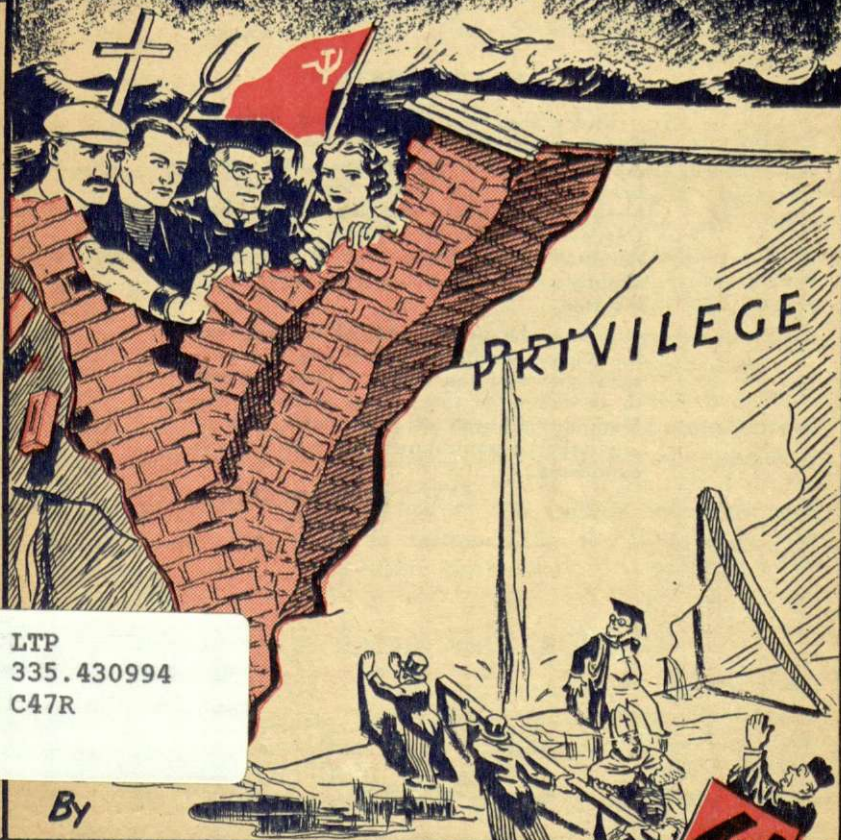


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THE RISING TIDE OF COMMUNISM



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By

REV. DR. C.M. CHURCHWARD M.A., Litt.D.

DAN RUSSELL



AN EXPLANATION

Under the title "The Rising Tide of Communism: What Are We Going to Do About It?" this paper was first read before a meeting, consisting mainly of Methodist ministers and laymen, at 139 Castlereagh Street, Sydney, on 9th August, 1943. Since then it has been slightly revised, and headlines have been inserted.

It is to be understood, of course, that the views herein expressed are the personal views of the writer. They are not to be taken as the official views of the Methodist Church of Australasia, nor of any other organization with which he is connected.

C. M. CHURCHWARD,
Beecroft,
25-11-43.

The Rising Tide of Communism

AN APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS

By Rev. Dr. C. M. Churchward, M.A.

Though I am sometimes charged, and sometimes credited, with being a Communist, I make no such pretensions concerning myself. I am not a member of the Communist Party, neither am I wholeheartedly in sympathy with communism, either as to its teachings or as to its practices. This however, let me add; that if I were a communist, there would be no need for suspicious whisperings, and no call for solemn investigations; for I should be no more ashamed to own myself a communist than I am to own myself a Methodist.

Having made this personal explanation, I will now turn to the subject before us, namely the rising tide of communism. I say "tide" deliberately. For, like the tide, communism is well-nigh universal. Like the tide, again, it is, I believe, irresistible. Like the tide, again, it is fraught with immense possibilities. Whether it is destined, like the tide, to fall, as well as to rise, only the future can reveal. At present, however, it is rising, and rising fast.

IN AUSTRALIA AND ENGLAND

Here in Australia, for instance, according to figures given me recently (August, 1943) by a Communist official in Sydney, the membership of the Communist Party has risen from about four and a half thousand to about twenty thousand in the past twelve months, and it is growing at the rate of about a thousand a month.

In England, where, two years ago, the members of the Party numbered between twelve and fifteen thousand, they now number between eighty and eighty-five thousand. If 85,000 does not seem to you a very large number for the whole of England, let me remind you that in the whole of Russia at the time of the revolution (1917) the number was only about 90,000, a number which has since grown to two and a half million.

Moreover, the influence of communism, and the acceptance, in part at least, of communist theory and practice, extends far beyond the actual membership of the Party, just as the influence of Christianity extends, we believe, far beyond the actual membership of the Christian Church. For not only have active and zealous members of the Communist Party gained the leadership of the principal trade unions of Australia (and presumably the same is true in various other countries), but the communists have gained the attention of the working man to a degree of which few of us, perhaps, are aware.

It would be a mistake to suppose, moreover, that communism exists only among those whom we generally speak of as the working class, or that it is restricted almost entirely to the so-called riff-raff. On the contrary, the membership of the Communist Party includes many men of high educational attainments, men with university degrees—bachelors, masters, and doctors—in various faculties. It includes men in nearly all walks of life—writers, scientists, professors, teachers, actors, physicians, surgeons, estate agents, bankers, lawyers, and judges, to mention a few only. As regards material wealth, it includes men and women from the middle and upper middle classes, as well as from the so-called lower classes. As regards religion, it includes Christian people, as well as atheists and agnostics; it includes both Protestants and Roman Catholics; it includes ministers as well as laymen.

A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Permit me to mention a personal experience which illustrates this point. A good many months ago—it was during the time when the Communist Party of Australia was

legally banned and was therefore not supposed to exist—I was invited by another Christian minister to attend a meeting at a certain suburban address. A meeting of "friends," he called it, as he spoke to me through the telephone. Actually it was a meeting of communists, together with a few non-communists like myself who had evidently been invited in the hope of winning converts. Now, the place of meeting was the large lounge of an almost luxurious villa, surrounded by a spacious garden, in one of Sydney's upper middle-class suburbs, and many of those present, including the couple who lived in the house, were apparently of the so-called middle or upper-middle class. At all events, not even the most rabid anti-communist, had he seen that assemblage, would have ventured to use the epithet "riff-raff." Not, of course, that the communist movement is necessarily more respectable, or more powerful, because it extends to the higher strata of society (to use the common parlance); but it is just as well for us to know the facts.

IN OTHER COUNTRIES

I have not given you much in the way of statistics, for, candidly, statistics interest me very little and impress me even less, when it comes to judging the strength of a movement, whether it be communism or Methodism. But there can be no doubt of the growing strength of communism, and its penetration of all, or nearly all, ranks and professions, in country after country, nearly all over the world. As to the German and Italian attempts to crush communism in Europe (a side of fascist activity which has found, and still finds, considerable sympathy and support among those who regard themselves as true-blue democrats), who can doubt, in the light of current events, that the ultimate result will be a tremendous resurgence of communism throughout western and southern Europe, if not throughout the world? Such phenomena as the appearance of the "National Committee of Free Germany" in Moscow, and the singing of the International by thousands of Italians in the streets of Milan and Turin on the day when Mussolini abdicated, explain them as you will, and minimize them as you will, may indicate, as truly as floating straws, the direction in which the stream is running; and who knows

whether, at almost any moment, the stream may not become a flood, carrying everything before it?

The rising tide of communism: what are we going to do about it? Or what ought we to do about it?

Shall we ignore it, and hope for the best? As well might we ignore the rising tide of the sea, as we recline on the beach with a coastline of unscalable cliffs behind us! I submit, therefore, that the first thing which we ought to do about the rising tide of communism is to recognize it.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING COMMUNISM

The second thing is to seek to understand it.

No matter how much some of us may deprecate communism, no matter how much we may dread it or detest it, mere denunciation or indiscriminating opposition can do no good whatsoever. We must first take time, and pains, to understand it.

And to understand it we must approach it sympathetically, or, at any rate, without prejudice against it. Regard it as a hideous monster, something more terrible than intemperance or prostitution, and more insidious than gambling or hypocrisy, and we shall never understand it, never! We shall simply find what we expect to find, just as the atheist or the agnostic does when he reads Church history.

Neither is there any hope of understanding communism while we study it wholly, or mainly, through the medium of books or newspaper articles which are written by its opponents. To do this is to act like a man who sets out to discover the truth about Christianity by studying the writings of Tom Paine, Robert Ingersoll, or Joseph McCabe. And this applies, of course, even when these anti-communist books or articles are based on actual quotations from communist leaders like Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. We must remember that specious and powerful arguments against Christianity can be written, and have been written, on the basis of actual quotations from Christian divines and even from the Bible itself. To study communism, therefore, in such a way as to understand it, we must not only begin by divesting our minds (as far as possible) of all prejudice against it, but

must also study communist writings for ourselves. The **Communist Manifesto**, by Marx and Engels, which is obtainable for a few pence, will make a good starting point.

COMMUNISM AS AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

Further, we cannot expect to understand communism, for it will be quite impossible to do so, while we say to ourselves, "I am not concerned with the economic side of communism." As well might a man expect to understand Christianity, or Methodism, while he said to himself, "I am not concerned with its religious side." It is true, of course, that communism has its religious implications, just as it is true that Christianity has its economic implications. But, just as Christianity is primarily and essentially a religion, so communism is primarily and essentially an economy, that is to say, an economic system; therefore we must begin by studying communism as an economic system; otherwise we shall be putting the cart before the horse, or the tail before the head!

I would therefore ask your attention while I endeavour to explain the essentials of communist economy, from which I shall pass on to the relationship of communism to democracy, and finally to its relationship to the Christian religion.

I shall deal with these matters step by step, as follows: first, what we mean by an economic system; second, capitalism and socialism; third, socialism and communism; fourth, the communist objective; fifth, communism and democracy; sixth, communism and Christianity.

First, then, what is meant by an economic system? Answer: a method of producing and distributing wealth.

CAPITALISM AND SOCIALISM

Second, capitalism and socialism. Capitalism is an economic system based on private ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. Socialism is an economic system based on the public ownership and control of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. And socialists, including communists, maintain that a change over from the first system to the second—that is to say, from capitalism to socialism—is essential. Without

this radical change, they contend, the economic wrongs and social injustices which mark and mar our existing civilization can never be substantially reduced, let alone eliminated.

SOCIALISM AND COMMUNISM

Third, socialism and communism. The crucial question which divides communists from their fellow socialists is, How is the change over from capitalism to socialism to be brought about? By constitutional methods, or by a more or less violent revolution?

Socialists who are not communists say, by constitutional methods. In other words, by voting into parliament men who will pass laws transferring the ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, to the whole community, and entrusting their control to representatives of the whole community.

Communists, on the other hand, say that this would be impossible. Impossible, because the present owners would resist the change with all the means at their disposal, even though it meant civil war. Therefore, communists maintain, the only way for the people to get control of the land, the banks, the ships, the railways, the mines, and the factories, etc., would be to take them from their present owners by force and to hold them by force. To what extent this forcible seizure would involve bloodshed or civil war would depend, in the main, on the nature and extent of the resistance put up by the present owners.

This view, communists aver, is not only theoretically reasonable, but is confirmed by abundant historical evidence, culminating in the recent tragedy of Spain.

THE COMMUNIST OBJECTIVE

Fourth, the communist objective. The communist objective—that is to say, the ultimate goal which communists, and indeed all socialists, have in view—is a civilization in which the many artificial and unnecessary inequalities which characterize our present civilization are reduced to a minimum or (if possible) entirely done away with.

Their aim, of course, is not to produce a state of society in which all men are alike, any more than the aim of a

gardener who gives equal attention to roses, dahlias, and poppies, is to make all flowers alike. Their aim is simply to ensure, as far as is humanly possible, equality of opportunity and of obligation. Equality of opportunity, especially as regards health, education, and the choice of work; and equality of obligation, in the sense that each person would be required, alike by law and by pressure of public opinion, to contribute to the welfare of the community according to his own particular genius or capacity.

Moreover, by abolishing the distinction which now exists between those who own the means of production and those who own little or nothing but their ability to work, communists, and socialists in general, hope to bring into existence a classless society in which every man, without condescension and without pretence, feels himself to be the friend and comrade of every other man.

In the matter of work and wages—that is to say, what each should give and what each should get—the communist ideal is "from each according to his ability, and to each according to his need." This ultimate objective, however, the communist expects to achieve only after an interim in which payment is in accordance with the quality and quantity of work done, though with due consideration, of course, for the needs of the young, the aged, and the incapacitated. This interim system—which, though a form of socialism, is not communism—is the one now in operation in the Soviet Union.

COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY

Fifth step: communism and democracy. So far from regarding communism, or socialism, as the antithesis of democracy, the communist contends that not until capitalism gives place to socialism will genuine democracy be possible. This, indeed, is the contention, not only of communists, but of socialists in general.

Our existing democracy, they contend, is only half democratic. It is democratic in the political sphere, but it is oligarchic—that is to say, it is under the rule of a small minority—in the economic sphere. And, of course, it is the economic sphere that counts most. Once in every three years

or so, we exercise our democratic right of one man one vote. But every day of our lives, our work and our income, our social status and our economic conditions, are determined, in the main, by the interests or desires of the comparatively few people who own and control the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

Thus, like the feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, which were "part of iron and part of clay," our capitalistic democracy is a mixture of two things which are fundamentally incongruous. They can neither be kept apart nor made to combine.

What, then, are we to do about it? In other words, how are we to deal with this fundamental incongruity of our capitalistic democracy, this tension between democracy in the political realm and oligarchy, or plutocracy, in the economic realm?

There are, it would seem, just three ways of dealing with it.

The first is simply to put up with it. That's what we do, or try to do.

The second is to abolish democracy in the political realm, and so to make oligarchy the rule in both realms. That's what the fascist does, or tries to do.

The third is to abolish oligarchy in the economic realm, and so to make democracy the rule in both realms. That's what the communist does, or tries to do.

True, the communist does not set out to achieve this goal in one jump. That, he maintains, is impossible. For some years after the means of production have become common property, the former owners must be forcibly prevented from seizing them again and so restoring the reign of capitalism. This period is what is called by communists the dictatorship of the proletariat. As soon, however, as the new regime has become thoroughly established, democratic rights may be, and will be, granted or restored to all citizens, as was actually done in the Soviet Union when the new constitution came into operation in December, 1936.

COMPLETE DEMOCRACY

The final result, communists maintain, will be complete democracy. Democracy in the political realm, and democracy in the economic realm. Democracy in the making and administering of laws, and democracy in the production and distribution of wealth. They contend, indeed, that, even during the so-called dictatorship of the proletariat, there would be, for the vast majority, a greater measure of real democracy—a greater degree of self-determination—than there is or can be under capitalism.

COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANITY

We now come to the sixth rung of the ladder, namely the communist attitude to religion, or (to be more specific) to Christianity.

In the constitution of the Communist Party of Australia, at any rate, there is nothing to debar a member of a Christian Church from joining the Party. On the contrary, rule 3 distinctly states that any person of 18 years of age or over, who is "loyal to the working class movement," is eligible for membership, "regardless of race, sex, colour, religion, or nationality." Regardless of religion: that is distinctly laid down. Hence, as I have already mentioned, the Communist Party of Australia includes, in its membership, Christians of various denominations, some of whom are ministers.

Again, in the constitution of the U.S.S.R., freedom of religious worship, as well as freedom of anti-religious propaganda, is granted to every citizen.

Nevertheless, it would seem that the typical communist attitude to Christianity—and likewise the typical Christian attitude to communism—has been, and to a large extent still is, one of antagonism.

What, then, we naturally ask, or we ought to ask, are the principal grounds on which the communist criticizes or attacks Christianity?

COMMUNIST OBJECTIONS TO CHRISTIANITY

The communist's first objection to Christianity is—if I may be allowed to coin a word—its **consolationism**. "Religion,"

wrote Karl Marx, "is the opium of the people." incidentally, a Christian contemporary of Karl Marx, namely Charles Kingsley, spoke even more strongly on this point. He spoke of the so-called Christianity of his day as "an opium-dose for keeping beasts of burden patient while they are being overloaded." The objection, of course, amounts to this: that religion serves as a sedative, or a soporific, rather than as a stimulant. It lulls men to sleep, as far as economic wrongs are concerned, instead of stinging them awake. It leads them to acquiesce in things as they are, instead of rousing them to protest and rebel. This it does mainly by turning men's thoughts from the seen to the unseen, or from the present life to an alleged life to come. If this contention be well founded, can we wonder if many of those who have espoused the cause of revolutionary socialism regard Christianity as their enemy?

The communist's second objection to Christianity is its **conservatism**. This, of course, naturally follows from what I have called its consolationism. For if men are taught to acquiesce in things as they are, consoling themselves with the hope of a Paradise in the life to come, they are not likely to worry about any fundamental changes in the system under which they live now. Hence, says the communist, religion has nearly always been, and still is, the bulwark of the existing economic and social system. Moreover, with its continual appeal to ancient history, and to teachers and law-givers (or saviours, maybe) of bygone centuries, its tendency, as far as this world is concerned, is to keep men's minds on the past rather than to direct their gaze to the future. Religion, in short, is traditional and conservative, rather than inspirational and progressive.

The third communist objection to Christianity is its **supernaturalism**. When men are faced with injustices and other evils which have been brought about by men themselves, and which must be changed by men themselves, the Christian, it would seem, is taught to leave it all to God. Once again, therefore, the Christian religion proves itself to be a hindrance to revolutionary effort.

The fourth objection, closely connected with the third, is the **irrationalism** of the Christian religion, or, indeed, of any

religion. The Church's creeds, liturgies, ritual, and sacraments, what are they (asks the communist) but so much hocus-pocus? As rational beings, surely it is our duty to make a systematic study of social and economic phenomena, just as the scientist does of natural phenomena, and, having discovered their underlying laws, to proceed to bring about economic changes by acting in harmony with those laws. This, argues the communist, is the only scientific way, the only rational way. Then why trust in magic words and superstitious ceremonies, like people living in pre-scientific times?

To sum up, the communist's principal objections to religion, or (to be more specific) to Christianity, are its consolationism, its conservatism, its supernaturalism, and its irrationalism.

CHRISTIANS, AWAKE !

What, then, I ask you once again, are we to do about it? So far I have urged that we must recognize the growth and spread of communism, and that we must seek to understand it. I now come to the third thing which I believe we ought to do, and that is, to take stock of ourselves in the light of communist criticism, and to set our own house in order.

Beginning with the communist's four objections to Christianity, let us be honest enough to admit that they have at least sufficient truth in them to make them sting.

Take, first, its consolationism, or the charge that religion is an opiate. I have already reminded you that no less a man than the Reverend Charles Kingsley, a minister of the Church of England, and the author of "Alton Locke" and "Westward, Ho," brought the same charge against the religion of his day, which was only three generations ago. And I would submit that the general tendency is still to give such prominence to the soothing, comforting aspect of the Christian message as to conceal the force of our Master's words, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." (Matt. 10.34). It is true that we are ready to attack such evils as intemperance, gambling, and sexual vice. But we are sufficiently outspoken, and sufficiently specific in our utterances, when it comes to the economic wrongs and social injustices which are bound up

with our existing economic and social order? or are we content with mere admissions and generalities, together with a few "pronouncements" neatly and safely tucked away in our General Conference Minutes? Is it not time that, in relation to these things, and not merely in relation to the liquor traffic, etc., we sold our cloaks (to use Christ's own words) and bought swords, or (in other words) exchanged a protective type of religion for an aggressive one?

The second communist objection to religion, you may remember, is its conservatism. This also we must face. You may say, perhaps, that religion ought to be conservative. You may wish to remind me of Christ's words, "I came not to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matthew 5.17). But does to fulfil mean to conserve? Does it not mean, rather, to develop? Did Jesus Himself explain the meaning of His own statement by saying "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, . . . and I also say unto you the same"? Or did He say something more like this: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, . . . but I say unto you something different, something more radical, more advanced"? (Matthew 5, verses 2, 8, 2, 4, 9, 4). In any case, is it not all too clear that, to a very great extent, religion has been, and still is, the bulwark of the existing social and economic order? And is it not equally clear that we ought, rather, to be in the very vanguard of those who are advocating, and seeking ways and means of bringing about, a change over to a new and better system which shall be more in harmony with our professed belief in the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man?

Or take the third communist objection to Christianity: its supernaturalism. Surely we ought to recognize that there is a danger, and that we have sometimes succumbed to the danger, of allowing our so-called faith in God to degenerate into an attitude of leaving everything to Him (everything, I mean, in the way of radical changes in our existing civilization), instead of girding up our loins and (remembering that we are His servants) co-operating with Him in bringing about those changes which an enlightened Christian conscience shows to be necessary?

Take, finally, the fourth objection, that of irrationalism. This charge, like the other three, needs to be honestly faced. Ought we not to admit that there is a danger, and one that is all the greater for its being so often ignored, of our so-called religious observances, or acts of worship, degenerating into hocus-pocus? Be that as it may, as Christians we ought not to feel any more aversion to scientific study and rational lines of action when facing social and economic problems, than we do when facing problems in medicine, surgery, or engineering. Religious observances ought to be an inspiration to hard study and strenuous activity, and not in any sense a substitute for them.

THE NEED OF COMMON OWNERSHIP

As to communism's criticisms of our so-called democratic system, surely we ought to admit that democracy, as we know it (that is to say, capitalistic democracy), is largely a sham, and that, as the communist contends, this is largely due to the fact that our democracy has not yet been extended to the economic realm. And how—let us ask ourselves honestly—how can this extension of the democratic principle to the production and distribution of wealth take place, no matter what laws are passed, until the means of production are publicly owned and publicly controlled?

It is encouraging, indeed, to find that no less a body than the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Australasia has gone a considerable distance towards admitting this. For, in the official pronouncement on Economic and Social Relationships, made at the 1941 Conference, there occurs the following clause:

Because doubt exists in many minds as to whether a just order of society can be established so long as ownership is a source of income, or so long as the resources necessary to our common life are privately owned, we urge, therefore, that Christian people should face this question with open minds and alert consciences. (General Conference Minutes, page 153.)

But how many of us, I wonder, have really faced this question with open minds and alert consciences, if, indeed, we have ever faced it at all?

Be that as it may, let me add that, to me, as to a growing number of other Christian people (both ministers and laymen), the matter is no longer doubtful. We are firmly convinced that the public ownership of the means of production, and their control in the interests of the whole community, without discrimination in favour of anyone, is a prime essential, if Christianity is to be expressed, in any real sense, in our economic life. We feel, therefore, that to resist this movement towards common ownership is to resist the Spirit of God.

Not for one moment, of course, do I intend to suggest that all who advocate a change over from private ownership to public ownership, or from capitalism to socialism, are animated by the Spirit of God, or moved by purely unselfish motives. Some of them, no doubt, are just as selfish in their motives as are some who are opposed to such a change. Indeed, the most ominous aspect of the situation, as I see it, is just this: that, on both sides, the fight is waged very largely from motives of selfishness. What is needed, therefore, is, above all, that the ranks of those who are seeking to transform our present system into something more harmonious with Christian principles, should be strengthened more and more by men and women who—as far as material wealth and social status are concerned—have more to lose than to gain by the transformation. Only so, I believe, can we hope to avert the horrors of civil war, and to bring about a revolutionary change by constitutional methods.

REVOLUTIONARY CHANGES WITHOUT BLOODSHED

I do not forget that the official Methodist pronouncement to which I have already referred declares that "we believe and teach that a Christian social order . . . can and should be attained by peaceable and constitutional means." I know also that this is the general—probably the universal—attitude of the Christian Church. But, this being granted, what follows? Surely this: that we should so readily and

openly acknowledge the need of fundamental changes, not to say revolutionary changes, in the present economic system and in the social relationships which are bound up with that system, and that we should be so insistent in our endeavours to persuade others to think the same, that whatever changes may be needed in the interests of social and economic justice may be introduced without any risk of civil war or even of serious violence.

The rising tide of communism: what are we going to do about it? So far, I have maintained that we should, first, recognize it; second, seek to understand it; and third, take stock of ourselves in the light of communist criticism, and set our own house in order.

CHRISTIANIZE COMMUNISM !

This brings me to my fourth and last contention, which is this: we should endeavour to Christianize it.

Christianize communism? some of you will ask in amazement. Yes, I mean it! Christianize communism!

Impossible? Impossible, indeed, while we maintain towards it an attitude either of indifference, or of prejudice, or of superiority. If, however, we approach it in the manner which I have already indicated—recognizing it, seeking, with open minds, to understand it, and heeding, with alert consciences, its criticisms of ourselves, and setting our own house in order—then the task of Christianizing communism, though it may be a difficult one, will not be impossible.

To me, indeed, it seems clear that what is impossible is not the Christianizing of communism, but the Christianizing of capitalism. For capitalism, as even its advocates generally admit, is based on selfishness.

As Dr. Stanley Jones says, in reference to capitalism, in the introduction of his book "Christ and Communism" (1935), Christianity "is not at home in an order where the weakest go to the wall, and the devil takes the hindmost. In such a society," he goes on to say, "Christianity is gasping for breath. It is not its native air. But its genius," he then adds, "would flower in a co-operative order; for there, love and

goodwill and sharing, which are of the very essence of Christianity, would be at home." (Pages 34-35.)

And communism, remember, is essentially a co-operative order. For it is an economic system in which the means of production are the property of the whole community, and are worked in the interests of the whole community, without discriminating in favor of anyone. Healthy rivalry it encourages; rivalry, that is to say, in service, in contribution to the common good. But the selfish competition, the every-man-for-himself or every-monopoly-for-itself competition, which is the warp and woof of capitalism, is anathema to it.

THE COMMON AIM OF COMMUNISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Moreover, the definite and explicit aim of communism is a community—ultimately a world-wide community—in which the barriers of race, of class, and of privilege, are overcome, and in which the rule and the practice is "from each according to his ability, and to each according to his need." And what is this, if it is not a Christian ideal? What is it, indeed, but the social and economic aspect of the kingdom of God on earth?

But if so, you may ask, then in what respects does communism need to be Christianized?

Above all, I would maintain, it needs to be divorced from its atheism. And to this end, we must be able to show the communist that belief in God, rightly conceived and sincerely held, would not be a hindrance, but a help, an immense help, in that transformation of society which he is seeking. We must be able to show him, what seems self-evident to us (in theory at least), that the brotherhood of man, which he professes to seek, cannot find any permanently satisfactory basis except in the fatherhood of God.

COMRADES !

In the fatherhood of God—and in the comradeship of Christ. But how are we to show him that? No mere argument will do it: though argument, when we are challenged to

produce it, ought never, of course, to be shunned. But above all, as the representatives of Christ, or (in St. Paul's phraseology) as members of His body, we must ourselves make friends of individual communists, and associate with them. We must do this, moreover, not in any condescending way, or from a superior position, as it were, but as comrades and friends, as ready to learn as to teach.

Communism, then, needs to be divorced or dissociated from its professed atheism, and to be united—enthused, in fact—with a vital faith in God as the Father of us all, and in Christ as the Comrade and Brother of us all.

NOT IMPOSSIBLE

But is this possible? you will ask. In the words of our great Leader Himself, I would answer, With men this is impossible, but not with God; for with God—that is to say, in co-operation with God—all things are possible.

It is easier, of course, far easier, to join in the popular cry, "Down with the communists! Ban their organization! Gag their leaders! To hell with all their literature and all their works!"

But is this the Christian attitude? In other words, is it the attitude which Christ Himself would take up, and which, therefore, He would have us take up, towards those who are aiming at "a world brotherhood of man"?

Would not His attitude, if He were here to-day, be in harmony, rather, with the spirit of the following verses, which are based on the words of Mark 12.37, "The common people heard Him gladly"?

WAS HE A COMMUNIST ?

A communist? From heaven He came
To share our common earth,
When near a common village inn
His mother gave Him birth.

A communist? A common home,
'Twas there he lived and grew,
And there He found His common joys
And common tasks to do.

A communist? He learned a trade
And worked with common tools;
A common wage He earned and spent,
And kept the common rules.

A communist? He ventured forth
To teach a common creed:
That all were equal in God's sight
And shared a common need.

A communist? He chose to be
The friend of common men;
And if they fell, His hand was there
To help them rise again.

A communist? The common right
To life and food and health
He claimed for all, against the claims
Of privilege and wealth.

A communist? He hated sham
And superstitious cant—
The ways of those who prayed to God,
Yet lived on human want.

A communist? He dared to teach
That those were truly great
Who lived to serve their fellow-men
And rendered love for hate.

A communist? To common men
He talked of gain and loss,
While vested interests conspired
To nail Him to a cross.

A communist? No crime was His;
But since He dared defy
The laws that injured common men,
They said that He must die.

A communist? A common fate
He shared with common thieves,
And so He died; but in the heart
Of common men He lives.

And now He leads our common cause,
To seek the common good,
Where all are free, since all are bound
In common brotherhood.

"Argus" Print, Parramatta.