

No.

27.

"IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST, SEEK THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE ABOVE, WHERE CHRIST SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD." COL. 3. 1.

SOCIALISM IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE.

An Address (revised) at

EMPIRE RESTAURANT,

March 22nd, 1912.

by

PERCY W. HEWARD.

Correspondence welcome:

Scriptural literature for Believers

Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1 – 74343 Sachsenheim – GERMANY

SOCIALISM IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE.

Address by Mr P.W.Heward at the EMPIRE RESTAURANT, on Friday, March 22nd, 1912.

Outline.God's Word deals with everything.

- 1 The name. Its meaning and usage, varied forms, root ideas. Some effects Summarised.
- 2 Socialism and the Glory of God,
- 3 Socialism and Human Depravity.
- Socialism and the Brotherhood, 1 Pet. 2.17, 5.9.
- 5 Socialism and The Coming Kingdom.
 - (a) Dan.2,43.44.
 - (b) Jas.5.7,8.
- 6 Socialism and Practical Godliness. 1 Tim. 6. 1-5.
- 7 Our Appointed Attitude;-
 - (a) Emphasis on the Truth, (b) A Living Protest. (c) Is Controversy Right?
 - (d) Prayerful and Longing Anticipation of "That Day".

Our subject, dear friends, this evening, is SOCIALISM IN THE LIGHT OF SCRIPTURE. It is important that we should realise that God's word deals with everything. It is not merely a book at which we are to look sometimes, not merely a book that guides us in our arrangements of an assembly; but a book that deals with every circumstance of daily life. If we desire to know what to believe, we find it in the Bible; if we desire to know what to do, we find it there; if we wish to know what not to do, the Word of God is equally decisive. There is no circumstance in which we shall be found, in which the Word of God does not guide. If we are the Lord's people and have an ear to hear, we shall find the instruction is complete, and only needing the application of the Holy Spirit to our hearts, that we may carry it out in our lives. Truly it is written in Prov.6.22. "When thou goest IT shall lead thee". The Word of God is meant to lead us in every circumstance, and at every time; therefore when we are surrounded by problems, whether in home or business, or of the state, our first thought is not, or should not be, What do I think? but, What says the Word of God? We cannot at the present time avoid the fact that socialism is manifest and powerful everywhere. Therefore, we as children of God, if, by grace, we can lay claim to that wondrously-given title, we, as children of God, desire to find out exactly what the Word of God says in the matter of Socialism.

At the outset, I should like to say, as to the word SOCIALISM that the name is linked with other words, like "associate" and "social" and thus from its derivation we have the general idea of fellowship. Socialism implies a certain FELLOWSHIP, a certain sharing, a certain having in common. When we come to usage, then we find the word is employed in a number of different ways. There is the socialism of the idle theorist on the one hand, and there is the daring, defiant, openly godless socialism of many an agitator on the other hand. The word is used in a number of different ways, and MANY profess to be socialists. Some call themselves Christian socialists, others characterize themselves as socialists without any prefix to the word, but yet not desiring to put themselves in opposition to the word of God. I propose, therefore, as socialism is so varied in its forms, to briefly indicate one or two root ideas which are common to all the forms. Among the root ideas, I feel, and I think you, dear friends, will feel the same, are two very prominently, one is man's RIGHT, the other is man's POWER. Those two root ideas, are, to change the figure, a basis on which Socialism is built; MAN'S right, MAN'S power. That every

man should have an equal chance, and an equal opportunity, is an underlying idea, which is only a development of the thought of man's right. And the conception of man's power must underly every scheme to reform and improve the world, apart from the Gospel of the Grace of God. These two root ideas lead, I believe, to all the branches.

Some effects may be briefly summarised. The result of socialism is a general discontent, a dissatisfaction with God's providences, a denial of God's right arrangement of the universe, and an exaltation of MAN. I believe further that there is the effect of irreverence, for socialism by exalting EVERY man leads to a lack of respect of man toward man, which is caused by, and reacts upon, a lack of respect towards God. One of the results therefore, is a growing spirit of irreverence. Furthermore, socialism by exalting the individual and demanding a certain quality, becomes in its tendency, whatever be its intention, a help toward lawlessness. And one of the results of socialism that one finds today, is a growing increase of lawlessness, which will only lead on till the one who is called THE LAWLESS ONE will arise out of the midst, and assert himself as the great hero of MAN, whose number is the number of MAN. Antichrist will, I suppose, be simply the heading up and the fruition of the socialistic system. Furthermore, another result of socialism, we find in the indirect effects upon the Lord's people. Surrounded by all these theories and fancies, and notions and ideas, they are often inclined, alas, to become argumentative, and in measure, self-assertive, and not to take their due and right position as rejected followers of a rejected Lord. I need hardly say that the affairs of this land, at this time, cannot but be viewed by the child of God as a consequence of the development of the spirit of socialism. It may, however, be suggested that there are certain counter-balancing good results. Now I cannot deny that every movement has certain results which seem to be good, even the worst movements. The compromise of God's people with the world has brought us the opportunity of having our meeting this evening, and brought us the opportunity for going forth to preach the Gospel in the open-air afterwards. But results which are in spite of a system, must never be put to the credit of that system. That God is governing over all, and that even the wrath of man shall praise Him, and the remainder He shall restrain, is blessedly true. And those who are children of God, and desire to look at the signs of the times with a spiritual insight, can be thankful to God that He overrules in a marked way the tendencies of the age. Furthermore, we have said that there is no system, or at least there are few systems, which are altogether bad in their results. By some reasonable suggestions, and by some attractive results, Satan ensnares those who would not be otherwise ensnared. Unmixed evil is a rarity. It is so mingled with that which appears desirable, and which is desirable THAT being the decoy, and we all need to be on our guard in this connection lest we be decoyed among others.

We pass now to consider the second point, SOCIALISM AND THE GLORY OF GOD. To the child of God, the great thought of life is, or should be, "Do all to the glory of God". It was an old belief that man's chief end was to glorify God, and every saved one who would walk with God enters into the meaning of that still. As Peter, the apostle, puts it, having fellowship in this with Paul his beloved brother apostle. "If any one minister let him do it as of the strength that God supplies, that God is all things might be glorified through Jesus Christ". The beginning of the disciples' prayer is "Hallowed be Thy Name". The end of Christ's life was summarised in the words "I have glorified Thee on the earth", and His wondrous comprehensive prayer "Father, glorify Thy name" expresses the heart wish of those who, like unto Him, would delight to do the will of God. Now if that is to be the great object of the believer, it is not the great object of socialism. Socialism revolves round man; its centre is man, its thought is man, its object is man. Not only is it OF man, as distinct from Christianity which is from God, but it is also TO man. the thought of socialism is the advancement of humanity, and in so far as humanity is honoured and esteemed, God is forgotten. To a child of God this is not a matter of secondary importance. He cannot find it desirable to put God even in a first place if man has a prominent second. God must be all in all. Everything else must only take its place as part of the great object- the glory of God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" leaves no room for any other love except that which is included in love to God. There is no room to do anything with any other object but the glory of God. That which is worth having is wrapped up inside.

Thirdly, we come along to consider SOCIALISM AND HUMAN DEPRAVITY. By human depravity, I mean not only that there is none righteous, no not one; but that God has looked down and seen that the imagination of the thoughts of man's heart is only evil continually, that none can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, that whatsoever is born of the flesh is flesh, and the best which man can do is before God only as filthy rags. I do not mean by human depravity that man never does anything desirable before his fellow-creatures, He may be excellent in his kindness toward a MAN, but there is nothing acceptable toward God, for He is so perfect that He demands perfection, and will not take that which sin has damaged, will not take that which is marred because it is not done to His glory. The goodness and kindness of man is described in Hosea 6 as like a morning cloud, and in Isa.40, as like the fading Palestinian grass, beautiful but not lasting. Often man has an apparent excellency, but the spirit of the Lord blows upon it. To-day it is, and to-morrow it is cast into

the fire of Divine judgment. There is nothing to please man in this plain speaking, but it is nevertheless the unchanging word of God. Now socialism does not believe in human depravity in the same solemn way. It regards man as capable of improvement, and capable of doing that which is satisfactory; it deals with man in a totally different way from that in which the Gospel of Grace deals with him.

The Gospel of grace comes when the law has condemned TO the condemned sinner, but Socialism has no thought of such a condemned sinner. Socialism has no remedy for a ruined creation. Its hope is IMPROVEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, and thus it is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel of Christ.

We pass next to consider SOCIALISM IN CONNECTION WITH THE BROTHERHOOD. We thank God there is THE brotherhood, as we are told in 1Per. 2.17.. "Love the brotherhood", and literally in 1 Pet.5. ("the same afflictions are accomplished in ~~in~~ the brotherhood throughout the world" - not a universal brotherhood, not a brotherhood of man, but a brotherhood of believers as believers, a brotherhood in the NEW creation, a brotherhood in Christ. That is the only brotherhood which we can recognise in the Word of God, as Heb. 2 puts it, The Lord is not ashamed to call His people "Brethren". But He would be ashamed to call the ungodly "Brethren", for the expression used implies this. Now socialism is a development of Christendom's brotherhoods, and it is a brotherhood apart from Christianity, whether that brotherhood be expressed in societies of to-day, or merely in the general underlying idea of a universal brotherhood. That is to say, whether it be special or general, there is the conception of a brotherhood in all socialism, - in that way it is contrary to the Word of God. The Word of God only recognises TWO brotherhoods, one in the Devil's family, the other in that of God, Only two fatherhoods, one of the Devil which is universal, and the other of God which is limited to those who by faith are children of God. Now socialism is not merely to be considered as an attempt to reform the world, but as a deliberate substitute directly or indirectly for Christianity, as a deliberate introduction of another brotherhood instead of THE brotherhood, viz, - that which is of Christ's servants only. It is an attempt to do the work of God without the power of God. It is an attempt to make a church of humanity. It is an attempt to develop that which God says is incurable. It is an attempt to bring good out of that which God regards as unalterably bad. Socialism is therefore to be put on one side with holy HORROR by every believer. It is important in this connection to realise that it often appears as a helper to Christianity. Does Christianity want to deal with men in their ruined condition and to introduce a spirit of fellowship (that is only a part of it, but it is a part which some bring to the front), then they say "Here is a handmaid for Christianity, that which will work hand in hand with Christianity". And so we find systems of social reform and improvement brought before us as if useful helps to real Christianity. Herein lies the attractiveness and the plausibility of socialism. The child of God mourns over the ruined world. The child of God grieves over the awful condition of man. He would do anything he could to bring others into a loving brotherhood, delighting in that which is beyond the fading pleasures, and the fading attractions of to-day. He would do all in his power to bring men from that low and evil condition in which they are, and if the heart is out of harmony with God Satan takes advantage of a right wish toward fellow creatures to introduce a wrong method. It is by this that socialism works among the children of God. I anticipate that the majority of believers at some time in their experience have had a fraction of socialism. As one looks round on a ruined world with all its labour unrest and utter confusion one must feel, What will put this right? Socialism offers itself as a panacea, and the child of God is apt to be ensnared, and to think it will be a help and a preparation for Christianity, in the same way as some use entertainments to draw others to hear the Gospel of Christ. But God's work must be done in God's way, and with God's accompaniments only.

We now come to consider SOCIALISM AND THE COMING KINGDOM. To the child of God there is a Blessed Hope, and that Blessed Hope is the appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ "He that shall come will come and will not tarry". "We look for a Saviour". When He shall come swords shall be beaten into ploughshares and and spears into pruning hooks. There will be a universal blessing. Now the tendency of man is to anticipate that day in a wrong manner, and to pervert the longing of a child of God for the blessings of that day into an attempt to obtain them without the Blessor Who will bring them. Socialism would bring before us a millennium before the time. It would bring before us a reformed land, a reformed earth by natural means. MAN UPLIFTING MAN, and humanity saving itself. In other words it aims at salvation without a Saviour, and it speaks of a Kingdom without the King. The important BASIS is left out. It seeks to uplift without any lever, and to improve without any vital beginning, - it thus is dealing with that which is impossible. We might, in this connection notice Dan. 2. 43.44. for this gives us another aspect of the relationship of socialism to the Coming Kingdom. Socialism is accordingly leading up to Antichrist, but there MUST BE a development of socialism in the last days, and therefore it only heralds the kingdom of Christ, for we find that the last kingdom of Dan. 2 is a kingdom in which there is a development of socialism. In the figure it is seen as "iron mixed with miry clay", "the iron", like to the other metals, being symbols of earthly power from those who are not in authority, an earthly power of the people. We notice here the miry clay and iron mixing together, and Scripture distinctly says that the miry clay is the "seed of men", and there will not be a cleaving. There will always be a friction and a lack of cohesion in man's attempt to blend government and

democracy. We find this in our midst and it will be manifested more. Government and democracy cannot cohere. It is IMPOSSIBLE. Government is contrasted with democracy. Democracy cannot flourish when man is a fallen creature. There is no real union between the creatures that will give stability, for men are "hateful", and at the root in God's sight "hating one another". Therefore every attempt will not lead to any permanent result, but kingdom will rise up against kingdom and there will be but a temporary manifestation of outward unitedness finishing off with the ten kings when Antichrist the MAN will place himself at the head. For those who desire to have great power themselves are the very ones who will gather power to the very one who treads down all that opposes him. Socialism in a word will lead to a very absolute monarchy of Antichrist, and behind it, Satan. Thus the striving for the spirit of socialism often produces a tyranny which is greater than the tyranny it seeks to combat.

Jas. 5.8 gives us another thought as to Socialism and the Coming Kingdom. There we have brought before us a patience UNTIL the coming of Christ, a patience that is comparable with the long patience of the husbandman, though we know that the Coming of the Lord draweth NIGH. The Lord's people are there told not to resist (verse 6). They are contrasted with those who resist, and with those who live in pleasure, which to my mind, and I think to yours, must seem a twofold sign of the last days. As I came along here I saw a placard with the words "The strike, and a football match", and I thought that that was just about an indication of the present day tendency towards socialism and pleasure loving. We pass now to point 6. SOCIALISM AND PRACTICAL GODLINESS. Socialism is at variance with this, first because of its attack on God's doctrine. It sets aside HIS absolute sovereignty. Secondly, it is opposed to practical godliness because it omits the power enabling practical godliness and the offence of the cross. Thirdly, it is antagonistic to practical godliness because of its exaltation of another standard. MAN is the standard, and that which brings honour and advantage to MAN is the goal. Further, it is opposed to practical godliness in its indirect results. It brings an atmosphere of individualism and self-assertiveness, and in this connection it is well to notice 1Tim. 6, for God's Word always anticipates the ruin in which we are placed. "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the Word of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them because they are brethren, but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort". Here we have the acknowledgment of masters in the assembly, BELIEVING masters. They were not to give up their mastership. "If ^{any} man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is in accordance with godliness, he is proud knowing nothing". Here we see that there is opposition to the doctrine according to godliness, and opposition to the wholesome words in connection with a denial of due service to masters. Scripture speaks very plainly as to the consequences;- "Doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strifes, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness, - from such withdraw thyself". "Supposing that godliness is gain" as we might take it. There are men who imagine they will gain something by godliness, and one finds among professing believers the tendency to expect more from believing masters, and the employee puts himself on the level of the employer, and delights to become in a fellowship above his social position, which is oftentimes linked with this evil spirit of supposing that godliness is gain. We cannot too definitely speak against this tendency and result of modern socialism in its effects upon the practical godliness of an assembly of God's people.

Coming to point 7., What is our commanded attitude? First, we are surely to emphasize the truth. The darker the days are, the more are we to emphasize the Word which is "as a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the Lightbringer arise".

Secondly, our lives should be a living protest. I do not mean by this that we are merely to speak against socialism, but something beyond that. We are to take no part with any agitation, for we are doubly hindered. First, from its nature, secondly, from its fellowship with the ungodly. We can recognise no partnership with those who are not Christ's. We have no rights in this world, our rights are in the age to come. And, furthermore, our living protest should be linked with a spirit of deep and solemn reverence in the power of the Holy Spirit. For socialism, inasmuch as it is the setting aside of authority needs us to have a contrast protest in a reverence toward the Lord and a respect toward fellow believers. A socialism that brings about an equality which is not in accord with God's will needs to be opposed by a godly recognition of DIVERSITY. Among the Lord's people, leading to a wholesome mutual respect, and special acknowledgement of older saints, and those to whom God entrusts special responsibility. Never in age, or gift, or position in life, can all God's people be equalised. They are one in Christ as to salvation and acceptance. This is gloriously true. And those who are higher in some ways should condescend to men of low estate, but it is not for those who are lower to tell them their duty, rather to do their own duty. Thus will there be the true harmony. If only we could find the Scriptures which apply to ourselves most manifestly, and see them FIRST, how much more godliness would there be! Thirdly, our appointed action in connection with controversy needs consideration. One finds that where the Lord

Jesus was asked to put things right between two men - brothers in the flesh - He definitely refused when one was seeking earthly goods. What a contrast with what He said as to putting things right, when one brother differed from another in the assembly. Luke 12.14, 15 is the one passage. Matt.18, 16-20 the other. The context in Luke should be noticed, We find that the Lord when asked to speak to the brother to divide the inheritance went on to the parable of the man who desired this world's goods. How often the Lord's own words have applied to various forms of socialism. Men have professedly desired merely a dividing of the gift, but the Lord deals with the underlying wish, - self-aggrandisement. As to mere "controversy" concerning socialism, we are to be wise in abstaining. 2Tim. 2 says "Shun profane and vain babblings", and furthermore Titus 2 warns against foolish questions and so forth. The last epistles of Paul show, I think, that there was a spread of TALKING among the professing people of God. Talking and arguing are usually unprofitable. We need to spend more time with God, and feeding on His Word, and less in mere argument. We must contend earnestly for the faith; but we must avoid the spirit of contention.

Finally, our prayerful attitude must be a LONGING ANTICIPATION OF THAT DAY, in the words of Luke 21 when we see these things going wrong, we lift up our heads, for our redemption draweth nigh. The failure only reminds us that He That shall come, will come, and will not tarry; and we look on beyond the ruin, with hearts aglow to see Him Who alone can solve earth's problem and deal with earth's distress, - the MAN Who is GOD-man (the contrast with anti-christ), the Centre of our thoughts, and He WILL be the Centre of worldwide government and homage.

I should just like to finish with 2 Tim, 3 "This know also that in the last days heavy times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of reverence, but denying the power thereof. From such turn away". The twentieth century is marked by the absence of reverence, and that is only socialism writ large. May the Lord give us grace to ponder His Word.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Q. The so-called "Christian Social Union" has prepared a list of reliable firms, where you can get goods that you know are not sweated. Are we right as Christians to use such lists, or ought we as Christians to abstain from the result of sweated labour?

H. I think it is our responsibility to avoid doing anything which would cause any to stumble, whether Jew, Gentile or Children of God, and therefore we might abstain from certain things; but I do not think we can make ourselves absolutely clear as to everything, nor should I consider it our duty to spend a vast amount of time to find out. I do not know that it is wrong to use the list.

Q. From the criticism of present-day political socialism you render a word of praise to conservatism.

H. I cannot see that we do. I think the whole image is wrong, from Nebuchadnezzar's autocracy down to the miry clay, that every form of government is absolutely full of failure and evil, but that every form of government is to be absolutely obeyed within the limits of the Lord's commands, however it may press upon us.

Q. Has the scarlet coloured beast of Rev.17.4. any bearing on this subject, - scarlet being the colour used by anarchy and socialism?

H. It is also the colour used by Eastern despots. I should not therefore like to apply it particularly in this connection. The thought is of gorgeous decoration, and of man's glory. I do not know that the woman does present to us "socialism", but am inclined to think that the woman presents to us rather religiousness in its varied forms, which is practically always anti-socialistic, - religiousness of men, whether Arminianism or Babylonianism. All the old heathenish religions were antisocialistic, in that they glorified a priesthood, and I think that the woman rather presents some religiousness.

Question as to the woman.

I am inclined to suggest it symbolizes a system of religion, and here the system of error. Where we have socialism I think it is rather in connection with Antichrist himself. He places himself at the head of the movement as the great MAN who comes in with flatteries. He is one like to the vile person of Dan.11, who is raised up above his position and exalted, the hero of men, and the great MAN. And I am inclined to think that it will be one of the final strokes of the Socialistic movement when he leads the ten kings to destroy the woman, for we are told, are we not, that they burn her in verse 16? That I would regard as the climax of socialism, to lead up to the government of the "MAN".

Q. You did not touch on the beginning of socialism. Is socialism a modern thing?

H. In its organised form it is comparatively modern. It is becoming now

quite an art and science, but in olden times it showed itself, for the human heart is always the same. You see how the one who came to the Lord asking that his brother should divide the inheritance with him was exalting the idea of man's rights, and looking after such an arrangement. So in 1Tim.6 we see how men wanted to treat their believing masters in a different way, and put themselves on the same level, they were socialistic in their tendency. And right at the very beginning, in the garden of Eden, the introduction of sin was of course an act of a deliberate socialism on the part of Eve, and on the part of Adam alike; for Eve brought herself away from her husband's authority, she was to be a help-meet but she acted on her own initiative, and Adam, moreover, chose definitely for himself, and set aside Divine authority. Here is the whole root principle of it. Socialism is only a name that we give to a present-day appearance of the neverchanging sinful heart of man.

Q. Some would quote the "All things common" in Acts 2.

H. Very likely, . The word "all things common" is a word from the same root as the word "fellowship", which is the name given to the free-will offering of the Lord's people further on in the Scripture. Notice the exact words of Acts 4. 32. "Neither was there anyone who kept on saying that anything was his own, but there were to them all things common, and with great power the apostles kept on giving witness, and great grace was upon them all; for neither was anyone being in need among them, for as many as were possessors of lands or of houses, selling them, were keeping on bringing the price of the things that were being sold, and were keeping on placing them beside the feet of the apostles; but distribution was being given to each one according as anyone may have been having a need". So the idea is not that they all gave up at once, but put their brethren before their goods, and they did not keep on saying "This is mine", but they said of their brethren "THEY are mine" and therefore they were willing to give up. The apostle distinctly said to Ananias and Sapphira, that while the goods remained they were their own, and when sold they were in their power, which implies that there was no socialistic principle in the church. The sin was acting a lie. Retaining anything while not boasting of it, or using for self was not marked out as wrong. But let us be careful that nothing, however small, becomes a treasure on earth. Believers are NOT THEIR OWN, but they belong to the Lord.

Further literature, concerning the Lord, gladly sent (international) to exercised believers for personal perusal, and **passing on** to God's glory, some also in German, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Czech, Romanian:

– ***"To Testify the Gospel of the Grace of God."*** –

COPIES FREE (as the Lord enables) on application to:

Scriptural literature for Believers

Gottlieb-Daimler-Str.1 – 74343 Sachsenheim – GERMANY