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884TH ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

HELD AT 12, QUEEN ANNE'S GATE, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1, ON MONDAY, 9TH MAY, 1949.

REV. F. CAWLEY, B.A., B.D., Ph.D., IN THE CHAIR.

The Minutes of the previous Meeting were read, confirmed and signed.

The following elections were announced :—F. L. Hogg, Esq., M.Brit.I.R.E., A.M.I.E.E., Fellow; Rev. F. H. Harris, Fellow; Milson G. Polson, Esq., Fellow; Rev. Frank Wood, L.Th., Member; Rev. A. Victor Maddick, B.A., Th.B., L.Th., Member; Douglas W. Lyon, Esq., L.R.C.P. & S., L.R.F.P.S., Member; Frederick G. Nevell, Esq., Associate.

The CHAIRMAN then called on Rev. Gordon J. M. Pearce, M.A., to read his paper on "The Christian and the Marxist Views of History."

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE MARXIST VIEWS OF HISTORY

BY REV. GORDON J. M. PEARCE, M.A.

SYNOPSIS.

An account of Marx's theory of economic determinism. The main types of social change in history are discussed with special reference to the interplay between theology, politics and economics. It is shown that Marxist theory contains much truth even though, taken too seriously, or too literally, it often leads to absurdity. The general conclusion is reached that the attitude of Marxism is essentially religious—the main tenets of Judaeo-Christianity having all been adopted and translated into secular terms. It is concluded that this religious element is so strongly entrenched that Marxism can only be replaced by an alternative religion.

In an Addendum the author discusses the Christian attitude towards history—one that finds in the incarnation a key to the meaning of the historical process.

IN this paper I propose to give some account of Marx's chief contribution to the study of history, namely, his theory of economic determinism.

Before we consider Marxism, however, we must indicate our line of approach. Every day we hear or read of Russian Communism. Millions of people have adopted this political creed, and it shapes the policies of many nations. Communism is a

force to be reckoned with in the politics of the modern world. It arouses enthusiasm, suspicion, or hostility in those who come into contact with it. It may be welcomed or hated; it can scarcely be ignored. With Communism as a system of practical politics, however, we shall not be directly concerned. We shall do well to attempt to clear our minds of prejudice towards Communist policy, and to examine dispassionately the theory of political action by which Communists profess to be guided.

There are several varieties of Communism. Plato advocated a communistic mode of life for the rulers of his Republic. The primitive Christian Church in Jerusalem seems to have practised some form of communism, for its members " possessed all things in common." Mediæval monasteries were organised on a communistic basis. Many writers on politics have expounded systems which advocated a communistic doctrine of the ownership of wealth. For our present purpose, we shall content ourselves with examining the Communism of Karl Marx, its most important, though not its sole exponent to the modern world. But here again we must delimit our ground. Student though Marx was, he always considered it his task to change the world rather than to contemplate it. He took part in the organisation of Communist activities, and wrote much about the political events of his time. His intellectual interests ranged far. A considerable part of his major work, " Capital," is devoted to the discussion of economic theory, and his illustrations and proofs are derived from his study of primitive societies and from the history of western Europe. In his various writings he works out a political theory, a doctrine of man, a system of morals, an account of history; or, at least, even if he does not expound all these matters with systematic thoroughness, he makes important suggestions about them in the course of his study of society. We shall consider his political and economic views for the light they throw on his conception of history.

Marxism is a doctrine of social change. Change in the natural world has attracted the attention of philosophers since Heraclitus, and has remained important for modern philosophers like Bergson and Whitehead. Men and women change. Other writers beside Shakespeare have written about the seven ages of man. Society also changes. Political regimes vary from age to age. The benevolent despotism of the Tudors gives way to the absolutism of the first two Stuarts and the military dictatorship of Cromwell. The Whig oligarchy of the eighteenth century is followed by the

Parliamentary democracy of the Victorian era. Not only do political systems change. We do not speak the same English as Chaucer wrote, think in the manner of John of Salisbury, wear our clothes after the fashion of the Puritans, or build in the style of Sir Christopher Wren. Laws and government, institutions and modes of living, technique and culture—human social life changes with the passing years.

How can we account for this change? What initiates and maintains it? Many answers have been given. Changes in the physical environment, in climate, food, and soil, set up social changes. The work of a great man may have far reaching effects on the life of his own and subsequent ages. The life of Israel was shaped by Moses. The culture of the Roman Empire was profoundly influenced by the conquests of Alexander. The life of our own times has been shaped by Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. Not a few attempts have been made to account for social change, to outline a perfect society, and to suggest some means of attaining it. In making these attempts social thinkers called to their aid faith, philosophy, imagination, and some of their accounts now strike us as quaint rather than exact. One of the most famous, Sir Thomas More's "Utopia," has given us the adjective "utopian" to describe what is possible of achievement in cloud-cuckoo land, but certainly not on earth.

Marx aimed at giving a scientific account of social change. "Just as Darwin," said Engels, "discovered the law of the evolution of organic nature, so Marx discovered the evolutionary law of human history." What Darwin did for biology, Marx wished to do for social study. He desired to dedicate his book "Capital" to the great biologist, who declined the honour.

In order to explain Marx's doctrine, I shall quote some sentences written by Engels to indicate what Marx contributed to "The Communist Manifesto," a pamphlet published by them jointly in 1848 when Marx was twenty-nine, and Engels twenty-seven.

"I consider myself bound to state," Engels wrote, "that the fundamental proposition which forms the nucleus, belongs to Marx. That proposition is: that in every historical epoch the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind (since the dissolution of

primitive tribal society, holding land in common ownership) has been a history of class struggles, contests between exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes; that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolution in which, now-a-days, a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed classes (the proletariat) cannot attain their emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class (the bourgeoisie) without, at the same time, and once for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinction, and class struggles. This proposition, which in my opinion is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory had done for biology, we, both of us had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845."

Notice, first, the claim that a certain social organisation necessarily follows from the mode of economic production and exchange in any period, and that this organisation is the basis of the political and cultural life of that period.

Consider the state of affairs in the Middle Ages. A mediaeval village was largely self-supporting. Corn and vegetables were grown in the local fields; cattle grazed in the meadows, and pigs rooted in the woods. Wool from the fleeces of the local sheep clothed the inhabitants, and some remained to sell outside. The peace of the village was kept by the lord of the manor, supported by the villagers, who gave him service in exchange for protection. Everyone lived close to the land, the economy was agrarian, and the authority of the local magnate was very considerable. An economy of this kind made possible, indeed, made inevitable, the hierarchical mode of government known as feudalism. The Parliamentary democracy of modern times, or the militaristic imperialism of Rome, would have been impossible in a state in which communication between local communities was slow and difficult, in which interchange of ideas was comparatively rare, where civil servants were lacking, and central authority was weak. Inevitably, political power would be concentrated in the hands of some local leader who claimed to be the owner, or the chief tenant, of the lands around his headquarters, and protected the people on his estates from the depredations of a neighbouring lord, provided that they served some time in tilling the manorial domains and supplying the lord's necessities while he was dealing with his enemies and theirs.

Not only did the economy strongly influence the mode of government. It played a large part in shaping the morals, the religion, the culture of the time. The moral notions which were

most widely approved were those that tended to preserve the power of the lord. The virtue of submission to authority was thoroughly inculcated and rebellion was stigmatised as a sin which could hold no promise of success on earth and have no hope of mercy in heaven. Whether submission to authority is always a splendid virtue may be open to doubt; that it was a highly convenient attitude in an inferior, his feudal superior could never doubt. We are not to suppose that the lord was necessarily a hypocrite, that he said in effect, "I know that a man of independent spirit is finer than one who is cowed into submission, but my own interests demand that my tenants shall be submissive; therefore I will have them taught that submission is one of the greatest virtues." The point is rather that he was himself convinced that the moral order of the time was the right one, but his conviction depended directly upon the need to maintain his position in a society which would otherwise collapse.

Even theological doctrines were influenced by the political, and hence by the economic, structure of society. Dr. Maldwyn Hughes observed that most writers on the doctrine of the Atonement "poured their ideas about the Cross into the moulds of the dominant conceptions of their own particular age. During the period of the Fathers, when brigandage and warfare were prevalent, the practice of ransom existed. In harmony with this, man was held to be in bondage to the Devil, and the death of Christ was thought to be the ransom paid for man's deliverance. The Mediaeval Period was the age of chivalry, and the Atonement was interpreted in terms of this institution. Sin was defined as a violation of God's honour (for example, by Anselm) and Christ's work as a satisfaction."

Suppose we now compare mediaeval England with the England of the late eighteenth century. Throughout the intervening centuries, the power of the towns, and especially of those within easy reach of the sea, had been steadily increasing, and the power of landowners had declined. A new economy had arisen based not so much upon wealth in the form of land as upon wealth gained from exchange in trade. The growth of modern science and the development of new techniques facilitated the rise of industry and England was rapidly becoming an industrial country. In other words, the mode of economic production and exchange was rapidly becoming industrial rather than agricultural. Consequently, the balance of political and social power was altered. A new class had arisen, the manufacturing class,

whose members, though drawn both from the landed aristocracy and from the peasants attached to the soil, had aims and interests different from the classes from which they had sprung. The middle classes slowly gathered into their hands a considerable proportion of the wealth of the country, and having gained economic power, demanded political power, and obtained it with the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832. The chief means which a community adopts to satisfy its basic material needs decides its class structure, its political system and its culture. The reign of Queen Victoria was conspicuously the golden age of the middle class. Its preferences strongly marked the literature, art, and religion of the time; both politics and culture reflected the dominance of those who derived their wealth mostly from trade and industry.

This view of history is known as dialectical materialism. It has been briefly defined by Professor Seligman as the view that "the chief considerations in human progress are the social considerations, and that the important factor in social change is the economic factor."

To return to our earlier quotation from Engels, we must notice that he asserts that Marx held that since the economic factor was dominant in history, "the whole history of mankind has been a history of class struggles." Marx insists that a change in the economic centre of gravity in any community is accompanied by a struggle between the possessors of economic power and those who would take it from them. No class can be divested of its power without a struggle. The feudal system tended to be weakest in large towns. Merchants formed guilds to resist the claims of feudal overlords and gradually increased in strength. The feudal system itself encouraged the organisation of the trading class which at length overthrew it. A Marxist would hold that the Reformation is less significant as an event in the religious history of Europe than as an indication that political and social power was passing from the Mediaeval Church, a great feudal institution, into the hands of the Commercial class. As feudalism nurtured its destroyer, so also bourgeois capitalism generates and nurtures the class that will strike it down.

The Industrial Revolution was made possible by the invention of new machines, the use of coal and steam, and improved means of transport. Cottage industry, in the face of severe competition, fell into decay. The population was drawn from the countryside and set to work in mills and factories situated in towns which

grew up to house those who were thus employed. The choice before those who came to work in the new factories was either employment there or starvation. Having nothing else with which to bargain, they were obliged to sell their only possession, their labour. This employers bought at the cheapest rate. The law of supply and demand operated in favour of low wages and high profits. If a business operation was profitable, considerations of justice and humanity counted for little. Economics was a territory beyond the sway of moral law. Marx prophesied the steady growth of urban civilisation, the spread of western methods of production throughout the world, the penetration of western trade and commerce into every continent, the growth of large international business corporations, the decline of the small trader, and the increasing misery of the working class. Between employer and employed there could be no peace because their economic interests were opposed. The wealth of the one depended on the poverty of the other. But capitalism also engenders its destroyer. To enable the workers to operate machines, they must be given a certain amount of training. The organisation of factories demands the adequate education of the employees whose work is administrative rather than manual. The working class gradually takes advantage of its training to organise itself to secure better conditions of employment and to demand higher rates of pay. Trade unions grow, and the use of the weapon of the strike is discovered. The misery of the proletariat increases with the prosperity of the bourgeoisie, hostility between the two classes issues in proletarian action made more effective by growing class-consciousness and by increasing skill in the use of methods of attack. Capitalism increases the size of the proletariat and augments its strength, until it is at last in a position to seize power for itself and "to expropriate the expropriators." When this revolution occurs the minority which owns the wealth of the community is dispossessed. The proletariat which capitalism has itself made the only class in the community other than the dwindling bourgeoisie, seizes wealth for itself. Thus the community now owns the wealth of the community. Classes die with the system which gave them birth and class antagonism perishes in a society in which there is but one class to own the means of production and supply.

The social and political revolution is accompanied by far-reaching cultural change. Under capitalism, morality is merely a device for keeping the workers in subjection. Religion encourages

them meekly to acquiesce in the degradation of their present life by promising them rewards in heaven. The function of the worker is to tend his machine; creative activity is denied him; consequently he has little or no interest in the arts or in culture. He is entertained by machine-made pleasures provided by capitalists who make large profits from brightening lives which they themselves make drab.

If, then, to revert to our earlier question, we ask: What is the cause of social change? Marx's answer is that social change is initiated by variation in the mode of economic supply and that such change is reflected in a class conflict which moves to a climax. No one can read Marx without being struck by the difference between him and earlier socialist writers. It is comparatively easy to portray an ideal society, and throughout the centuries, men have never been lacking to undertake the task. Few of these dreamers of dreams, however, have suggested how the beautiful ideal may be translated into fact. Their ideal states have remained ideal, and in the main impossible to realise, except perhaps by men who were themselves ideal. Marx brings the discussion down to earth. He claimed to set Hegel's dialectic the right way up by using it to explain not the abstract ideas of logic, but the concrete realities of social life. For many years, Marx pored over bluebooks in the British Museum, and was among the first of social scientists to use statistics. He claimed that his doctrine was based upon the historical study of social facts and corroborated by them. He claimed in other words to give a strictly scientific account of human society, and he worked out a theory which he thought was capable of scientific examination. Marx possessed a vivid sense of the dramatic and a considerable power of expression; his mind had a remarkable scope and he himself lived close to practical affairs; his doctrine seemed to be firmly based on social fact and enabled those who accepted it to foresee what must inevitably come to pass in the future; moreover, it gave them the confidence and hope which sprang from the belief that they were on the winning side and that nothing could prevent the final triumph of their cause. These features of Marxism account for its power over the men of our time. It is not a religion, but it has some of the characteristics of a religion, and indeed, there is much to be said for the view that it is the only successful mass-religion of the modern world. The Christian speaks of the sovereignty of God, the Marxist of the sovereignty of the economic process; the Christian, of redemption

from sin; the Marxist, of redemption from iniquitous social conditions; the Christian, of conflict between God and the Devil, the Marxist, of conflict between proletariat and bourgeoisie; the Christian, of the certain coming of the Kingdom of God, the Marxist, of the certain coming of the class-less society. Providence, Redemption, and Eschatology are all in Marxism, but they are all translated into secular terms. The blood of many Jewish rabbis flowed in the veins of Marx; he inherited the moral passion of the Old Testament and exhibited a fervour for righting wrongs which, in view of his deterministic account of history, is something of a paradox.

Marxism can be interpreted in two ways; we may regard it as a method of interpreting history, or as a theory in the strict sense. It is important not to confuse the two, for as a method, it may be useful, but its usefulness does not entail its validity as a theory. The question we have to ask of a method of interpretation is, Is it fruitful? For the Marxist, the life of society is unitary. All its aspects reflect a single pattern of culture. In this pattern, the economic element is most important, and dominates the other activities of life. In the event of a contradiction between economic and political systems, the political is transformed because it pays more to adopt the more profitable structure. Economics divides society into classes dominant and subservient. Society is essentially unstable. The development of fresh methods of production bring to the front fresh classes to compete for power. A Marxist will take account of economic processes which affect religion, art, philosophy. It follows that the extent to which the Marxian view can be followed is a question of degree. Its usefulness may vary with different periods of human history. It may throw light, for example, on the class-structure of nineteenth century England without throwing much light on the structure of contemporaneous Basuto social life, or on English social life in the days of King Alfred. We may admit, on the whole, that as a method, Marxism is fruitful and does lead to the discovery of the truth. The development of social and economic history, of sociology, and the social sciences, has been powerfully influenced by the impetus of Marxism. But, of course, even the best method can be misapplied, and Marxism has often been used as a method of study in fields which are not amenable to this type of investigation. It may be doubted, for example, whether, in spite of the claims of some scientists who are taking part in the present discussion, it can

be usefully applied to the solution of problems in biology. The Marxian method is probably most valuable in its application to the problems of modern European history, but even here, it is important to remember that it is not the only method which yields useful results.

We may, however, take Marxism as a theory in the strict sense, that is, as a set of truths to be accepted or rejected. If we take it in this sense, Marxism is open to serious criticism. Consider Marx's essential thesis that the economic factor in social life dominates all the rest. But is not the economic factor itself determined? We may make out a case for the view that the Industrial Revolution accelerated the growth of bourgeois capitalism and gave rise to a greatly enlarged urban proletariat. But the change in the means of supplying the necessities of life would not have been possible except in a fairly stable society whose political organisation was well developed. Even if the necessary scientific discoveries had been made and the requisite techniques developed, say in the reign of King Stephen, it is scarcely conceivable that the factory-system could have been established. The necessary political organisation was lacking. Further, it is very doubtful whether the change would have occurred prior to certain scientific discoveries. The inventions of Watt, Hargreaves, Arkwright, and others, made possible the change in the mode of production. Is it not a fact that scientific inquiry greatly influences economic technique? In short, where are we to draw the line between economic and non-economic activities? It is easy to speak of "the economic factor," but in practice it is very difficult to isolate it and to exhibit it working in isolation from other factors. We should be on our guard against theories which give too simple an account of very complex human activities.

Nevertheless, we ought also to be on our guard lest, having pointed out the inconsistencies of Marxism and indicated its inadequacies and its failure to account for subsequent developments in social and political affairs, we imagine that we have robbed it of its power to appeal to the mind and imagination of men. The criticism of Marxian theory is important, but by itself, it is not enough. Marxism is not only a philosophy, a social and political theory. It is a dogma passionately accepted with a religious intensity. A religious faith can be destroyed only by a more adequate faith which gives a valid account of the facts of human experience and touches the deepest springs of human

action. Christians believe that their faith gives a true account of human nature and of the real environment in which men live, enables them to solve at a deeper level their personal and social problems and inspires them with a nobler hope.

I should like to conclude this paper by making a few comments on the Christian view of history in order to suggest some differences between Christianity and Marxism.

Christians believe that at a certain point in time, God became incarnate in Jesus Christ, who lived, died, rose again. This unique event divides human history and bestows significance upon it. The historical process is moving towards an end in which the redemptive purpose of the God disclosed in the Incarnation will be fulfilled in the establishment of His divine rule and in the subjugation of everything opposed to His will. Human history elapses between three critical points: the creation of man, the Incarnation, and the Second Advent, but it is the second of these, the Incarnation, which links together the first and the last things and discloses the meaning of the whole process. For the Christian, God, who is transcendent, intervenes in the temporal process in order to redeem it. The Christian's approach to history is eschatological; that is to say, he finds its meaning revealed in certain events which belong to history and yet are beyond history, since in them the eternal God has intervened in the temporal order. For the Christian, the meaning of history is not disclosed by any historical event such as the age of the Antonines, or the growth of freedom, or the establishment of a classless society, but by one unique event, the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. His Advent certainly belongs to history; we know who was the Roman Emperor when it occurred. Secular historians may regard it merely as an event in history to be noticed with many other events which occurred in the reign of Augustus. At that time the Republic persisted, Virgil and Horace wrote, and Jesus of Nazareth was born. The Christian, however, enlightened by his faith, sees in the birth of Jesus Christ that event with reference to which the importance of all the others must be assessed. The significance of history must be sought, he affirms, not in any human acts, but in the mighty act of God which, although it occurred in history, is not merely an historical event.

The difference between the Christian and the Marxist account is plain. Christians believe in the living God who transcends the world, yet is immanent within it. Marxism is often called

atheistic, and if, by the use of this term, we mean to indicate that Marxism knows nothing of the God who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, then the description is accurate. According to Marx, our religious ideas are functions of economic structure. "The religious world," says Marx, "is but the reflex of the real world." "God," says Lenin, "is primarily a complex of ideas which result from the overwhelming oppression of man through external nature and class slavery—of ideas which fasten this slavery upon him, and which try to neutralise the class struggle." God is merely an idea, or a complex of ideas, not so much deliberately invented by men, as generated by his social relations. He does not exist as the Creator and Redeemer of the world. Marx, however, does not quite succeed in maintaining his atheism. He repudiates the Christian God, but venerates, indeed, almost deifies, the dialectical process. This process creates human culture and moves inevitably on its way towards its appointed end. It is at once the source of all social change and its director.

Marxism, again, is materialistic; Christianity, on the other hand, while it maintains that the material world is real, holds that it possesses a subordinate reality derived from the supreme reality, God, who is its creator. Marxism, however, is a special form of materialism. Marx and his followers have been at pains to insist that their materialism is very different from that, for example, of eighteenth-century France. The older materialism was based ultimately upon the mechanism of Newtonian physics; the science of biology with its newer conception of evolution, and more especially the social studies, just beginning to take shape in Marx's early days, showed the inadequacy of the mechanistic principle of explanation. Marx's dialectical materialism was, he thought, much more effective in explaining the phenomena of human social life. There is some doubt, however, whether Marxism ought to be described as a form of materialism. Marx used the word "materialism" to distinguish his doctrine from Hegel's idealism. In view of this, and having in regard the fact that Marxism "embodies the fullest recognition of the conscious determining power of mind," G. D. H. Cole prefers to regard Marx's "materialism" as a form of "realism."

Further, Christianity holds that the human will is free. Its freedom is impaired by sin and limited by the over-ruling will of God; nevertheless, within a circumscribed area, it has genuine freedom. Hence it is not possible to predict from a consideration

of human history the course which man will certainly take in the future. Marx, as we have seen, accepts a form of determinism and believes that dialectical materialism enables him to forecast what will inevitably be the future tendencies of any given society. Without this principle of explanation, he thinks it impossible to offer any genuinely scientific account of human social life.

The divergencies between Marxism and Christianity are deep-seated, and ultimately arise from differences which are metaphysical and theological. A Christian may be, perhaps ought to be, critical of the capitalist system. At least, if his faith is the faith of the prophets and the apostles, he will be greatly concerned with the question of social justice. He will notice that in the modern world the followers of Marx are stern critics of capitalism and champions of the oppressed. If he declines to equate liberal democracy, particularly in the heavily secularised form it has assumed in Britain and America, with the social ideal of Christianity, he may be inclined to regard Marxists as fellow-travellers. In this he will be mistaken. No matter how much their objectives seem to be akin to the objectives of some Christian reformers, we cannot disregard the facts that they begin with different pre-suppositions, they are animated by a different spirit, and they really travel to a different goal. Some kind of alliance between a secular, this-worldly Christianity and Marxism, may be possible; no kind of alliance is possible between Marxism and Biblical faith. Two cannot walk together unless they be agreed, and they need to agree first of all about the purpose of their journey. They are not likely to walk very far together if one walks to improve his physique while the other walks counting all things loss that he may know Christ and the power of His Resurrection.

Discussion.

The Chairman (Dr. F. Cawley) said: A most opportune subject. In some real measure the peace of the world depends on Russia's way of thinking and our own reaction to it, politically and spiritually. Russia is a deeply religious country, hence it is essential that Christian people the world over should study carefully and, as far as possible, sympathetically, the new order under which the Russians now live. In many quarters Marxist Communism is held to be a deadly enemy of Christianity. Even though this were finally proved

to be so, it would still be necessary for us to understand the nature of the difference. And we should have to remember the conditions of those earlier embittered years that paved the way, to a large extent, for the emergence of this new factor in world movements. Further, we ought not to forget that it is of the genius of the Christian faith to conquer many enemies in its age-long history, absorbing something of the qualities of the defeated to grace the Cross. Russia, I feel, is not far off from the Kingdom, and a part of our task is to aid her in this crucial hour. We therefore especially welcome Mr. Pearce, in whom we have one of our younger scholars. He has majored in philosophy and has read widely in theology. We are safe, therefore, in his hands, and are assured of a well-constructed exposition of Marxist Communism as it bears on history and the Christian faith.

Mr. W. E. LESLIE said : It is difficult to think of a more important subject at the present day than Marxism and Communism. Unfortunately a great many people are filled with blind, unreasoning panic when these subjects are mentioned, and react with undiscriminating abuse. This is a very dangerous attitude.

At the recent Lambeth Conference the Bishops published a careful and moderate review of the subject, and commended it to the study of the faithful. This section of the Report of the Conference has been re-printed by the Industrial Christian Fellowship in a 3*d.* pamphlet.

Mr. Pearce is therefore to be congratulated upon his attempt to give an objective scientific study of one part of Marxist philosophy.

Dr. P. W. O'GORMAN said : Discontented and envious men of the type of Marx and Engels, imbued with malice aforethought, always seek for justification in false philosophy to veneer their prospective evil deeds. It was a wise statesman who long ago asserted that education without religion turned out only clever devils. They can invent " dialectical " historical materialism and easily discover opposed parallels in past ages—light and darkness, Manichean two gods, Christ and Mahomed, etc. Scandalous social and economic iniquities, of course, need radical remedies, but never by illegitimate means.

Marxism cannot be understood without realising its fundamental principle, " militant atheism." The denial of God, of Heaven and Hell, of immortality of the soul, and of responsibility to the Supreme Judge, necessarily involve the view that men are beasts; the destruction of Christian civilisation, and the " liquidation " of all who oppose. Add to these the sham " Dictatorship of the Proletariat " or hand-workers, war against class and private property, the abolishing of the family, the unit of Society, and the insolent appropriation of children, together with the elevation of State godship as the source of morality, and the slavery of humanity. How do these practices compare with the essence of the two Commandments—Love of God and our neighbour ? Are men so blind to the hatred and presence of Lucifer ? Satan is not an abstract of the mind : he is very much alive and active, and we must seek the Archangel St. Michael's sword. Let us be ever mindful of St. Paul's warning in Ephesians vi, 11–12.

Mr. THOMAS FITZGERALD said : I believe that Mr. Pearce has presented an altogether too favourable picture of Marx's views. I think it ought to have been pointed out that Marx was a diligent student of Spinoza. In this way he absorbed much of what was worst in the Jewish tradition. Spinoza, for instance, had no use for repentance. " Repentance is no virtue, in other words it does not arise from reason ; on the contrary, he who repents of an action is either miserable or impotent."

Finally—What is the attitude of Marx towards religion ? He says " Religion is the laudanum (opiate) of the people," and his vehement modern disciple tells us that " No influence was more persuasive than that of Wesley in inducing the masses in England to accept the grim discipline of the new factories in return for the dubious consolation of an unproved and unprovable eternal bliss."

Mr. TITTERINGTON said : In any discussion of Marxism we need to keep our minds clear of what has been taking place in Russia. There has been only a partial application of Marxist principles in Russia, and there is certainly no classless society.

A classless society is neither desirable, nor possible. Just as in the physical world there is a law of increasing entropy, so that when

entropy reaches its culmination there is nothing but stagnation and death, so there is a kind of social law of entropy. A classless society, should it be possible for it to exist, would be stagnant; there would be no incentive, no active principle of life. But in fact it could not exist; for a truly classless society would have no law, no government, and nothing making for cohesion, to hold its parts together—it would inevitably disintegrate. It would really be no society at all, and a " classless society " would be a contradiction in terms.

Christianity, in its social application, should not strive for a classless society, but rather to regulate the relations between the different classes of which society is composed: rulers and ruled, employers and employed, and so forth.

Rev. C. T. Cook said: I deeply appreciate the very able exposition of Marxism given to us by Mr. Pearce. It seems to me, however, necessary to point out that the Soviet leaders have departed radically from the Marxist theory in their government of Russia. A few years ago, that noted authority on Russia, Sir Bernard Pares, declared that " Communism is as dead as a door-nail in Russia." Indeed, as far back as 1922, Lenin scrapped the Communist programme for what he called " The New Economic Policy "—in other words, he substituted State Socialism for Communism. New class distinctions are taking shape in the Soviet Union. Already there is a far greater disparity between the pay of Russian Army officers and the rank and file than is the case in Britain, and substantial rewards are paid to individual scientists and others who render outstanding service to the State. There are also many other signs that Russia's present rulers are returning to the capitalist " evils " they are supposed to have repudiated.

Mr. C. E. A. Turner said: Mr. Pearce is to be congratulated on his excellent examination of the Marxist position and the issues involved. It is agreed with the author that Marx gives an economic interpretation of history, but this is only one of several viewpoints, and perhaps we can accept it *as such*. But history is affected by personalities, ideas, scientific enquiry and religion. While all these are expressed in the economic sphere because man lives in a body, the material is only a vehicle by which the personal and spiritual

behind all things is expressed. Ideas reached by taking up one or even several viewpoints, like some photographs, can be very distorted. What is needed is the comprehensive survey, and this can be done only by and in the revelation of God, Who declares the end from the beginning (Isaiah xlvi, 10)—even of history!

Communism may claim to "liquidate" all classes, but social classes do not disappear. They are replaced. Communism does not do what it teaches; it is self-contradictory. It merely changes the form or arrangement of the social strata. It gives no true freedom, but brings those it liberates from one tyranny under another. It replaces one faith for another.

We reject Communism on the best grounds when we say that it is quite contrary to the tenor of Scripture, Old Testament and New. Social classes were made and accepted in the Old. The teaching of the New did not attempt to change them, but sought to produce harmony between them—not "class war." Also there is nothing approaching Communism in the future kingdom of God.

Written Communication.

Mr. Arthur Constance wrote: This paper is timely and of vital importance. It is evident that world events will compel us all to make up our minds, one way or other, regarding the validity of Communist dialectic. I feel that the author of this paper should have emphasised much more clearly, in his opening sentences, the vast difference between the "communism" of the Christian Church in early times and this sinister political ideology of to-day. Some of his sentences in this connection might have been written by someone endeavouring to relate the two. And there is quite obviously no connection whatever. Surely it is evident that Socialism—all forms of which are materialistic, and promise material gain to the envious, in opposition to the plain fact that we are pilgrims and strangers in this world, with our hopes rooted in another—has no Scriptural sanction whatever. Marxian Socialists harp on the "brotherhood of Man" and ignore the countless passages in Scripture which show that men are *not* equal. The political content of the Bible—if such a term can be used—is one of social degrees: kings, lords, rulers, masters and servants. Our Lord recognised all forms of class distinction, and preached no revolt of one class

against another. His teaching is exactly that of the Victorians who believed that we should be content with our lot, in the place God has appointed. It is this other-worldly humility, emphasis on the *spiritual* at the expense of the *material*, contentment to suffer social or personal injustice, which is so diametrically opposed to Marxian materialism, and which is truly anathema to all Socialists. And the paradox of the position is that God has used the humble, the other-worldly, the *unsocial* humans of the world far more than its political busybodies and rebellious reformers. The author gives Marx credit for a sincerity which was non-existent. Marx was no "member of the proletariat," of the "toiling masses." He was a fraud.