

not entertain. Phrases like 'I venture to think,' or 'the probability is,' or 'it seems upon the whole likely,' are wholly absent from his pages. One after another, the opinions unfavourable to his thesis are marshalled, examined, and sentenced with an equable confidence, which only breaks into some irony of personal feeling when M. Loisy happens to be the culprit. The reasons for his respective judgments have all been heard before. M. Lepin has certainly written a clear and full handbook upon the external evidence in the main, but on few points has he much original thought to bring forward. His positive contributions seldom advance beyond what one is accustomed to in essays written from his standpoint.

After discussing the general Johannine problem, with especial reference to Loisy (chap. i.), the author devotes his second chapter to a proof that the Gospel was composed at Ephesus and circulated late in the first century (pp. 19-72). To this conclusion one need not seriously demur, though the *terminus ad quem* might be placed a decade later, without doing violence to the relevant evidence. The rest of the book then follows the conventional order of topics. Chap. iii. proves that the Apostle John resided in Ephesus till his death at an advanced age. Chap. iv. defends the tradition which associates the Fourth Gospel with him; chap. v., again, shows that the Apocalypse, the Gospel, and the three Epistles were all written by the same hand; while chap. vi. concludes that

the internal evidence of the Gospel itself points to John not only as the beloved disciple, but as the author of the entire work (including even v.²⁴ of the last chapter). The argument seldom goes into much detail, except in chap. vi. As a rule, M. Lepin proves his point by general considerations, buttressed by a careful summary of critical opinion. His work is rather useful in this respect. It shows wide reading, conscientious labour, and a desire to omit no item of the evidence. But, I confess, it leaves one as it found one. Like several other apologetic volumes, it reminds one of Dr. Rochecliffe's *Malleus Hæresis*, which 'was considered as a knockdown blow by all except those who received it.'

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Kirn's Dogmatics.¹

THE first edition of this work was reviewed in THE EXPOSITORY TIMES (vol. xvi. p. 515), and it is not necessary to add anything to the notice already given. It is a good sign, both for the book and for the study of Dogmatics, that it is already in a second edition. It deserves the success which it has won.

¹ *Grundriss der Evangelischen Dogmatik.* Von D. Otto Kirn, Professor der Theologie in Leipzig. Zweite Durchgesehene Auflage. Leipzig: A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung. Price M.2.20.

Social Theories and the Teaching of Jesus.

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II.

What is Christian Socialism?

DEFINITION is the first duty of any one who uses the word 'Socialism.' It is a very chameleon among words, and takes its colour from the circumstances in which it finds itself. Its many meanings are not made fewer by prefixing the epithet 'Christian.' There can be neither agreement nor argument until the fluctuating connotation of the terms has been exchanged for a fixed value.

Benjamin Kidd has used the word 'Socialism' to cover 'all attempts towards the improvement of society by society.' This is a more generous and inclusive definition than could be accepted by some of the straightest of the sect of socialists. But we are seldom able to accept the definition of a movement by its straightest sect. The definition is a convenient one, and suggests further a specific sense which may be given to the term 'Christian

Socialism.' It will include all efforts for the improvement of society by an organized Christian society. It will cover all attempts made under the impulse of loyalty to Christ to develop and shape a Christian social life, which by its practice, ideals, and influence is to remake the social relations and conditions under which we live.

This definition makes a clear distinction between the socialism which is qualified by the epithet 'Christian,' and the socialism which is compulsory, civic, or governmental. The latter is willing to depend on the force of law, which is ultimately physical force. Christian Socialism relies for its power of compelling obedience on the supreme moral force, the power of Christ over the conscience of man. It declares the authority of Christ to be ultimate and final in making the life of a just and sane society. The whole question of obedience to Him is involved in recognizing that fact and 'claiming for Him the right to rule social practice.'¹

Although it does not appeal to any forces but those which are moral, Christian Socialism has the essential characteristic of all socialism. It aims at bettering the individual by the action of society. It believes that the individual will not be bettered in any complete or permanent sense without the action of society. It does not deny that the 'soul of all improvement is improvement of soul,' but it insists that the highest improvement of soul can only be made general by improvement of the soul's human and material environment. This is the differentiating characteristic of socialism. It is not essential to its idea that the society should be constituted by laws which rest on an ultimate sanction of force. A society is still a society though its constituent and formative power be attachment to the Person of Christ, or resolute submission to the Divine will, or the settled conviction that God is creating a kingdom on earth. Its unifying force may be not law but grace.

Christian Socialism is not averse to State action when society is ready for it. The State will naturally register by its laws the growth of organized co-operation as it displaces individualism. But it does not rely on the State for the creation of the society which is to be the lever of social improve-

¹ Cf. the rules of the Christian Social Union.

ment. It looks rather to the weight of the moral authority of Christ, the power of convinced consciences, the explanation and assertion of the truth, and the reformatory contagion of consistent Christian practice. It is ready to form an organized Christian Society *within* society as it is, an 'imperium Christi in imperio Mammonæ.'

In England Christian Socialism began, not as in Germany with the professor's chair, but as an endeavour to show that Christianity is concerned with practice as well as creed. It was a revolt against a theology, against systems of belief and fashions of pew and pulpit, which left out of account a great majority of the population of the larger cities. It was a movement of the Christian heart towards the outlying populations. Without explicitly formulating the theory of its practice it took the form of university settlements, co-operative organizations, working-men's institutions, economic experiments of various kinds, an ethical preaching of the Christian message, and a ventilation of working-men's questions from the pulpit.

But man is a thinking as well as a social animal. Christian Socialism has been thinking out its theological basis, and can give an account of the faith that it holds. It may even be said to be making its theology. It has a keen interest in New Testament exegesis. It is adding a department to Christian literature. It has given some good names to the roll of Christian biography. It has made many experiments and achieved some results in the domain of Christian enterprise which are worth recording and imitating. It has found a large place in the life of one great Christian communion—the Anglican Church. It is reported of a certain vicar that he complained that it was difficult to find a good curate who was not inoculated with the virtues of Christian Socialism. It has modified thought in all communions where thought is open to modification. It is reasonable to claim for it now that it is a force to be reckoned with. It has something to teach which our time needs. It expresses forcibly some clamant wants. The time cannot be far distant when even theological colleges, under the guidance of men like F. G. Peabody, will recognize the new birth, and devote some attention to fostering and training the child born of more vigorous parentage.