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# IDEAL SOCIALISM;

## HOW DOES IT COMPARE WITH CHRISTIANITY AND SPIRITUALISM?

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DELIVERED AT CHICAGO. SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 1888.

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### INVOCATION.

Infinite, Eternal God; Thou Divine Creator and Ruler of the universe; Thou Giver of every good and perfect gift: unto Thee Thy children ever turn with thanksgivings, whether, as it is, veiled in the mystic meaning of past ages, they pronounce Thy name, or whether in the silence of the spirit they worship Thee; before whatever shrine or altar Thy children bend, still they would praise Thee, the Infinite, and only Good, and Ever-Living, and All-potent Divinity of the universe. For all that goodness manifested in the material world they would praise Thee: for the beauty of summer, the white rest of winter, the bursting buds of spring-time and the fruition of harvest; for all that the earth yields unto the hand of man in response to his toil, his intelligence and industry; but for those gifts that Thou has given, that man cannot attain, that are not within the scope of his intelligence, nor yet can he procure by labor; the gifts of the spirit with which Thou hast endowed his soul from eternity, the perception of immortality, the consciousness in the spirit of the ever-living power of perfect love: for this he would praise Thee more and more. Since it is only by growth in divinity that he can understand Thy presence or the eternity of Thy love, so he would turn to Thee, the unspeakable source of all love and wisdom, asking for greater understanding, that the eyes of the spirit may be opened, that the ears may be quickened, that the comprehension may be uplifted to a knowledge of Thy perfect law; even as dimly perceiving the spirit while in the senses may that spirit more and more be awakened by the knowledge that cometh from within; until, at last, all the nations of the earth shall turn aside from their striving, their darkness of the senses, their conflict for material possessions and power, and seek only for the gifts that are divinest and best. Thus shall their striving cease; thus, O God, may "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

## DISCOURSE.

"And if any man will sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also."

"And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."—*Jesus*.

"The moment men begin to make laws they show themselves unfit for freedom."—*Pythagoras*.

"This much philosophy hath taught me: to do from choice that which other men do from fear of the law."—*Herodotus*.

These and countless other sayings of the greatest, wisest and the best, from the Messiah down to earthly philosophers, proves that that which is religion—the highest religion—to one who believes it, is the highest philosophy to another, and is the ideal state of all the world. Between the typical millennium of the Christian, the perfect state of the Buddhist, and the highest attainment and conquest over the senses of the Orientalist, and the philosophy of Plato, or the teaching of that which is the highest moral achievement of today there is not the slightest difference.

The idealism of one age, by subtle transformation, becomes a portion of the practical life of another, then there is a still greater ideal; but nowhere in any age, under any law or form of government, has man yet attained the perfect state to which all teachers, philosophers, seers, sages, and poets have continually turned. The inspired works of every age point to it; the poesy and art of every age reveal it, and the dreams of the greatest patriots and philosophers prove that somewhere in the sphere of man's spiritual belongings is the possession of the state that is yet to be attained on earth.

Among those things that have a name, and yet the name is vaguely understood, indefinitely thought of, almost scorned on the one hand and worshiped on the other is the name of Socialism: having in the public mind no definite place it is variously considered as revolution and bloodshed; or some fantasy or dream of the imagination, which a few fanatics have put forward, but which can never be realized.

Practically, as well as poetically speaking, Ideal Socialism is the Sermon on the Mount set to the music of daily life; practically speaking Socialism in its highest sense is the individual perfection which comes from the abnegation of self, co-related to the perfection and the welfare of the whole of mankind.

What dreamers have dreamed and prophets foretold has never been and never will be fulfilled under any form of arbitrary government fashioned by men. The forms of Levitical law produced nothing among the children of Israel (or among the followers of the church in Judea) that was higher than their spiritual growth and mental unfoldment; with a law for every day in the week and for every action performed in every day, enjoined with the authority of the church, the violation of which was subject to severe penalties and arduous religious sacrifices, still those who journeyed in the wilderness or possessed the promised land did not rise above the ordinary standard of human selfishness, human acquisition and human injustice.

That which is claimed for Socialism in its highest sense is not to put in motion an impracticable scheme whereby immoral, irresponsible people are to govern the world without law, but it is to abrogate the necessity of law by placing the human government in the only proper position that it can occupy and be successful, viz.; the welfare of the whole into the hands of the whole, and the individual to be held responsible for his individual acts. In other words, that the highest standard of humanity shall prevail instead of the lowest. The Mosaic law was made for the lowest standard, the natural tendency was that all men under the government of Judea would fall to that level. To illustrate: if there is a law

prohibiting murder, theft or any violation of man's personal well-being, then whatever a man can do that is an evasion of the law he seeks to do it. If he is above the law of course it does not affect him; if he is beneath it it enspheres him, it does not elevate him. The standard of the Christian law was that which placed the Sermon on the Mount beyond Sinai; the Golden Rule above the Ten Commandments of the decalogue; in other words placed the government of society upon a moral and spiritual instead of a temporal basis. While Jesus carefully avoided doing or saying anything that was in violation of the existing law of land, under the rule of Cæsar, still the whole tendency was to the moral emancipation of the Jews from the thralldom of the Hebraic law as relating to man's moral nature; to raise the standard of human excellence by human responsibility instead of by penalty and fear. The same thing is perceived in the statement of Herodotus who said: philosophy had taught him to do from *choice* that which other men did from *fear*; which was true in the control of Judea; that men were good simply because they feared the penalty of the law; avoided doing violence to one another's persons and possessions merely because there was a penalty attached to it. Would it not be considered an insult to this audience, or to any large audience or assemblage in any Christian church to say, that men pursued toward each other the practice of honesty and rectitude, and refrained from violating the rights and lives of others because of fear of the law? Yet they would not like to have it put to test. How many lives are there who consider the sanctity of human life, because it *is* human life, and that of human rights because they are human rights? It is not for us to judge, but it would be a shadowy record at best if this were revealed.

The world then has been governed not only by monarchs and rulers whose authority was law, but by codes from the Romanish law down through the code Napoleon even to the present hour, presumably, for the protection of man against his fellow man, that to in periods of the greatest civilization that the world has known; so that the standard of human judgments and human decrees have been predicated, not upon what was right, but what was lawful. If the law is always right well and good; but supposing the law is wrong? We know human judgments err, and there has never been a perfect law maker from the time of Solon and Lycurgus down to the present day. If the law is wrong and men only seek to encourage their selfishness, and baffle their consciences by adhesion to the law instead of the right, what becomes of the moral purpose, the latent intension of humanity, the exaltation which belongs to the highest conception of man's duty to his fellow-man?

What was due to a Roman citizen under the law of Rome was due to the whole world. The savage who has no law; has, nevertheless, in some cases a higher code of action. The stranger is a guest whether with the Arab on the desert or Indian on the plains of America, no violation can come to him who is a stranger while in the tent, or tepee of the wandering tribes that know no laws of civilization. The hospitable instincts that come to man by natural impulse and intuition are in countries governed by law frequently overlooked, the stranger instead of being a guest is usually looked upon with suspicion; any wayfarer in any Christian land finds it difficult to enter a Christian home without the suspicion of being intent upon plunder, robbery, and murder; are these the outward growth of a civilization founded upon law, and is the safety of the stranger among savage tribes the result of the absence of law? We think there is a mistaken reverence in the minds of the people for that which is considered law without reference to what is just and right; because laws founded upon the highest conception of the law maker may be either misapplied or may be mistaken in their wording. Nothing could be broader than the Magna Charter of England yet still this breadth has been superceded by the laws of this country, nothing could be wider in scope and intension than the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of your own country; but the founders having just come from monarchial Europe, having just escaped from the bondage of the tyranny of an individual monarch, those who

fashioned the laws could not be expected to foresee the giant-growth of this country. The very formulation of the laws upon the pattern of the old country proves that while there was a new growth of freedom there was no new form of law in which freedom could clothe herself, for the benefit of future generations. Hence you are in this country governed by too much law: there is Judicial, legislature and executive government; there is the municipal, the state and the national government; there is law for everything. This makes the law making power not only the subject of great perplexity, but the subject of imposition and ridicule, and finally a power of weakness instead of strength.

Socialism aims at the fulfillment of the highest duty of man toward his fellow-man. Not by such force as is expressed in law, but by such an exalted status as shall make the responsibility of the individual to the whole so great that it will be impossible for the individual to withstand it. This, in a moral sense, is absolutely possible. Who ever made war upon a nation absolutely disarmed; and by what power could any nation of the earth attack that dear little republic that slumbers in the heart of Europe undisturbed because it is so small! The Quakers are a peace-loving, justice-loving people, and since they endured the persecutions of a tyrant in the form of a monarch and that the result of religious bigotry, no one ever thought of making war upon them. There are communities of people in the length and breadth of this country who live without a code of laws, who are peaceable, who do no violence to one another, who do not steal and in whose communities no violence is ever done; no murderers visit the communities of Shakers, Quakers, and Non-resistants that keep themselves aloof from the law-making power of the land; knavery is unknown among them, they do not violate one another's rights, and there is no invitation for others to do so. In other words there is a moral atmosphere surrounding these peaceable communities that does not invite crime. Make a law against murder that is violent and social science will reveal to you that you invite murder.

The highest Socialism of the past century has been idealized in the form of poetry and philosophy not only in the schools of Germany and France, but throughout all Europe; but more than this, you must remember that Socialism, *per se*, in name has been bred in the midst of tempest, has had the hand of monarchy above it and all around it; it has been ground out of the hearts and minds of the people by acts of injustice and wrong in which the people have been crushed. Germany, under the dominion of an iron chancellor, who used an emperor for the perfection and perpetuation of his power, is the very shrine and altar of enlightened Socialism. Why should it not be? From a military despotism to an ideal government of the human conscience and respect for human rights is such a reaction as would inevitably come.

Let no one make the mistake of supposing that because sometime there are those who advocate violence or defence by violence, that it is the basic plan of Socialists. In Holland Socialism is the plan for a state government, twenty-three of the newly elected members of the parliament in Holland are Socialists. What does this mean? That just as soon as the surveillance is removed that constitutes the military despotism of the empire there will spring up the kind of liberty which you enjoy here, which is the dream of Socialism there, but which is your accepted law and government. Republicanism is Socialism in monarchical countries. They name those men *Real* Republicans who seek for the kind of government you have here.

But Socialism aims for something still higher. As home is the place of sanctity in all enlightened countries, as society holds the voice and its edicts prevail even more fully than the law of legislature or the judiciary, so the time is coming when what is called society will govern instead of law. We mean by this: that if the moral sentiment of the community is against murder, murder cannot take place; if there is no other standard than law against murder, murder will take place. Shall we illustrate what we mean even if we seem severe? Suppose a murder has taken place in your city, instead of peaceably allowing the law in

which you have faith to take its course to find its victim and bring him to justice, nearly all the community is agitated, not only with indignation at the murderer, but with revenge toward the murderer, and, frequently, instead of allowing the officers properly appointed by law to find the murderer, to see that he is arrested, to bring him to the tribunal of justice, the whole community is agitated with a murderous sentiment which sometimes is put in execution against the supposed criminal. Who then become the violator of the law? What is the standard of human justice when the entire population constitute themselves police, sheriffs, and detectives and proceed not only in judgement, but in actual fact to arraign the murderer and see to it that he is convicted? There is no possibility of impartiality under such circumstances. However degraded a man is he still should have the benefit of an impartial tribunal. In countries governed as this country is the mistake is that the people suppose that a code of laws once made and being in force are the right laws for meeting the particular ends they have in view; but a little study will show that the basis being wrong the whole superstructure must be wrong; that a nation does not rise, even in the execution of its laws however good, higher than the average height of that nation's mental and moral growth, no matter what the laws may be. Socialism intends not only to cultivate the individual, and see that the individual convictions, the individual conscience, the individual mind is properly trained, but that there shall be no such barriers between individuals as now exists, and that no man can, (in consequence of his allegiance to the law,) do violence to another member of society. By making it a moral instead of a legal proposition the whole community becomes proportionately responsible; but as it is not a moral proposition now, only a legal one, and then resolves itself into a political question, the whole government relates to politics not to moral and social results.

Socialism considers the possessions that are given to all should be the right of all, that each man should have according to his deserts, merits, and abilities, this should be without favoritism or distinction, it makes the social government the law of the land, it makes man's relation to his fellow-man supreme, instead of his relations to things. The difference between the existing civilizations and that which is contemplated by the highest Socialism, is that the existing civilizations are largely predicated upon man's relations to things; to possessions that have no innate nor integral relations to him, instead of being predicated upon man's relations to his fellow-man. The ideal civilization, the Ideal Socialism is to make every man's action predicated upon man's relation to his fellow-man.

Of course religion being superior, religion is the governing power; but even in the form of philosophy, among those intellectual methods that are employed by people claiming no religious convictions, still this is the standard: that the highest government is that which regulates the relation of man to his fellow-man and that *things* will adjust themselves as soon as man's relations to his fellow-man are right. Supposing, for instance, that the Golden Rule should be the standard, (which of course is the standard under other forms and names the world over,) there would be no necessity for laws that effect men's conduct toward each other in dealings in reference to possessions, since if the Golden Rule were in operation who could do his fellow-man any harm? If this standard is too high, if it has not yet been attained by any numerous body of people, still there are approximate stages toward it. As a matter of policy it is known that that which interests the welfare of the whole, interests the individual; as a matter of well-being man cannot afford to be a thief, for it sets the example of thievery to others and he is just as liable to be the victim as the successful operator; as a matter of principal, speculations which are common and thoroughly recognized by law cannot be the highest standards in a truly ideal civilization, for whatever a man wins from others by his superior skill, falsity, or subterfuge is after all undermining his own safety, his own security as a member of society and the common community. In other words there can be no inducement in the highest civilization for any kind of bribery, robbery, or intellectual subterfuge for taking

possession of another man's earnings, because it at once sets the example for others to do the same, and any one having the ability is liable to pursue it.

Plato said the difference between the small thief and the large one is not a difference in the desire but in the ability. So the man who steals a small amount is imprisoned and the man who successfully appropriates a very large amount is admired and emulated by the world: one does it driven by necessity, or perhaps, lack of desire to labor, the other does it by the prompting of desire for success, by the prizes that are offered in the world for that kind of achievement, by the ability which constitutes genius in modern speculation; which of the two most violates every law against stealing?

In the highest state of Ideal Socialism a man is a monster who, having the power to take advantage of his fellow-man, could, by any kind of ability gain possession of the results of another's labor. A giant like the one in the fable who amused himself by eating up little boys, would be considered a pattern of morality compared to this insatiate giant who under existing civilization is protected by law.

If the moral sense of the community were awakened as to the true spirit of stealing, a man could never be received in a Christian community who had been known in any business transaction to take advantage of his fellow-man; but so long as it is possible, so long as it is permissible, so long as the government is founded upon that basis there can be no successful out-cry against it.

The world must not only be taught the fallacy of existing methods: whatever comes in the forms of monstrous monopolies, powers that with greedy and octopus-like maw absorbs all the revenues and industries of the land; it may be best, perhaps, that these grow to their utmost enormity, that humanity may see, as in a mirror, what a monster the world can produce under the name of civilization, Christian civilization.

When the Socialist idea shall be better understood, when even the name of Anarchy shall not be a bugbear, when it shall be known that the generic meaning of the word is not, as perverted by your vocabulary, "lawlessness," but anarchy is derived from an ancient Northern word which means "without a ruler," viz., without a king or other arbitrary methods of government; that the highest law is within the human spirit; but surely no one can deny this, for when there was a law favoring slavery who was it but an American legislator, one of the counselors of the nation who rose to the dignity of the hour and pointed to the "higher law" as the evidence of human rights. Above the judicial tribunals, the supreme court of your land, there are other overruling laws; in the history of all nations when this higher law, engraven upon the conscience and conviction of the individual, declares that that which is at variance with the rights of mankind cannot be sanctioned even though it is the law. "Then," you ask "in the absence of any law what would men do?" Very much as they do now. If they are bad they violate the law; if they are partly wicked and not courageous they evade the law; if they are good the law does not affect them, they would do precisely the same without the law. "But what will be the standard of government; men cling to authority, authority is the basis of civilization." Not so; intelligence is the basis of civilization the highest knowledge of government is right, and that which can make all men strive to emulate the highest and best is to compel them to have recourse to the highest standard instead of the lowest. If any man is thrown upon his honor he does better than when he is thrown upon the law. The freemason's pledge is more binding than a court of justice: that which a man pledges himself to, even though he be a thief and a robber, is often more binding than all the laws of the land. He is considered an arrant coward who to save his own neck or his liberty, which is not worth a farthing, betrays his fellow criminals. The informer is one degree beneath the criminal. Such is the moral sentiment of the community already; what shall it be when with the twofold power of conscience and knowledge people in their highest and divinest perception rise up to the full understanding that even the lowest elements of society the criminals, the outcast,



and those who are prone to do evil can be better dealt with in an atmosphere of social and moral strength than by the hand of what is called the law? There is a certain kind of mechanism about the law, that, without regard to those who are the administrators of the law, their motives being the best, still makes it a kind of inquisition that in itself arouses the worst elements in society.

Supposing that it should be known that that kind of government is abandoned, or were to be abandoned, and that there would be substituted the basis of placing every man's conduct on the moral standard, each feeling himself responsible to the whole and this gradually becoming the law of communities, countries and nations. We do not imagine that any socialistic dreamer, however wild or utopian his idea, supposes that it can come in a day or in an hour. Whatever any man thinks is the highest and best he must advocate it, even though the age in which he lives is not ripe for it; but for this agitation you would never have found yourselves in a country of comparative freedom, but for this kind of agitation there could have been no basis for the constitution which your forefathers made, but for this kind of agitation there could not be hope for the world, beyond the weary treadmill of law-making and law-governing power, which is not based in the highest and most sacred standard of moral excellence.

Finally it is said that one school of Socialists destroyed the individuality and that the other builds up the individual at the expense of the whole. The highest Socialism cultivates the individual to the fullest extent of the individual power, but does not cultivate individualism: and by this we mean that it does not protect the individual at the expense of the whole but it makes the individual factor one of the parties in the responsibility of the whole. Just as in a wheel every spoke must be of equal strength to make the wheel serviceable and complete; there can be no partiality in the distribution of the force and weight that shall come upon any of these factors. So in society: the perfection of the individual constitutes the safety of the whole, but this does not mean that individual selfishness, individual purposes, individual schemes, individual desires, or individual wishes shall be carried forward at the expense of another or of the whole. As the light of the sun and the planets in their spheres would not be perfect if encroaching upon each other, so the light in the individual life, under the system that we have stated, would so surely belong to humanity that it would be for the interest, the aim and well being of the individual to be as bright and shining as possible.

The greatest tyrannies are those that drown the individual, monarchies swallow it up at the expense of the power that governs, churches, like that of Rome, make the most of the individual faculties, each personality, that they may be absorbed and lost sight of in the controlling power of the church. Not so with Socialism: it sheds abroad the light from the individual, from the family, from the society, at last its radiance fills and enspheres the whole, and that which makes particular brightness in any individual life makes it bright for the welfare of humanity.

As genius belongs to the ages not to any country or nation, as all mankind worship at the shrine of goodness without regard to race, or color, or age, so the ripe humanity turns toward that golden age, that period of enfranchisement, that individual liberty which shall not mean license, but means only that which is worthy to be free.

There is no freedom in sin, in wickedness, in tyranny, in despotism, in selfishness that defrauds one's neighbor in any kind of dishonesty. Freedom is born of the skies, it is the glorious inheritance of the enlightened spirit. No one can possess it who is degraded, ignorant, or downtrodden; though bestowed a thousand times upon him who is unworthy he could not hold it for a day. It is a jewel of such rare price that it can only be won by the exaltation that comes from individual strength. Such freedom as this only is consistent with that highest civilization which is called Christian; such as this constitutes that highest ideal state dreamed of by Plato, taught by his successors, carried forward in his philosophy, and cropping out in the various social schemes all over Europe.

Germany and France have heralded the light of this dawn, but drowned in blood, hushed in the sound of battle cries, or the moaning of those that shrink beneath the lash and terror of tyrants, its voice cannot be heard; but again and again it shall rise and rise, as it even rises here.

Beyond your day of comparative freedom a better day is still in store for you; beyond your comparative light a better light is still coming; that which shall make you know that even the present liberty which makes for justice, is but the feebleness of a child compared to that glorious strength that comes from the freedom of conscience, freedom of will, freedom of an enlightened life. Freedom of conscience leaves the heart open to God; freedom of will leaves the way open to just and truthful action; freedom of life means freedom from every degrading appetite, passion, or desire that shall mar the fair fabric which is the work of God.

### IDEAL SOCIALISM.

[IMPROMPTU POEM: THE SUBJECT BEING CHOSEN BY THE AUDIENCE.]

As the morning gives promise of the day,  
Even though the day is not yet here,  
So the ideal life always  
Reveals the future state more clear,  
And points unto the zenith bright  
When man shall reach the highest height.

The child gives promise of the man;  
And by his aspiration turns  
Toward that time when, in heaven's plan  
He shall reach the state for which he yearns:  
Shall yield manhood's complete estate  
And he shall be named among the great.

So do ye yearn for the perfect life  
That is to reveal man's final goal;  
That which shall cause sorrow and strife  
To cease and shall light the perfect soul;

That which when all included are  
Shall make humanity as one  
And though each differs as star from star,  
None shall be as the light of the sun,  
Still all shall fill their places here  
In the complete and perfect year.

'Tis the ideal rules the world;  
Man is not made from mold and dust;  
He is not simply earthward hurled,  
But all his powers are held in trust;  
And in the light of the ideal life  
He is won from all corroding strife.

When every part shall perfect be  
Then is the circle made complete;  
So the perfect humanity  
Shall find *all* its ideals meet,  
Until before the Throne of light  
Returns man's spirit pure and white.

Yes the ideal is the real;  
Poet and prophet both declare  
That at the last this night unreal  
Shall sink away as empty air;  
And out of the fabric man hath made,  
In the eternal perfect goal,  
His ideals shall be found inlaid  
In the shrine and kingdom of the soul.

### BENEDICTION.

May that perfect state that cometh from within, that highest light that knows the governing power of God and truth, be your ideal forever. Amen.

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