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The Church and the Poor.

A SERIES OF HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

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XI.

I. The Industrial Revolution.

IN studying the Industrial Revolution and its effects, two classes of facts must be studied side by side. Both may be regarded as parallel and contemporaneous causes : the first of the actual revolution, the second rather of the evils which accompanied it. In the first class I would place the great physical and material changes which commenced about the middle of the eighteenth century, and among these we must put the discovery of certain mechanical inventions whose effect in the way of increased production it is difficult to overestimate.[1] In 1760 the Bridgewater Canal was constructed; this introduced a means whereby the cheap transit of heavy materials such as coal became possible. In 1764 Hargreaves produced his "spinning jenny"; in 1765 Watt invented the steam engine; in 1767-70 Arkwright produced his "water-frame," which practically necessitated the factory or mill. In 1775 he took out a second patent "which enabled him to co-ordinate the processes of carding, drawing, roving, and spinning. He was now able to send raw cotton into his factory and bring out thread, almost the whole work being done by machinery."[2] In 1779 Crompton invented the "mule," which produced a thread at once fine and strong. In 1785 Cartwright produced the power loom, and as early as 1789 steam was applied. I give these examples from a single branch of industry—the cotton trade. In other textile industries—for instance, in connection

[1] There were, of course, earlier inventions—*e.g.*, Kay's "flying shuttle," about 1730; and ten years after this there was a spinning mill at Northampton. There was also Savery's "fire engine," used early in the century to clear mines of water.

[2] Meredith's "Economic History of England," p. 246.

with the use of coal, with the production of iron and steel, and in various branches of mechanical engineering—during the same period similar inventions were being made and employed.[1] We are, of course, now dealing only with the early days of the Industrial Revolution, for actually the movement so described has never ended. It still continues, and from the time of which we are speaking down to the present day discovery has followed discovery, and one invention has succeeded another with ever increasing rapidity; while the almost innumerable applications, first of steam, then of electricity, and lastly of petrol, have enabled these inventions to be applied in a constantly widening sphere. It must be remembered that these various inventions at least synchronized with other changes—rapid increases in population, in trade, also in the aggregate wealth of the nation. The inventions may have at least to some extent been due to the pressure exerted by the growth of population and trade; and certainly it was the increase of wealth, that is of available capital, which made their application so widely possible.

All these various changes—in methods of production, and in large increases of population, trade, and the aggregate national wealth—are facts belonging to the category of the physical and the material.

The second class of facts to which I just now referred are those connected with the equipment of both the Church and the State at this time to deal with the new social problems which arose in consequence of these immense changes. This equipment should have been twofold: first, in the sphere of ideas, that is of thought, or doctrine, or principles (for ideas are the motive and ruling powers of conduct); secondly, in the sphere

[1] There was, of course, in the last half of the eighteenth century an immense improvement in the methods of agriculture. Partly by means of these, Coke raised the rent of his Holkham estate from £2,200 in 1776 to £20,000 in 1818. (Meredith, *op. cit.*, p. 244.)

Also immense tracts of land were enclosed, as much as 7,000,000 acres between 1760 and 1843; small farms gave place to large ones; cultivation became more and more scientific; the rural population became not only relatively, but actually smaller. See Toynbee's "Industrial Revolution," pp. 67 *et seq.*, 206 *et seq.*

of organization, which is the chief means or instrument whereby any political or religious body is able to carry out and propagate its ideas. Actually we find in the middle of the eighteenth century, on the part of both Church and State, very inadequate views of their responsibilities, and consequently a very inadequate discharge of their duties. These inadequate views were due to equally inadequate conceptions of the true nature of both man and society, and also of the responsibilities to both on the part of those who are in authority.

It is impossible for me even to sketch in outline either the theological and philosophical, or the political and social, ideas which were chiefly prevalent at that time. The Church was certainly not wanting in men of very considerable intellectual power.[1] She had thinkers who might have set forth the New Testament conception of the supreme value of the individual life, also of the responsibilities both of the individual to society and of society to the individual. But the religious teachers of that time were otherwise engaged. In the earlier part of the century they were occupied in vanquishing the Deists,[2] and at intervals throughout it they were busy with the Trinitarian[3] controversy. The work they did was useful in its way;[4] those who attack the Faith must be answered. But controversy is not the only, it is not even the chief, duty of the leaders of the Church. One of the principal causes of the failure of the teachers of that time was their constant insistence upon the "prudential" aspect of religion.[5] They were always dwelling upon the "reasonableness" of Christianity; they were content to point out how "expedient" a belief in it was. There was no teaching of the responsibility for man as man—that is, for man redeemed by Christ. The truth, that by the Incarnation

[1] This was especially so in the early part of the eighteenth century.

[2] On the "Deists," see Abbey and Overton, "The English Church in the Eighteenth Century," chap. iii.

[3] "On the Trinitarian Controversy," *ibid.*, chap. vi.

[4] Then, as so often, the "apologists" made the road for the so-called "more spiritual" teachers who followed them.

[5] This may be said to be equally prominent in such otherwise different teachers as Butler and Paley.

man's physical and material welfare, as affecting his spiritual welfare, must be a matter of concern to the Christian, seems to have been entirely forgotten. Then there was no sense of the *corporate* life of the Church, of her corporate responsibility towards the ignorant, the poor, and the oppressed.

The current philosophy and ethics of the time were as inadequate as its theology. Hobbes, whose influence upon thought was still strong, held something very like "the natural unsociality of man,"[1] and that, "since all the voluntary actions of men tend to their own preservation or pleasure, it cannot be reasonable to aim at anything else."[2] There is nothing very lofty in Locke's reason why one man should not hurt another—viz., "because the person is another man—that is, an animal related to us by nature whom it would be criminal to harm."[3] Bishop Butler was certainly a great ethical teacher, yet it can hardly be denied that he assumes that the ultimate appeal must be to the individual's interest. Also he seems to admit that, should the dilemma arise in which "reasonable self-love" and conscience should come into conflict, conscience would have to give way, because "our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest and most important to us."[4] Hume regarded justice, veracity, and fidelity to compacts as "artificial" virtues, due to civilization, and that our approbation of them is founded upon our perception of their useful consequences.[5]

Burke was in some respects a really great statesman, but we cannot acquit him of teaching political expediency; and when he regarded revealed religion as something not entirely different from an "adventitious" addition to natural religion, he was only echoing the prevailing conception of his age. As Professor Maurice says: "Burke was the masterly investigator of a *nation's* constitution, of a *nation's* obligation." He was at the same time "the masterly protester against every attempt to merge this constitution and these obligations in some general

[1] Sidgwick, "History of Ethics," p. 164.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 177.
[4] Sermon xi.
[5] Sidgwick, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

theory which concerned all men equally."[1] But Burke apparently gives no answer to the question whether "there was not a conscience which demanded that if the multitude were swine, they should not be left as swine; whether there was not food, and that the highest food of all for which they had powers of digestion, for which they might also have an appetite?" To quote Professor Maurice again: "Burke could give his aid in extinguishing what was false. . . . He could bid them cast away nothing that had been given them, and expect nothing from what they created out of their own fancies. He could *not* show that there is not a city for men which hath [the] foundations, nor that all the cities of the old world and the new are not to walk in the light of it."[2] The doctrine of "expediency" is even more clearly taught by Paley, who held that it "is the one foundation of moral and political philosophy." To him "moral obligation means a motive which is 'violent' enough to produce obedience to it. There is no motive sufficiently violent but a self-interest which stretches through an interminable future."[3] Paley thought Hume "right in supposing that justice and benevolence have no foundation except in utility." But he thought Hume wrong "in fancying that a sufficient sense of what is useful, and therefore a sufficient motive to be just and benevolent, could be created in men's minds unless they were promised enormous future rewards, if they were just and benevolent, and were threatened with punishment of unmeasured magnitude and duration if they were not."[4] After considering the teaching of Paley, I ought to have proceeded to deal with that of Bentham and the Utilitarians, but these, so far as their practical influence is concerned, belong to a later period of the Industrial Revolution than that which I am now examining.

[1] "Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy," vol. ii., p. 595.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 596.

[3] "While Burke was working out his ideas of a nation's expediency by hard practical conflicts with its pride and avarice, William Paley was teaching, in the halls of Cambridge, that expediency is the one foundation of moral and political philosophy" (Maurice, *op. cit.*, p. 596).

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 597.

I have entered somewhat fully into the theological and philosophical teaching of the eighteenth century, because, apart from the ideas which were generally accepted at the time, it is impossible to understand adequately the conduct of either rulers or churchmen in reference to the changes that were taking place, or rather to the social evils which were rapidly growing in magnitude.

But, as I have said, besides considering the ideas or principles accepted in any period, we have to consider the organization then available in Church and State for applying these. In the Church at this time there was practically nothing to which the term "organization" could be applied. Since the silencing of Convocation in 1717[1] there had been absolutely no assembly through which the Church, as a corporate body, could utter her collective opinion, had she wished to do so. Such gatherings as diocesan conferences were unknown. The very size of some of the northern dioceses, especially when we remember the means of locomotion in those days, precluded any collective gathering of clergy except upon the rarest occasions. In the Northern Province, apart from Sodor and Man, there were but four dioceses—York, Durham, Carlisle, and Chester; even part of the Archdeaconry of Richmond in North-West Yorkshire was then in the Diocese of Chester. Probably the last qualification for an aspirant to a bishopric in the days of Walpole would have been organizing ability. Again, "what would now be considered the most ordinary parts of parochial machinery were then wanting. . . . The population of the country had far outgrown the resources of the National Church, even if her ministers had been as energetic as they were generally the reverse, and there were no voluntary societies for home missions to supply the defects of the parochial machinery. . . . Beyond the personal influence which a clergyman might exercise over his friends and

[1] In the years preceding this Convocation had been doing much good work (see Abbey and Overton, "The English Church in the Eighteenth Century," pp. 283 *et seq.*). On the causes which led to the silencing of Convocation, see "A History of the English Church" (Macmillan's), vol. vii., pp. 16 *et seq.*

dependants in his parish . . . his clerical work consisted solely in reading the services and preaching on Sundays."[1]

The political organization of the time, so far as this was available for translating any ideas into practical measures for the welfare of the people, was, compared with what we possess to-day, extremely inefficient. Parliament did not in any sense represent the people. Even such changes towards this as were affected by the First Reform Act[2] were as yet three-quarters of a century in the future. Large and growing centres of trade and population, as Manchester and Birmingham, were, as we have seen, without a single representative. Then we must remember that it was illegal for workpeople to combine with a view to improving their financial condition.[3]

Thus, in the middle of the eighteenth century—that is, when the Industrial Revolution began—there was, both in Church and State, at once a singular absence of lofty ideas for the betterment of the people, whether spiritually or materially, and also of any organization for propagating these.

This was specially unfortunate, because at that time the material condition of the poorer classes, if far from satisfactory, was actually better than it had been previously. This is proved by the fact that a larger amount of the necessaries of life were obtainable for the same amount of labour.[4] "It was during the rule of Walpole that the seeds of our commercial greatness were gradually ripened. It was evidently the most prosperous season that England had ever experienced."[5] How very different the condition of great masses of the poorest people became as the Industrial Revolution proceeded will be seen only too clearly. The terrible thought to us must be that the frightful social and also moral evils which accumulated towards the end of the eighteenth century, and grew greater and greater

[1] Abbey and Overton, "The English Church in the Eighteenth Century," p. 299.

[2] That of 1832.

[3] This had been prohibited so long ago as 1548 by 2 and 3 Edward VI., cap. 15; also in 1720 by 7 George I., cap. 13; in 1725 by 13 George I., cap. 34; and in 1749 by 22 George II., cap. 27. On the "Combination Act" of 1800, see Dicey, "Law and Opinion," pp. 95 *et seq.*

[4] Nicholls, "History of the Poor Law," vol. ii., pp. 55 *et seq.*

[5] Hallam, "Constitutional History of England," vol. iii., pp. 301, 302.

until far into the nineteenth, ought never to have been allowed to do so.[1] The causes of these evils should have been checked nearly a century before they actually were so. As Dr. Arnold once wrote of the period of which we are speaking: "All the evils of society were yet manageable; while complete political freedom and a vigorous state of mental activity seemed to promise that the growth of good would more than keep pace with them, and that thus they might be kept down for ever. But tranquillity, as usual, bred carelessness; events were left to take their own way uncontrolled; the weeds grew fast, while none thought of saving the good seed."[2]

The chief thing to remember—indeed, the real key to the situation which arose at the end of the eighteenth century—is that the policy of non-intervention, *i.e.* the belief in this as a working principle, became more and more firmly fixed.[3] During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the opposite policy had prevailed. The State had interfered everywhere. It had attempted to regulate conduct in almost every department of life. For instance, it had fixed both the amount of wages and the prices at which goods were to be bought and sold; it had imposed duties on imports and bounties on exports. But with the new conditions, that is with the new power which invention had put into the hands of capable and energetic men, with the great increase of capital, with the opening up of new markets for goods which could be rapidly produced and sold at a large profit—with the coming of all these, all kinds of restrictions and regulations were felt to be unbearable. Men demanded freedom for each man to develop his own business in the way most profitable to himself, to make the utmost of his resources,[4] and

[1] "The more we examine the actual course of affairs, the more we are amazed at the unnecessary suffering which has been inflicted upon the people" (Toynbee, "The Industrial Revolution," p. 35).

[2] Quoted by Dicey, "Law and Opinion in England," pp. 76, 77.

[3] The gradual acceptance of the doctrine of *laissez faire*, until for a time it became almost unchallenged, is the chief of all the keys to the economic history and to the social evils of the period which stretches from about 1790 until almost 1870. On the doctrine of *laissez faire* and its results, see Toynbee, "Industrial Revolution," pp. 158 *et seq.*

[4] Upon how political theory in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was governed by considerations of trade, see Hertz, "The Manchester Politician," chaps. i.-iv.

also to use to the full the new opportunities which were constantly opening out.

Adam Smith, in his celebrated book, "The Wealth of Nations," which first appeared in 1776, gathered up and expressed with considerable clearness the thoughts and convictions of the time. Largely because he wrote, not for the philosopher, but for the practical statesman and the man of affairs, and just because his teaching so exactly agreed with what these latter saw would be to their advantage, his book from the first attained very considerable authority, and for certainly not less than three-quarters of a century its principles were generally accepted. The two fundamental ideas of "The Wealth of Nations" are "the belief in the supreme value of individual liberty, and the conviction that Man's self-love is God's providence, that the individual in pursuing his own interest is promoting the welfare of all."[1] Put together, these principles imply that all that is needed for prosperity is to give scope to every man to work out his own welfare, according to the dictates of self-interest. The almost universal acceptance of the truth of this thesis is the essential key to understanding the economic conditions and the social evils which rapidly developed, and which persisted for at least three-quarters of a century. How very untrue the thesis actually is, the appalling misery suffered by multitudes of the poorer and weaker members of the community during the first half of the nineteenth century, and the harvest of social evils (largely arising from this misery) from which we are still suffering to-day, are more than sufficient proof. Conduct is ultimately governed by ideas, and if we want a striking instance of the necessity of right thinking, and also of the dangers of accepting a false doctrine of man, and a false doctrine of society, we certainly have it in the results of accepting the teaching of Adam Smith and David Ricardo.[2]

[1] Toynbee, "Industrial Revolution," p. 148. With Adam Smith's influence must, of course, be associated that of David Ricardo, who was born four years before "The Wealth of Nations" was published, and whose influence was at its height from about 1817 onwards.

[2] "Ricardo's economic assumptions were of his own making . . . his philosophical assumptions were derived from Adam Smith, whose intellectual

One factor which most injuriously affected the poor during the first seventy-five years of the Industrial Revolution was due to the nation being throughout this period almost continuously at war. Then, as always, war meant three things: First, it meant that thought, energy, and money, which might have been devoted to the improvement of the social condition of the people, were expended upon the war; secondly, it meant an enormous increase in taxation, the heaviest burden of which then, as is usually the case, fell upon the poorer classes; thirdly, it meant an immense rise in price of all the necessaries of life. From 1755 to 1764 the average price of corn was 37s. 6d.; from 1765 to 1774 it was 51s.—a rise of 35 per cent.;[1] in 1782 it was 53s. 9¼d.; in 1795 it was 81s. 6d.[2] There was also a very considerable rise in other classes of provisions and also in rent.[3]

The first hundred years of the Industrial Revolution was a period during which there seems to have been an unusual amount of oppression of the poor and the weak by the rich and the strong. There were at least two reasons for this: First, the opportunities for amassing wealth were unusually great, and consequently the temptation to use these to the full, even at the cost of a practically unlimited exploitation of the workers, was proportionately great;[4] secondly, owing to the prevalence of inadequate and un-Christian views of both man and society—though their un-Christianity was not clearly recognized—men who had no actual wish to do wrong were prevented from seeing the real iniquity of their conduct.[5] Among the most fertile of all the causes of the ineffectiveness of religion and of the failure of Christianity to make the progress which it should, has always been a contradiction between the opinions professed and the

position he accepted in the main without question" (Toynbee, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 148).

[1] These figures are from Nicholls, *op. cit.*, vol. ii., p. 74.

[2] Toynbee, *op. cit.*, p. 82. For the further great rise during the war with France see the next chapter.

[3] Toynbee, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 and 108.

[4] This was especially the case in regard to pauper child-labour.

[5] See quotations from Lord Shaftesbury's private diary on the conduct of such men as Gladstone and John Bright (over the "Ten Hours" Bill), quoted by Dicey, "Law and Opinion," pp. 231 *et seq.* See Professor Bennett's

conduct pursued by men calling themselves Christians. This contradiction was then more glaring than usual; but at the same time we must remember that this was at least partly due to a very imperfect conception of what Christianity involved. This defective conception not only prevented the ordinary layman from acting as a Christian; it prevented even otherwise earnest clergymen from speaking, as the old Hebrew Prophets would have spoken, of the iniquity of oppressing the poor.

The moral standard at the close of the reign of George II. was, among all classes of society, but especially among the richest and poorest, extremely low. I need not stay to prove this statement, for the evidence is only too abundant. Among the richest class there was great extravagance, especially in the way of gambling; drunkenness pervaded all classes; and where any form of industry called together large numbers of ignorant, unskilled workmen, the restraints of orderly society were almost entirely removed.[1] With the accession of George III. the moral tone of the Court certainly improved, and to some slight extent this affected the tone of society generally; but the improvement was far from what it should have been, and for nearly a century after this time the moral standard, especially among the poor, was deplorably low. It has been asserted that during this time the clergy set a distinctly bad example; the charge has even been made that there was widespread immorality among them. For this charge there appears to be very little justification. Their greatest failing seems to have been a really culpable inactivity in discharging the responsibilities of their office. Their faults were chiefly those of omission. They failed to do their duty, and

essay on Social Ideals in the Old Testament in "Christ and Civilization," pp. 49 *et seq.*

[1] "The mania for gambling in all forms pervaded society; ladies did their shopping where with every purchase they were given a ticket for a raffle. . . . The picture of the under-side of life in England during the second quarter of the eighteenth century is appalling. . . . In 1750 London physicians reported 14,000 cases of illness, most of them hopeless, due to the use of gin. . . . Every sixth house in London was a gin-shop. . . . Throughout the country things were little better. . . . Wherever any form of industry called together large numbers of ignorant, unskilled workmen, the restraints of orderly society were almost entirely removed. . . . Philanthropy was hopeless of them. The Church seemed powerless to take religion to them" (Winchester, "Life of John Wesley" pp. 73 *et seq.*).

therefore to be an influence for good among their people, who in consequence sank lower and lower into moral deterioration, and not infrequently into profligacy and crime.

I have thought it well to describe at some length the actual conditions which existed at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, because, apart from a knowledge of these, it is impossible to understand either the actual course which the Revolution pursued or its many evil social results. The causes of the unhappy condition of the poorest classes of the population in our great towns to-day, and the reasons for the present attitude of these classes towards organized Christianity, can be clearly traced back to the evil course which the Industrial Revolution—so far as the poorest and most helpless part of the people was concerned—was allowed to take. And it was allowed to take this course very largely because there was in those who at that time should have done something to form public opinion a totally inadequate conception of Christian doctrine, and consequently an equally inadequate discharge of Christian duty.

There is one movement belonging to the eighteenth century which no one who wishes to describe the relations between the Church and the Poor during that period can possibly ignore. The "Evangelical Movement" was primarily neither social nor economic, yet indirectly it had certain undoubtedly important social and economic consequences. It profoundly affected the moral characters of those who were strongly influenced by it. Because it taught them to live as Christians, it taught them not only to do their duty to God, but also to themselves and to their neighbours.[1] Because it was a warfare against all forms of *sin*, it could not fail to be a warfare against vices which had a most deleterious influence upon the social and economic welfare of the people. In those days, as in these, a great proportion of the misery from which the poor suffered was self-inflicted.

[1] In this connection we must remember William Wilberforce's "Practical View," published in 1797, and which had an enormous circulation.

Then, as now, intemperance and other vices were among the chief causes of poverty and social misery. We who look back upon the Evangelical Movement, and to whom its results (or want of these) are known, can see where it failed to be the power which it might have been. We can see great gaps in its theology. We can see the narrowness of some of its conceptions of Christian truth, and consequently its failure to affect certain spheres of Christian life and duty. We can see its failure to grasp the idea of the Christian society, and therefore its failure to teach the individual Christian his social responsibilities. We can see its failure to understand and therefore to teach the "sacramental" character (in the true sense of the term) of both Christian life and Christian conduct. It did not understand that the physical or the "material" was at least one channel of the spiritual; it did not realize the effects of the physical—in the most comprehensive meaning of the word—upon the spiritual life; it did not realize the deleterious influence upon character of the want of sufficient food and a healthy dwelling, and of at least a "living wage";[1] in short, it did not teach clearly the need of the sanctification of the physical[2] to the highest ends and purposes. It did not put the doctrine of the Incarnation in its true relation to the doctrine of the Atonement. It failed to comprehend, and therefore to teach, the essential unity of all life. It did not insist with sufficient clearness upon the essential connection of the life of this world with that of the world to come. Some, but by no means all, of its leaders were open to the charge of teaching a conception of the Atonement and of the "Plan of Salvation" which at least savoured of the mechanical, and so were in danger of becoming *un*moral. But when we have admitted all this, we cannot fail to see that the movement had far-reaching consequences for good. The effects of Wesley's preaching upon the moral lives of the people were

[1] When life is a perpetual struggle to maintain a bare physical existence, there is little or no energy left for thought upon higher things.

[2] In the light of present controversy I prefer to use the term "physical" rather than "material."

enormous, especially among the lower middle classes,[1] though probably not to the same degree among the poorest of the poor. It has been held—and not without a measure of truth—that it was largely owing to the influence of Wesley and his co-workers that there was no movement in England at the end of the eighteenth century corresponding to the Revolution in France.

I cannot here attempt to sketch the history of the Evangelical Movement even in barest outline,[2] but a few dates may help to put it into the right connection with other movements and events. John Wesley began his great preaching campaign in Bristol in 1739, and about the same time Whitfield and Charles Wesley began the work in London; in 1742 Grimshaw went to Haworth; in 1746 Samuel Walker became curate of Truro; in 1749 Romaine was preaching in London; in 1759 Henry Venn left Clapham for Huddersfield; in 1760 Fletcher went to Madeley; and in 1764 John Newton was curate of Olney.

When we examine the records of the work which these men accomplished, we find abundant evidence of a generally philanthropic spirit at work, side by side with their passion for saving souls.[3] In their several parishes they attacked drunkenness and immorality, and they did all they could to assuage suffering due to poverty and sickness. Grimshaw would personally clear the public-houses of tipplers on a Sunday morning;[4] Venn was even greater in his dealing with individuals—in the strong sanctified common sense which he brought to bear upon the difficulties of "weavers and shepherds"—than he was in his pulpit ministrations;[5] the effect upon the moral life of the seaport of Hull from

[1] At times Wesley was intensely practical. He refused to preach at St. Ives so long as his hearers took part in smuggling; he absolutely forbade bribery at the Bristol election, and this at a time when "everybody" smuggled and "everybody" bribed. See Winchester's "Life of Wesley," pp. 213, 214.

[2] The histories of the movement are numerous—*e.g.*, Balleine's "History of the Evangelical Party," and Canon Overton's "The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century."

[3] Reliance upon works was indeed one of the errors against which they chiefly preached; the doctrine of the hymn "Rock of Ages" was their doctrine, and the variety of secular learning and charitable works their theme . . . yet they owed their prominence "[at any rate, in the early years of the nineteenth century] to their activity in philanthropic movements" ("The English Church in the Nineteenth Century," F. W. Cornish, p. 9).

[4] Balleine, p. 48. [5] *Ibid.*, p. 52.

the preaching of Joseph Milner was enormous ;[1] at Truro, owing to the influence of Walker, the cockpit and the theatre had to close their doors ;[2] Fletcher had six Sunday-schools in different parts of his great parish,[3] while at Creaton Thomas Jones commenced both a sick club and a clothing club.[4] Then the philanthropy of the so-called Clapham sect—that is, of John Thornton, Henry Thornton,[5] William Wilberforce, and others—must not be forgotten. It was William Wilberforce and Henry Thornton who found the means for the wonderful work which Hannah More did among the children in the villages of the Mendips.[6]

All this being so, the question may naturally be asked, Why was not the philanthropic work of these men more effective? Why had it not a wider and more lasting influence?[7] Why did it apparently so little to stem the flood of misery—and not only of misery, but of vice and degradation—which poured over England, and especially over the large towns and manufacturing districts in the last years of the eighteenth century and far into the nineteenth? The chief reason was that their philanthropy, like their theology and their religion, was largely individualistic. They were most assiduous in trying to relieve the individual cases of poverty which came to their notice. But except in what they did for education (in their purely spiritual capacity), the leaders of the Evangelical School do not seem to have grasped the necessity for attacking *causes*. They do not appear to have realized that the relationships of society—those between rich and poor—were then fundamentally wrong. Doubtless their political economy was that of their age, and apparently they did not see that, as this was utterly un-Christian in theory, consequently it must be so in practice.[8] They cannot have realized that charity, however

[1] Balleine, pp. 53, 54.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 58-62. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 83.
[5] In four years, 1790-1793, Henry Thornton gave in charity £20,408, while in the same years all his other expenses were less than £7,000.
[6] Upon this work see Balleine, *op. cit.*, pp. 103, 104.
[7] I except, of course, the fight against the Slave Trade, and the (much later) work of Lord Shaftesbury, *vide* the following paragraph.
[8] The way in which Christian leaders—*e.g.*, Whitfield and Newton—took part in the Slave Trade is a striking example. See Balleine, *op. cit.*, pp. 100, 101.

lavishly bestowed upon individuals, was no substitute for the oppression of one class by another. They did not see the futility of palliating the sufferings of individuals while, by an iniquitous social and economic system, poverty and every kind of attendant degradation were being multiplied.[1] Historical parallels are proverbially dangerous. But the methods of philanthropy pursued by the Evangelicals towards the end of the eighteenth century were far nearer to the methods pursued in the Middle Ages than they were to those of either Calvin or of the men who did so much to make the Poor Law effective in the reign of Charles I. But both Calvin (though not in the ordinary acceptation of the term) and the advisers of Charles I. were "High" Churchmen—that is, they had a lofty sense of the reality of the Christian community, and therefore of the necessity of bringing statesmanship to bear upon the welfare of the community as a whole.

I am here, of course, speaking of the earlier Evangelicals. I am not referring to the men who were instrumental in the abolition of the Slave Trade, nor to those who, like T. F. Buxton and Lord Ashley (afterwards Earl of Shaftesbury), belonged to what has been termed the "third generation." These men had a far wider conception of philanthropy; they saw that oppression and poverty could not be attacked satisfactorily by individuals as individuals seeking to deal with individual cases. They saw that the conscience of the nation must be roused, and that the nation's rulers must be compelled to corporate action on behalf of the national welfare. But the work of these men does not belong to the period with which I have dealt in this chapter—the first five-and-twenty years of the reign of George III.; it belongs rather to the early years of the nineteenth century.

In the next chapter I hope to deal more particularly with the period which stretches from the close of the American War to the years immediately following the Battle of Waterloo.

[1] Many of the Evangelical laymen were keen business men. The connection between keen competition in business and individualism in religion is worthy of study.