble and the lowly. Where the commercial classes were strong it catered to the vanities and idiosyncrasies of these classes and defended usury and oppression. In this way it stored up for itself the trouble which has now come upon it and itself prepared the problems which it now discovers to be insoluble.

The Church and the Proletarian.

In 1760 began that great industrial revolution which has completely changed the face of society and has brought into being the world as we know it today. In the course of that change it broke up the old system of labor. It drove the workpeople from their villages and herded them in great cities, it took their children and harnessed them to the new machines. It sent the mother out to work and destroyed family life. In short it made the modern proletarian—a creature who is fundamentally not a human being at all but a piece of animated labor force, valued at a certain sum in the market, as long as there is any demand for the labor force, and of no value at all when that labor force cannot find a purchaser. But in making the laborer a commodity, the industrial revolution also, in the proletarian, freed him from the personal supremacy of the master. The compulsion possible in the
small village could not operate in the great city, and the public opinion which had obliged a certain course of conduct in the narrow life of the small community had no power in the crowded slum and the collective activities of the machine-made proletariat. The Church therefore lost touch of the workingman. But the Church did not seem to mind. During all that ghastly period in Great Britain from the beginning of the machine industry to the institution of the laws against child labor, the Church was dumb and the good Christian men who crowded her portals never learned from her teachers the iniquity of the murder of little children, by industrial means, and were not informed of the lack of Christianity involved in methods which were making a slaughter-house of a nation and destroying a race in a wanton and unrestricted race for greed. Those to whom the command "Feed my lambs" had been given with all the authority of the Founder of their religion saw those "lambs" sold into worse than slavery without a protest. Thus for every reason the proletarian deserted the portals of the Church and today the Church finds itself confronted by the fact that the proletarian has nothing to do with its ministrations.

The clergy discover that the proletarian know nothing about the Church, that they have no strong feelings against it, but that they simply have no sympathy for it and regard it with a sort of care­less contempt. In short the Church has learned that the progressive revolutionary force of the present day and the masters of tomorrow have escaped from its hand and that it must win them if it is to retain its power.
The complaints that the Church has lost the proletarian are really groundless; as a matter of fact, the Church never had the proletarian. If it is the modern proletarian, it has to begin at the very beginning and win him, win him to god, with all the odds against it, for the deference of the Church to wealth, the surrender of the clergy of all denominations to the baser influences of the money power, the class constitution of the modern Church, have created a contemptuous attitude on the part of the proletarian which will be difficult if not impossible to overcome.

That this is the case is unquestionable. The Church admits it. Every Church paper and every Church synod are concerned with the fact that the working class absents itself from ecclesiastical ministrations. Most elaborate proposals are made for dealing with the difficulty. All sorts of devices are resorted to and a considerable amount of money is expended with the avowed purpose of bringing the proletarian into the fold. But it is all in vain. The attitude of labor is stubbornly nonchalant where it is not actively hostile. Frankly speaking the gulf between the Church and the proletarian appears today to be unbridged and unbridgeable. For what can the Church offer to the proletarian?

Functions of the Modern Church.

Besides being a teacher of religion, the modern Church performs certain social functions by virtue of which it maintains its hold as an institution upon the middle classes which support it. In the first place, it is a social club. Membership in a Church implies membership in a definite social set.
The social value of one church differs from that of another; thus even in the same communion we get churches fashionable and unfashionable, and the Episcopalian, for example, who attends St. Thomas' Church would not care to be found among the congregation of St. Bartholomew's. Then, too, it serves as a meeting place for young men and women, and thus as an eminently respectable marriage bureau. It also has the effect of providing amiable ladies of the middle class and of middle life with some form of social and charitable activity. These functions do not make any appeal to the working class. Its own social life, as far as it enjoys any, is provided for,—badly and unsatisfactorily, it is true, but still in such way that the Church can render it no actual service.

If we compare these present-day functions of the Church with those which it has lost, we shall see how little material ground is left upon which the Church may develop its propaganda among the proletariat. Formerly the Church was the sole educator; now education has been taken from the hands of its ministers and has been made a department of public activity. The Church was the great dispenser of charity, and by this means exercised a control and influence over the poor; now the social experts have pronounced against the Church methods of charity administration upon the grounds that they are unscientific and tends to pauperization. The charitable activities of the Church have been undertaken by organized associations managed on a purely secular basis. Municipalities are continually assuming duties with respect to the alleviation of poverty; state societies are being
formed everywhere for the treatment of juvenile offenders; state substitutes for the magdalene institutions and for dealing with the problem of the submerged are either being seriously considered or actually created. The tendency is to an increasing participation by the whole community in that relief which was, up to comparatively a short time ago, the exclusive enterprise of the Church. In short, the social functions of the Church are being rapidly destroyed in all progressive communities; that is, in just those communities where the proletariat is a strong and growing force. One by one the privileges of the Church are being shorn away. One by one the habiliments of its former official rank are being taken off, and, like the early apostles, its ministers will have to face the proletariat with only the staff and scrip of the missionary. Its sole task left will be the proclamation of the religion which it professes. It will have to begin at the beginning again and proclaim the gospel to the sceptical proletarians, and it will have to do this under circumstances which present greater difficulties than the Church has ever before met.

The progress of modern science has made inroads even in the middle class support of the Church. The intellect of the dominant class has tended further and further away from the Church. Culture and knowledge pass it by. The loss of the functions which have been enumerated has tended to deprive the Church of the most energetic and most able of those who formerly placed their lives at her service. The intellectual calibre of the ministry deteriorates year by year, as is admitted
even by the Church itself. In short, it has paid the penalty for its own subserviency and snobbery and is reduced to the position of a mere handmaid of the class in power, whose vanity it flatters, and whose ethics it preaches. It revenges itself for its degradation by laying heavy tolls upon the wealthy, and by the acquisition of buildings and appointments whose expensive exteriors are suggestive of the whited sepulchres to which the Founder of the Church so caustically referred. The bourgeoisie is a hard master, even of the church. Having bought it with a price, the Church will demand the uttermost farthing in degradation and prostitution. It must be admitted, too, that the Church, as a whole, with certain brilliant and notable exceptions, is glad enough to pay the price and rushes headlong into the sea with all the abandon of those Gadarene swine. Under these circumstances it has to face the class which is most antagonistic to the classes which supports the Church. It appeals to labor with its altars laden with the gifts of those who have plundered labor; it appeals to the proletarian from the same pulpit from which it has proclaimed the ethics of the enemy of the proletarian. What success can it expect?

Religion and the Proletariat.

This non-success of the Church in the propaganda of its doctrines and its failure to gain adherents from the ranks of the proletariat comes at a time when the conditions of life of the proletariat are such as to tend to wean its members from religion. All students of the modern machine industry are agreed that its psychological effects
are by no means idealistic. The use of machinery and the constant demonstration of the working of physical causes and effect are such as to discourage speculation with regard to the supernatural and to induce a scepticism with respect to the miraculous. The life lived by the modern proletariat is the antithesis of that lived by his religious predecessor in the Middle Ages. The denizen of the modern city, who toils all day among the clatter and clangor of machinery is not confronted by the inexplicable. On the contrary, all the processes in which he takes part are explainable upon very obvious grounds. It was quite otherwise with the peasant. The latter is always confronted by phenomena for which he can find no adequate explanation. The natural occurrences are to him matters of wonder. The storm, sunshine, the germination of his crops, the fecundity of his animals are all inexplicable to him, and his mind is, therefore, all the more disposed to recognize the existence of supernatural agents, and his helplessness in face of them disposes him to worship.

Paul Lafargue, the well-known French socialist, thus contrasts the life of the modern city proletarian with that of the peasant: "His city life keeps him free from the perturbation, the anxiety and the cares which harass the mind of the farmer. Nature, consequently, has no part in shaping the character of his mind. . . . the gigantic apparatuses of steel and iron which appear in the factory, and which he sets in motion, as if he wound up an automaton, rattle and roar tempestuously but rouse in him no feeling of such superstitious awe as thunder might cause to a farmer, but leave
him unshaken and unalarmed. Practical labor in the workshop teaches the wage-earner scientific determinism, except that he has not arrived at it through the theoretic study of philosophy."

The same author makes the following statement with respect to the ill success of the church in its propaganda: "All the numerous attempts made in Europe and America to Christianize the proletariat have been barren of result. Nothing has ever succeeded in overcoming the indifference toward religion manifested by those city masses, which are being constantly increased by the accession of new recruits, as country handicrafts-men and villagers stream in by thousands to join the machine operatives in the vast army of wage-earners."

This statement may be considered in some quarters as exaggerated and overdrawn, but all unbiased observers will agree that it is substantially true of the European continental proletariat and, consequently, of the masses of the proletariat in this country which have drawn their inspiration from their training in the European workshops. But it is also true to a very increasing extent among the English proletariat. Father James Adderley, a well-known Church of England clergyman, wrote recently: "The labor movement is not divorced from religion as it is on the Continent very largely. Many of the labor leaders are Christian preachers. The rank and file of the labor army are intensely religious still, though not ecclesiastical. We need not lose them, but, in order to gain them, we must let them gain us." Thus we
see an energetic and earnest clergyman regards the championship of the claims of the proletarian by the Church as the only possible means of preserving the religion of the proletarian even in that country in which the proletarian is most favorably disposed to religion. How far-fetched and impossible such a solution of the question from the point of view of the Church is, will be seen at a glance.

The Church is tied hand and foot to the dominant class. To accept in any marked degree the proletarian position would mean the withdrawal of the middle-class support from the Church and the loss of all the emoluments and dignities which are so dear to human beings, even to ecclesiastical human beings. So absurd is such an idea that it is positively unthinkable. Even the solitary clergyman who dares to take such an attitude is deprived of the right to exercise his ecclesiastical functions and is thrown upon the world. The ranks of the socialist propaganda contain several men who have been forcibly deprived of their churches because of their expressed sympathy with the proletarian. If the religion of the proletariat is dependent upon the maintenance of the Church, as an institution, then we may regard the proletariat as permanently irreligious, for the Church, as an institution, has attached itself to the most violent enemies of the proletariat and, in so doing, has incurred the hostility of the proletariat. And this antipathy has been brought about by the action of the Church itself, for, as the clergyman above quoted says: "It is not the Christian Church which they object to, but the atmosphere of monopoly which they associate with us and the brewers and the landlords.
When they come across clergy who are in sympathy with national progress, apart from mere clerical advantage, they welcome them and do not trouble themselves about ecclesiastic questions.”

The only way, therefore, in which the religious propaganda can be made successful is by the proletarianization of the Church, by the acceptance by the Church of the claims of the revolutionary working class. The feudal noble had his Church, the middle class has its Church today. Will the proletariat as a class have its Church tomorrow? That is the question which Pope and presbytery have equally to ask themselves, for the proletarian is the coming victorious class, his victory is the logical result and, indeed, the practically inevitable result of the modern historic process. If the victorious proletarian has no Church, what becomes of the Church?

**Socialism and the Proletariat.**

Inevitably in the course of modern industrial development has come the Socialist movement. The Socialist philosophy is the philosophy of the proletarian. And with the Socialist philosophy has come, as a matter of course, the Socialist propaganda. The advocates of Socialism on the public platform have met and are meeting with the same persecutions and annoyances as the advocates of new doctrines antagonistic to the interests of the dominant class always experience. Still their propaganda develops and their halls fill with eager listeners and adherents of the working class. The churches may be empty of working men. You may visit the places of Christian worship in a city
one after the other and receive no impression that such a being as a proletarian existed. But the hall in which the Socialist speaker is explaining his doctrine is full of working men who show the most intense interest in what he is saying. Everywhere throughout the civilized world the same phenomenon is observable. It is said that in Germany five out of six of those who are met on the streets going to some place of meeting are on their way to attend a Social Democratic address. Even in this country the same thing holds good to an increasing extent.

The following is the report of an interview with the Rev. Charles Stelzle, who has been appointed as a special envoy of the Presbyterian Church by the Home Missionary Society of that institution, for the purpose of propagating Christianity specially among the wage-earners. "In an interview Mr. Stelzle, after his return from Colorado, where he had been studying the labor situation, said that Socialism is increasing among the workingmen of the West faster than Easterners realize. In Colorado, for instance, the issue, as he discovers it, is not unionism but Socialism; and the strike has entered many churches, officials differing fundamentally on the issues involved. For thousands of workingmen, Socialism has become a substitute for the church, the idealism of the earthly propaganda taking the place of the visions and ideals of the religious faith. This Mr. Stelzle has tested, not only by word of mouth conversation and by hearing the speeches of orators, but by a careful poll—through correspondence of the leaders among the Western labor leaders. He finds that
they are sending about the country as organizers and agitators men who were formerly ministers in Protestant churches, or who were Roman Catholic priests, who will use the religious terminology and appeal to the religious motives but to the end that an earthly Utopia may be set up, and without any reference to the life beyond the grave."

Socialism is not a religion, neither is the socialist propaganda a religious propaganda; yet, as we have seen, Socialism is able to find its adherents among the working class and to provide an ethic which receives working-class approval in preference to that of the Church. There was no necessity for the two forms of activity to come into collision. The Church was able to provide an ethical and religious justification for both feudalism and capitalism; it could have found such a justification for Socialism, and, in fact, if it is to survive at all, it will have to find such justification.

But the Church went out of its way to attack Socialism and used its pulpits for the purpose of controverting a political and economic movement. Its middle-class affiliations were the cause of this action. Petted and pampered by modern society and the bond slave of those whose social and economic position is based on the system of today, it has been compelled in the interests of its material supporters to declare war upon the Socialist propaganda and thus to prepare the way for its own destruction as an institution. Let us see the attitude which the Church has assumed to Socialism.

**Socialism and the Church.**

When the labor movement began to be strong
in Europe and to threaten the existing economic system, Pope Pius IX issued a papal encyclical in which he laid down the attitude of the great communion of which he was the head towards the movement of the working class for its emancipation. Article IV of this encyclical reads: "Of goods of the earth man has not merely the use like the brute creation, but he has also the right of permanent proprietorship,—and not merely of those things which are consumed by use but of those things which are not consumed by use."

Article V of the same encyclical is as follows: "The right of private property, the fruit of the labor or of cession or of donation by others, is an incontrovertible natural right, and everybody can dispose reasonably of such property as he sees fit."

The Church has therefore taken definite ground in defence of the institution of private property in the means of production, distribution and exchange. It stands forth as the champion of the economic system of today and therefore in distinct antagonism to Socialism and the Socialist propaganda.

In the encyclical of Leo XIII it is stated that the wages or pay of the laborer should be such as to support him in frugal comfort. This is based upon the ground that the wage-earner must live, and the only way in which he can live is by the wages of his labor.

Here is a declaration in favor of the present wages system, for the abolition of which the Socialist strives most earnestly and with reference to which the Church has placed itself in complete
antagonism to the working class and the Socialist movement.

As a result of this pronouncement from the Vatican the whole force of the Roman Catholic communion has been thrown against the Socialist movement and denunciations of the movement have abounded from all the Catholic pulpits. It cannot be denied that the effects of this propaganda have been the still further alienation of the proletarian from the Church and the bringing about of a condition which will render a conflict between the Catholic and the Socialist forces almost unavoidable, the first premonitions of which conflict have already begun to make themselves apparent in France and Italy.

The Church seems to have determined to be the rallying ground of all the conservative forces and apparently hopes to recoup herself for the Protestant schism by securing the support of the governments which represent middle-class interests. To that end, Catholic prelates lay great stress upon the success of their proselytising among the wealthy and powerful in the United States. The following remarks of Archbishop Quigley as reported in the St. Louis Star of 1903 are very typical of the point of view of the Catholic prelate. The Archbishop, according to the paper in question, said: "Since I have been in the Western parochial schools I have come to the conclusion that in fifty years, if things go on, as I see they are going on at present, the Catholic Church will actually own the West. Within twenty years, this country is going to rule the world. Kings and emperors will soon pass away and the democracy
of the United States will take their place. The West will dominate the country, and what I have seen of the Western parochial school has proved that the generation which follows us will be exclusively Catholic. When the United States rules the world, the Catholic Church will rule the world. Nothing can stand against the Church. I'd like to see the politician who would try to stand against the Church in Chicago. His reign would be short indeed.” Here is evidence of the effort which is made by this particular Church to become an actual political force as apart from an ethical and religious force. It is in pursuit of this end and not in the pursuit of the religious aims of the Church that the officials declare against the Socialist movement and that Archbishop Messmer of the Province of Milwaukee declares that no good Catholic can be a Socialist and says, “The Church must and naturally will condemn Socialism, although perfectly in accord with its professed aim—namely, the betterment of the laboring classes.”

The attitude of official Protestantism to the Socialist movement is not other than that of the official Catholicism. Innumerable instances might be quoted, but it is sufficient to note the report of the Board of Directors to the Colorado Baptists’ State Convention last year, which says, “The churches all over the State are now in a deplorable condition because of the incessant strife which has rent the business of this State in tatters. Not only have the commercial interests of the State suffered, but the attendance of our churches has fallen off to a considerable degree. No more serious crime could be perpetrated against a com-
munity than to place a finger against the progress of God's work among his people. The fault all lies at the doors of the labor agitators whose incessant bickering and agitation have stopped the wave of progress in all lines for more than a year; and it is due to this cause that I am compelled to report an empty treasury this year." Here, again, we see that the official portion of the Baptist Church in Colorado has pronouncedly anti-proletarian views and, naturally, sides with its wealthy middle-class supporters in the struggle between the two classes.

In fact, in whatever direction we may turn, we find that the Church, as an institution, is antagonistic to the Socialist movement, and that it goes out of its way to offer opposition to the progress of the working class. As a teacher of ethics and religion, it could not do this. It takes this attitude as a servant of the capitalistic class, as the paid advocate of the class against which the proletariat and the Socialist movement are in continual warfare. The Church as an institution, and the Socialist movement are therefore in antagonism. It will be noted, however, that the Church is responsible for the antagonism and, having precipitated the conflict, pays for it in the continual alienation of the working class which finds its representative in the Socialist movement.

**THE CHURCH AS A CAPITALIST.**

But the Church is not only an upholder and supporter of the present movement and the recipient of moneys gained by extortion from the working class; it is frequently itself a capitalist institution.
Many churches derive an income from the possession of landed property, some of which is slum property and concerning the incomes from which there has been more or less scandal. The source of income of some of the most famous churches has been the subject of much caustic comment even in the daily press. Saloons, and even more unlikely places to minister to the advance of religion, contribute their quota to the maintenance of the Church, as an institution, and colleges and theological seminaries connected with ecclesiastical efforts are by no means free from the charge that their funds are obtained in the same way as the funds of most capitalists, through the interest on capital invested in industry.

As an instance of the extent to which the Church is frequently a capitalist, may be quoted the statement of the "Koelnische Zeitung" in a recent issue that the value of the Church property in Belgium is $200,000,000, not including lands, forests, factories, hotels, etc., nominally held by others but in reality owned by the Church. That paper says, "The monks and nuns however do not stop at mere possession of capital but are active competitors in every department of life. They lower the already pitiful wages in the lace and linen trades, they build breweries and bakeries, they have so monopolized the school system that a young woman teacher today in Belgium stands no chance against a nun. Even the care of the insane is given into the hands of the Catholics, and out of 15,000 insane persons in Belgium, 13,000 are cared for by cloisters which receive from the state $600,000 a year. According to Dr. Lentz, the treatment of
these unfortunates is worse in Belgium than in any other country; the insane persons are made to work and the profit derived from this work by the cloisters is estimated at $5,000,000 a year."

France and other countries afford innumerable instances of the industrial and commercial activities of the Church as an institution apart altogether from the preaching of ethics or of religion. The same thing holds good, even here, and if a careful examination were made (for which there is not space here) of the capitalistic enterprises of ecclesiastical bodies the results would astonish those who have not hitherto regarded the Church as a capitalistic concern.

As a landlord and larger capitalist, it is therefore not remarkable that the Church should find itself in antagonism to the Socialist movement with its program of collective capital.

But if the great churches have taken up the role of the greater capitalist, it is equally true that many of the smaller churches have adopted that of the smaller capitalist, and that their methods of obtaining money are even more contemptible than those employed by the small retail traders of today in their struggle for existence. This fact has been noticed even by churchmen as appears from the following statement by Rev. Chas. Van Norden D. D. LL. D. in his book entitled "Jesus—An Unfinished Portrait." He says: "The editor of a religious journal thus recently bewailed the trials of the churches in his neighborhood. "They have raffled for crazy quilts, dipped into grab bags, voted for the handsomest man or for the most popular
minister in town, offered the privilege of kissing the handsomest young lady in the hall for one dollar or five dollars, sold cigars at the hands of sweet little girls, offered for ten cents guesses at the number of pins in a cushion, etc., until they are at their wits' end for taking resorts in making money.' "Chicken-pie sociables, poverty parties, guesses as to the number of pieces in a bed-quilt, fairs, maple sugar soirees, and all the usual round of pretty pious blackmail are resorted to in order to make up the deficit. And some years ago we tried the plan at one of our churches of having a dozen pretty young women take off their shoes and stockings and stand behind a curtain that left exposed only their pedals. Then we paid ten cents and passed by and made guesses at the owners of the underpinning. The man who made the highest number of correct guesses received a prize." There is little wonder that the author concludes that "Churches are capitalistic enterprises, run on commercial lines by small corporations, considered locally, or in great denominational confederations of these, by the usual methods of sharp competition, promotion and advertisement, and for the delectation of the incorporators with the least possible margin for disinterested charity."

In other words, the Church is itself part of the present capitalistic system, whose existence it is the aim of the Socialist to terminate, and of the Church, as an institution, to perpetuate, because its interests, its economic interests, are inextricably bound up with the system. It has great possessions and it cannot give them up. Its ethical
and religious mission is secondary in the eyes of the ecclesiastical officials to its social position and the standing which it gains as the exponent of the ethics of the capitalist class. It has frankly accepted this position. Let it, then, frankly accept the results of it, and not complain that it does not receive the support of the proletarian. Let it not assert that the Socialist movement is an enemy of religion when it is merely the enemy of the capitalistic system of which the Church itself today forms a part, that is, the Church as an institution.

**The Break-Up of the Church As An Institution.**

But, though the Church, as an institution, takes so antagonistic and hostile an attitude towards the Socialist movement, it cannot escape the consequences of that movement. Thus the fermentation due to the working of the Socialistic idea is affecting even the Church. Numbers of its clergy and ministers, who are really earnest in their anxiety to win the support of the proletariat, declare that the present position of the Church as the apologist for the economically powerful, is the main reason for its lack of influence among the working class. Thus the Rev. Van Norden who has been already quoted says: "The whole trouble is the conviction on the part of the wage earners that the churches are aristocratic, the exclusive domain for the salaried and employing classes, and no place for men and women who own little but their own hands and live by daily effort and that the ecclesiastical systems all fortify wrongs in social conditions they feel themselves suffering from. And the pity of it is that this claim is true."

The Report of the Committee on the Alienation of the Workingman made to the Synod of the Diocese of Kootenai, B. C., Church of England,
this year states: "The socialistic workingman criticizes the Church adversely because he main-
tains that she has stultified herself and failed to properly expound Christianity by allowing herself
to be dominated by a social system which he claims
to be in opposition to the Lord's own
teaching and with which he is in oppo-
sition. The Church, in other words, in
becoming the Church of those who maintain
the present social order, has, from his point of
view, unfortunately, also, become the defender
of that system, regardless of the fact that that
social system or order might be wrong, and thus
that she has ceased to be a recognized leader, guide
or exponent of that, to him, truly Christian condi-
tion which she as a Church ought to maintain, at
least in her own communion."

An English Church of England clergyman
writing to the "Church Times" of February 2nd
this year says: "No Christian can be contented
with the conditions of life and labor under which
the mass of the poor are struggling for existence.
Why not join in all right movements for bettering
those conditions and show ourselves more deeply
interested in them than in purely ecclesiastical
ones? No greater calamity could come upon the
Church than that it should find itself outside the
Labor movement."

The clergy who are brought into actual contact
with the life of the poor and who live among the
peasants and the artisans are sympathetic, for the
most part, with the Socialist movement. The
economic environment in which they find them-

selves and their constant association with the pro-
letariat, farming and machine, make many of them
ardent champions of the working class. But their
attitude does not affect the attitude of the Church as an institution. It remains sullenly on the side of wealth and privilege, and its methods will not be altered until the proletarian is assured of victory. Then the clergy will hail the advent of the new victor as they have always hailed victory in the past. But the proletariat must struggle towards his victory with no hope of support or comfort from the Church as an institution. Good wishes for success are the most that he can hope for at the hands of the sympathetic clergy who are fast bound in the chains of authority, authority whose entire influence at the present day is thrown against the progress of the working class.

Thousands of priests in the country and industrial districts, thousands of ministers throughout the whole land, are profoundly disgusted and distressed by the state of the Church at the present day. As time goes on and the Socialist movement increases in power, these priests and clergy will assert themselves. After all, the Church only consists of the sum total of the congregations and the congregations will support those who are on their side. Thus the great social conflict will find its mirror in the Church and the ecclesiastical institution will be rent by strife. The Rev. E. F. Blanchard writing recently in "The Christian Work and Evangelist" says: "The great need is to make the Church mean in present conditions what primitive Christianity meant to the world ages ago. This is the real reform needed but strange to say there is no effort made in this direction." It is obvious that no effort can be made in any such direction when the Church does not represent the primitive Christianity either in ethics or ideals but exists as the champion of the commercial and in-
dustrial capitalists and as the receivers of their bounty.

Only by the destruction of these material bonds can the Church be set free to do the work which tradition and the Christian faith has inspired its followers to believe to be its especial duty as a preacher of righteousness and of Christian ethic and the Christian doctrine. The victory of the Socialist movement would mean the stripping away from the Church of its capitalistic and political power, it would deprive it of the support of the wealthy classes for the wealthy classes would themselves have disappeared. But it would leave unimpaired to the priest and the preacher their especial functions while it destroyed their professional status. These social and political attributes are the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of the Church today. They interfere with its functions as a preacher of righteousness and prevent the return to the condition of the primitive Church which as we have seen is desired by the earnest within its fold. But the real liberty and power of the Christian minister will not be interfered with. The priest could still perform the Sacraments, the preacher could still preach the Faith. Religion would be preached and professed only by those who believe it, for there would be no inducements for a man to profess other than he believed. The Christian believer then could only find in the triumph of the Socialist movement, a greater liberty for his Church, a more splendid opportunity for the proclamation of his faith.

The Churchman who believes in the destiny of the Church must find in the death of the Church, as a political and capitalistic institution, the resurrection of the Church as a preacher of the Gospel.
WORKERS' WORLD SERIES
Of Socialist Books for Sale by

SOCIALIST VOICE
Published Weekly by the Socialist Party
25 CENTS SIX MONTHS
50 CENTS PER YEAR
OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

The Church and Socialism By AUSTIN LEWIS
Per copy, postpaid, 10c
4 for 25c; 50 for $5.00, $5.00 a 100 postpaid

THE SUPREME COURT And the Constitution By WALTER V. HOLLOWAY
Per Copy, postpaid, 15c; 2 for 25c; 10 for $1.00
50 for $3.50; $6.50 a 100, postpaid

HEARSTISM—An Analysis of Government Ownership, By J. B. OSBORNE
Per Copy, 10 cents; 5 for 25c;
25 for $1.00; 3.50 a 100, postpaid