ARTICLE VI.

PHILOSOPHICAL TESTS OF SOCIALISM.

BY THE REVEREND JAMES LINDSAY, D.D., IRVINE, SCOTLAND.

There can be no possible doubt as to the reactionary character of the movement called Socialism: it is really a return to feudal economics,—serfdom under a democratic government—fostered by the political and social ferment of our time. Perhaps the most legitimate aspect of this reactionary character of Socialism is to be found in its opposition to the results of Ricardo and the Manchester School, with their straining to the utmost the distinction between ethics and economics. Interests were supposed to be the basis of economics, and the only springs of human conduct, to the neglect of that modifying power of sympathy with others, to which Adam Smith had directed attention. This we say, although Smith's attempt to resolve morality into sympathy was more ingenious than successful. The difference between wealth—whose science was political economy—and conduct—of which ethics is the science—was assumed to be so great that the two sciences were treated as lacking mutual relations.

There is, of course, an abstract and scientific sense, in which that is true, but the fallacy lies in taking the distinction in too absolute a sense. This divorce between economics and ethics has been left behind, and these are now taken to be different sides of the same problem. If political economy were immune from ethical questioning and criticism, this would mean the strange liberty for man that, in the use of economic laws, he
need not be troubled by conscience. Change of economic system is the demand of present-day Socialism, wherein the range of personal activity will be contracted, and institutional activity be enlarged. But there can be no doubt that personal values are those which are in need of being emphasized. Individualism and Socialism are, however, both modes of looking at things, and hence Socialism is apt to lack coherency of system. The value of the claim of moderate Socialism that it is no stereotyped dogma or system, but a regulative idea of the industrial organization—an economic type of organization whose principle is pliable and always changing by needful adaptations to environment—may be easily gauged, when it is said, in the same breath, that the ideal will be always more exacting. The effect of such exacting ideal on the dogma and the outer organization is not difficult to guess. The frankness of the confession of moderate Socialism to always more rigid and exacting ideal is commendable, but its reputation for reasonableness and plasticity must thereby suffer. Rae has put the matter plainly when he has said that contemporary Socialism has for its first object, the conquest of the powers of the State, such Socialism having discarded all belief in the possibility of social regeneration except by means of political authority.

The absolutism of the State is one of the fundamental positions of Socialism that will not bear to be tested. No constitutional government has ever had such absolute power, on the part of the State, as Socialism demands: no people has ever been fatuous enough to favor such a despotic claim. As if the individual had not duties and rights—and these the most important—which concern not the State! The State exists for man's social development; it exists for him much more than he exists for it. It exists to guarantee him the free use
of his individual faculties, and the protection of his individual rights. The harmonization of his private good with the good of the State or community is that which the State exists, in ways just and equal, to effect. But it would be unjust for the State or society to infringe man's essential liberty or inherent dignity. The philosopher Fichte — who has been claimed, not without good reason, as Germany's first Socialistic writer — postulated, in his "Science of Rights" and elsewhere, a police power for the State, whereby it acted as guardian of rights, but he threw out suggestions that clearly went beyond this conception of police function. Distinguishing sharply between rights and ethics, Fichte deemed it the State's duty to maintain man's outward rights, but he also laid much responsibility upon the State in the way of furthering the interests of each individual, under the influence of ethical considerations. His Socialistic ideal lay in "the complete industrial State," with its care of all production and foreign trade, wherein elements of compulsion were unshrinkingly admitted by Fichte's idealism in hope of gaining, for every individual, scope for free fulfilment of duty.

Mill and Spencer rendered needful service in reasserting the function of the State as a police function, that of maintaining the liberty of, and justice between, individuals. These sustain to it organic relations, and owe to it what such relations imply; but organic metaphor, in the hands of Rodbertus and others, has been daringly responsible for mischievous sacrifice of much that is highest in human personality. It is not necessary that the individualistic theory be carried to extremes, as Mill and Spencer at points have done, and we may allow, with Hegel, that the State can sometimes facilitate readjustment, in ways not open to individual action. But the form of Mill's insistence on liberty for individual development had in it much
that was praiseworthy, and the dangers arising from collective mediocrity are greater to-day than in his time. Mill's aim is very much that of Kant, who, in his "Science of Right," had sought to harmonize man's free individuality with the regulated organism of the State. This harmonization must, Kant expressly says, be effected according to an universal Law of Freedom. Mill was content, however, to leave their reconciliation as an unsolved problem.

Martineau finely pointed out, in his "Types of Ethical Theory," how closely interwoven are the individual and the social factors we have been considering — so closely, indeed, that we can scarce divide them into inner and outer. Man and society are so interrelated that life is never a thing of compromise between opposing forces — self and society. Their relations, ideally, must be harmonious — one, however far this may be from being actualized in the conflicts of life or modern civilization. The real individuality of every man must be preserved, but the fact must, at the same time, be recognized that man's life is rooted in one underlying Reality, as the Source of all lives, and the Spring of their common good. Humanity — or the social organism — may have priority in time over the individual — the single personality — but this time-priority of the collective whole does not take away other priorities that belong to the individual, rather than to the many. On every side of his being, however, man is social, and abstract considerations of priority count for little. In virtue of his social insight, man can make the experiences of his fellows his own — can read and understand them at once, as his self grows always more and other than it is.

Neither the State nor Society, strictly taken, is person, entity, or being, despite the fact that States are the "persons" of international law; neither of them has any real existence
except that which it gets out of the individual. Political philosophies of diverse type have clearly acknowledged this power of the State as simply springing out of its constituent members. No group or collection of individuals, called the State, has any shadow of right to compel the individual's freedom of conscience, taste, or opinion, in matters that affect not others. It might be useful, however, for that often inhuman, and always impersonal, thing called the State, to remember that Plato, in his "Republic," tried to conceive the State as a human being on a larger scale, with like general functions and powers. Such personification of the State is, no doubt, metaphorical, but political philosophy still feels the need of trying to construe the State as, in some sort, a moral organism, even though its morality may sometimes be doubtful enough. This organic vitality of the State, and its continuous objectivity, were brought into greater prominence by the philosopher Schelling than has been generally recognized. Hegel, as is better known, stood, in his "Philosophy of Right," for the State as highest organic product of reason, and he maintained the rights and duties of the State, over against individualistic conception. But still, the free, though regulated or controlled, play of private interests is to yield a richer life to the State.

The State and Society, as I must insist, were made for man; he is the end for which they exist; man's individuality does not come from the State; the State does not give him his powers, neither does he owe it—in respect of what concerns his highest individuality—his allegiance; he is, in these respects, responsible only and directly to God. No principle could be more debasing than the root one of Socialism, which makes man, as individual, eternally a minor, and subjects him to despotic and degrading tutelage. Hence Spencer roundly declared all forms of Socialism to be forms of slavery. There
is no Socialistic aim which can possibly justify or compensate the sacrifice of man's true individuality. It is of true individuality I speak — not of individualism which sees nothing but self — the individuality that leads me to be myself, in order that I may be something for the world — for society. Individuality thus becomes the true and only Socialism, properly so called. The savor of society — its life, reality, power — must be found in true individuality. It is in such individuality that the spirit of life is found.

It is in its proscribing such individuality that Socialism stands everlastingly and irredeemably condemned, its logical implicate being a society not yet capable of being really human. The omnipotence of the State, it must not be forgotten, has, for its correlative, the impotence of the individual. Any true perfecting of the aggregate must come through the care and perfection of the individual units. It is a primary need of the individual to be member of a stable social organism, and it must be kept, ideally, in view that the interests of organism and of individual are identical, for, in the crypt of our inner being, the individualistic and the socialistic principles or tendencies are both represented.

A greater Socialistic fallacy does not exist than that all wealth springs from labor. It has been tested and refuted so often, that it were wasted energy to slay the slain. If we set the same population — the same muscular power — to work today, against a like population that might have been taken in an earlier generation, we should find the wealth produced today several times greater. Why, but because the thinking brain, the inventive genius, the capitalizing power, were behind the process. It is the idlest of fallacies to suppose that capital has less need of brain power than labor, or even to imagine that wealth is solely due to labor and capital united,
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apart from the brain factor behind what is the product of both. The true wealth-creator is the brain, not the body; the thinker, not the toiler; the mind, not the muscle. But that does not mean that labor has no part in the wealth produced, nor does it imply that we have any superfluous workers or population, nor does it suggest that there is a single individual who may not be a wealth-producer in his measure. The wealth so created or produced is no creation of natural products, but of activities or values. Its production is matter of necessity rather than of choice, but in the end, ethical interests are interwoven with its problem. Its value—central in any system of economics—is yet a social phenomenon, with ethical relations involved. When Socialism calls upon the State to deprive the capitalists of the instruments of production, and itself become the employer of labor, it blindly fails to perceive that, even if poverty could thereby be made to cease, it would be at immoral and illegitimate cost of individual liberty, initiative, enterprise, and all the higher manifestations of mind and of taste.

It is too often forgotten how many of the proposals, of which to-day we hear so much—such as the exploitation of the land, state control of railways, factories, etc., state division of all labor products, limitation of the rights of inheritance, and so forth—are really a century old, having been promulgated by Saint-Simon of France and his visionary disciples. We have neither space nor call here to follow such Socialistic and Communistic aberrations as the doctrines of Saint-Simon, Fourier, Robert Owen, Louis Blanc, Proudhon, and others of that time. It need not, of course, be denied that capital too often gave ground for the terrible indictment of Karl Marx, even though his theory of value has been tested and found wanting many times over. The cost in labor, and manual la-
bor as a source of value, were by him so absurdly overestimated as to bring great discredit on his theorizings. The truth is, that the main psychical factors, concerned in production, were wholly overlooked by Marx. Neither did he seem to reflect how much production owes to Nature and her coöperation under required conditions.

Even a rudimentary knowledge of political economy would have kept the assailants of capital from not knowing that a reserve force, such as capital represents, is necessary condition of profitable employment of labor — alone makes living possible, indeed, to say nothing of progress. Political economy demands, in the interests of clearness, that the idea of capital be dissociated from that of its owner. Not as belonging to him, but as being capital — and, as such, capably managed — does capital fulfil its function of increasing production. The value of capital to society is seen in production being more ample through its use. Political economy has shown ethical advance in its change of emphasis from production to distribution, and, later still, to consumption. It was Mill who boldly declared that distribution was a matter of human control and moral interest, in a way which did not apply to the production of wealth, the laws and conditions of the latter partaking, he said, of the character of physical truths. Here, in connection with the re-distribution of wealth, we have had Mr. Carnegie's gospel of wealth as something to be re-distributed by the few to the many — a doctrine of wealth which, in its relation to Society, cannot escape the condemning criticism of being, in the end, a huge system of patronage. The moral element, of which we have spoken, appears again in consumption, which represents the growth of want in the individual. Such growth is both stimulus and measure of social progress, and it was, in its name, that Gunton and others demanded
more leisure time for the workers, that they might, it was said, have greater opportunity of developing social character.

It is from treating the individual as separable from his social environment, or the social environment as if it were independent of the individual, that the inadequacy of the moral judgment springs. Hence the capitalist becomes, at times, a narrow individualist, and the worker often an unillumined Socialist. Writers like Bellamy wish to equalize the social environment, as if equality of material conditions constituted man’s true environment, rather than moral conditions, to which material conditions are yet by no means indifferent. Both the philosophy and its methods are in such a case wrong, and do not bear ethical questioning. But it is one of the easy yet persistent fallacies of Socialism to think that Socialistic theory can triumph, in some ultimate fashion, otherwise than by what it carries of moral, and not simply of material, improvement. Blind and fatuous are we if we do not see that whatever changed social conditions the future may bring, it will bring only because these have earned a moral right to be. It is a natural right of man, in communities civilized and regulated by laws of Right, to hold as his own what he has produced or acquired, be it by labor of hand or the higher sweat of brain, be it by gift or by genius or by discovery, and no coercive form of social organization has any right to wrest this from him. In the freest States or Societies, the limits of any considerations of expediency, in such economic affairs, will be soon reached, the principles of Right being present in the determination. Conjunction and coöperation of labor and capital, of land and labor, are necessary in order to wealth production.

Benjamin Kidd at least laid bare the fallacious character of Socialist expectations with regard to the effect of equality of
opportunity, showing that, so far from eliminating competition — that *bête noire* of Socialism — it will intensify the rivalry of life. Mill had already shown that Socialistic blame of competition for all social evils would not bear testing, the root of economic evil lying elsewhere; and he had pointed out what would be the result of alternative monopoly. Mill, however, allowed large room for productive cooperation and for wholesome State intervention. The removal of the competitive system is still the aim of Modern Collectivism, as expounded by Schäffle and others. What has not been shown is the compatibility of such Collectivism with the freedom and self-development of the individual. As matter of fact, such Collectivism, in its constructive aspects, has shown itself deplorably weak, and likely to create worse evils than those it could cure. It has always betrayed a shallow knowledge of the deep-seated egoism of man's nature, which is undoubtedly far from equal to building up an ideal State, in the present stage of man's moral education, without the spur of competition. Hence men will continue to hold that nothing of that which — in mind, body, or substance — is man's own, may the State properly claim, save only what is clearly essential to the well-being of the whole social organism.

But the modern State has not been without some disposition to construe the maxim *Salus reipublicae suprema lex* in a way that permits it to interfere too freely with individual property, alike in land and in other respects, under specious pretexts of social injustice. This would mean reversion to the spirit of so crude and extreme a theorist as Henry George, whose oft-exploded fallacies need not be dwelt upon. The Continental Communists can give us all we need on that score any day, since they are more logical in their demands, and draw no line between land and other forms of property, all of which,
after their hollow and unsubstantial modes of talk, are forms of exploitation and robbery. Such is the outcome of their non-recognition of a sphere into which the State may not penetrate.

The analogy between the State and the person, which some writers on international law would like to emphasize, does not derive any very strong support from modern evidences of the corporate or State "conscience." It may be worth while, however, to retain so bold a metaphor, and to speak of the "conscience" of the community as impersonated in the State, if haply it may help the State in the direction of cultivating a collectivist "Conscience." To grinding oppressions, to really unjust monopolies, to needless obstructions to opportunities of work and development for all, such end or regulative bounds must be set as not only economic justice, but higher laws of man's being, can appoint or determine, so that there shall be no hurtful individualistic exploitation of social values. But there is need to guard against modes of thinking that would make the Socialistic trend of modern legislation run, in the end, into a kind of legalized theft on the part of the State. It needs no saying, surely, that the authority of State enactment or an Act of Parliament does not make a thing ethically or essentially just, and that the Socialist adoption of Justice as a watchword does not keep the use of that sacred term from easily and often passing into caricature.

This peculiar sort of justice did not keep Karl Marx and his followers from being utterly one-sided, and blind to the tragedies of capital, with its numerous vast risks and losses in ventures for furthering the commerce of the country. Why must we forget that the market has had its martyrs, that trade and commerce have had their heroisms and sacrifices? Why forget that every proprietorship is, after all, but tenancy or
stewardship, being bounded alike on the Divine and the human or social side? When it is no longer superfluous for us to recall that every theft is, after all, a theft, even though it be that of a State disguising the theft under terms of taxation, we are clearly in need to set limit, in all proper ways, to the powers of the State.

It has always been a cherished fallacy of Socialism to suppose its scheme and principles workable. But a Socialistic condition of things, if realized, would only be able to secure forced and mechanical labor, but could not call into play the directive ability upon which the productive efficiency of a nation depends. Such ability and all higher forms of power or energy are voluntary in their display, and dependent upon a freer and more stimulating environment than Socialism can supply. Its inability to generate or supply adequate motive power for the higher types of ability is a fundamental defect of Socialism. This defect it hides, while unblushingly setting before the thoughtless masses the motive of increased personal gain. But if their primary economic motive is the greed of gain, why cannot they see they are then no whit better, for all their righteous airs, than the capitalists, or men of directive ability, whom they accuse of the like greed? Why cannot they see that they may be far inferior to such men, in motive and impulse, since, psychologically, the man who has the capacity or power of producing wealth may find as legitimate a satisfaction in the exercise of his power to do so, as does the poet or the artist in the joyous exercise of his power to create?

The destruction or Communistic distribution of capital amongst men would not keep the old inequalities from speedily returning, in the very nature of things. That social justice means equality in such a sense is a figment of disordered imagination which sensible people rightly discard. Real equality
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is not achieved except through liberty. Such Communism, with its abolition of personal property, in every form, in the supposed interests of freedom and equality, goes further than those idealistic forms of Socialism which aim only at a better constitution of society. These latter, no doubt, seek this end in a chimerical manner, their demand being based on the futile one of equality, which really means the tyranny of the majority. But such revolutionary Communism is more inimical to the State, being essentially anarchical, and denying the subordination of the individual will to the general will of the State. A fundamental principle of social philosophy not to be forgotten is, that with such anarchy virtue cannot coexist. The equality of economic opportunities which modern Socialism demands is inherently absurd, since the differences between individuals in intellect, imagination, energy, initiative, capacity, etc., would speedily result in the most abject failures and the most grievous discontent.

It is well to bear in mind how far from new or novel such Socialistic and Communistic ideas really are. They were not unknown to decadent Hellenism, nor to the degenerate Roman Republic. Platonic Socialism was more than mere individual fancy: speeches like those of the Gracchi already smack of the flavor of modern socialistic catchwords. An outbreak of the like ideas marked the Reformation era, fostered by works like those of Sir Thomas More and Campanella. Then we have the culture-destroying, revolutionary theories of our own and recent times, as crystallized especially in the teachings of Marx and Lassalle. While Socialism has the merit to have drawn attention to defects in our vaunted modern civilization, yet, historically viewed, it has been marked mainly by failure, and, philosophically tested, by deserved failure. But its failure — whether of its principles or its methods — must not
keep us from seeking a more beneficial social system than that which at present obtains, in which the principle of equality of consideration shall have a larger or more recognized place.

It is a fallacy of current Socialism that religion may be dispensed with, and man rendered content with labor for "the meat that perisheth." Such a religionless society would fall short of being a true civilization. It were a body without a soul. But that is just the kind of society which Socialism, wrapped up in the merely economic question, proposes to give us. The Socialistic mistake is to take man simply as he is, and not as he is meant to be—not in his upward aspirations and strivings. Intrinsic evil in wealth there is admittedly none, and property and wealth are valuable as they are made to minister to life. The projected benefits of land nationalization will not solve any of our social difficulties; it is mere Socialistic illusoriness to think so. Property has always served as basis of growing civilization; private property has not only been the law of civilization, but it has also been the foundation of individual improvement. It is in his own works man learns to respect himself: it is to the fruit of his labors he legitimately attaches himself.

But the dull leveling Socialistic machine, in driving him into the abyss of absorption, proves the necessarily irreligious character of the system. Socialism has thus become a religion (!) to many in various countries, who have been infected by the crude Socialistic theories of Marx, Engels, Liebknecht, and Lassalle, with their fallacious assumptions of capital as the people's enemy and oppressor, and of labor as sole producer of wealth. But it is a religion (?) that invokes no extra-mundane assistance, rates the material as superior to the spiritual, finds its chief good in this world, yields no moral uplift to the masses, and indulges, without weariness or satiety, in
tiresome tirades against the God of things as they are. No wonder that Rae represents Socialism of the artisan type as saying that they are not atheists, but that they have done with God. We know then precisely where they are. They have reached the same goal, practically, as contemporary Italian Socialists who preach blank Atheism with blind and fatuous pertinacity. Hyndman has lately put forward the most extravagant claims for their "one common material creed," in which as "Controlling part of the evolution of life through the ages," the Religion (!) of Socialism will prove "the most magnificent system of Monism of which the world has ever heard"! To all forms of spiritualized thinking, such materialistic Monism will continue to be the nadir of human thought. Present-day Socialism forgets that "before Earth reach her earthly best, a God must mingle with the game."

Again, the State must allow the sanctity of marriage and family life to remain inviolate, if it would escape one of the pernicious evils of developing Socialism, as it overpasses the merely economic problems. Marriage is still an indissoluble spiritual bond with which no State may tamper, and the need for State interference is always to be taken, in this connection, as symptomatic of grave social disease. Yet Socialistic writers like William Morris and E. Belfort Bax are content to sink the marriage institution into an association terminable at so-called needs "of either party." No more must the family, as the most vital and fundamental institution of society, be lightly interfered with. Yet it is the iniquitous contention of much scientific Socialism of our time that the family and private property are so closely related, that, in order to property being socialized, the family must be socialized likewise. The suppression of private property is a very curious way to insure liberty, yet socialistic advocates make the claim that their
aim is the freedom of mankind. These — the suppression of private property and the suppression of liberty — are the gracious gifts that are to come from the hands of bureaucratic and administrative Socialism, which does not see how much rather it is the expanded and purified spirit of the family that must give to the State. The sacred alchemy of unselfishness must be wrought within the temple of family life, and the less the State needlessly assumes social control of the family the better, in the interests of social progress — the development, that is to say, of free and efficient personality in the family and its members. Only extreme forms of individualism, or the excesses of pathological condition, should warrant State intervention or control.

It is curious to find writers on social and ethical philosophy solemnly writing of that glorified non-entity, the modern State, as if it were a being entitled, in some occult and unexplained way, to arbitrary, despotic, and unethical interference with individual life, as well as family life. Intervention of the State is beneficial and necessary for the protection of the persons of all, and for securing the development of personality in all — the opportunity for their full ethical self-realization. But there would be no lofty ideal of human life realized, had we only an institutionally bred population, with its certain deficiencies in character, initiative, and intelligence. Men might be clothed in purple and fine linen, and fed sumptuously every day, at the State's expense; they might have the slightest of State-regulated tasks apportioned them, and the most welcome of State-regulated amusements appointed and provided for them; all these things must miserably fail to produce anything like ideal types of human life and character. They much more certainly produce materials for the cartoonist, and, with their elimination of initiation, selec-
tion, planning, and forecasting, reduce an adult state to one of childhood. We have not condemned Socialism for pointing out evils of the present condition of things — competition, accumulation, and inheritance, all of them in unlimited forms — but because its principles and methods would, in the end, bring worse evils than those it seeks to rectify.

Any form of thoroughgoing collectivism must be fatal, alike to the material well-being of society, and to its higher forms of intellectual, aesthetic, and spiritual culture. It is surely a familiar truth that all social progress, all civilization and true culture, call for ever-increasing differentiation. Do we, as sane and reasonable persons, expect this increasing differentiation in society without resultant unlikeness and inequality? Do we expect the differentiation to be free of exceptional hardship here, and exceptional advantage there? To pursue equalization here is just to abandon the welfare of society in whole — a very non-socialistic procedure. But we come back to the truth that the so-called social organism is really a means — with all its apparatus of constitution and government — towards the good of individuals, and not an end in itself. But the individual can attain his truest good only in the fulfilment of the special function marked out for him by his position in the social organism, his activities necessarily consisting largely in forms that constitute at once his own good and the good of society. If we ever want to see Individualism run mad, we can easily find it at any time by turning to that form of Socialism which prefers everybody to be miserable rather than have any one a trifle happier than anybody else.

The ultimate issue will not be, whether Socialism is practicable or not; nor whether, being so, it could give some better order of society; but, what is its ethical value, and what sort
of type or ideal of personality it will develop. It is by such
tests it will stand or fall. Not what comfort, but what charac­
ter, it can educe; not what gains, but what moral incentives, it
can provide; not what outer surroundings, but what spir­
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and enterprise shall be crushed under Socialistic foot. Materialistic in nature we have seen Socialistic tenets to be, tending to encourage men to set their affections on things of the earth. They are not less truly paralyzing in tendency, since they cut the spinal nerve of human energy.

A movement whose impulsive principle is no higher than that of the enjoyment of commodities, as life's sole end, is foredoomed to be no noble or inspiring one. As if men's bitterest warfare were for mere means of life, instead of—to the glory of humanity be it said—for the promulgation and realization of ideas, intellectual, moral, social, and political. That is what happens from hunger being put in the place of the soul. Nothing can be more superficial than to suppose that, by merely changing the economic conditions or relations of man, you have made any noteworthy advance towards social perfection, in disregard of the free selection of his aims and the determination of his motives.

There can be no true philosophy of government, let it be plainly said, in which free play is not found for the highest individualism—the individualism of educated reason linked to Kant's good will. It is safe to say that any true science of Statehood will find its guiding light, and its social inspiration, in the Christian religion, and there alone.