
The Christian Socialist Fellowship: A Brief Account of its Origin and Progress.

by E.E. Carr

Unsigned article published in *The Christian Socialist* [Chicago], v. 4, no. 16 (Aug. 15, 1907), pg. 5.
Attributed to editor E.E. Carr.

From the beginning of the Socialist movement in America religious men have been identified with it. The five current American books teaching Socialism were written by men who are or have been active in the ministry: Sprague's *Socialism from Genesis to Revelation*; Vail's *Principles of Scientific Socialism*; Mills' *The Struggle for Existence*; Spargo's *Socialism*; and Rauschenbusch's *Christianity and the Social Crisis*.

Among the most notable advocates of Socialism in America appear many ministers, such as the late Bishop Huntington; the late [Frederic] McCartney, one time member of the legislature in Massachusetts; [George] Herron, who once voice the appeal of Applied Christianity to the churches of America; [Carl] Thompson, who now leads our forces in the Wisconsin legislature; [Winfield] Gaylord, who is state organizer in Wisconsin; J. Stitt Wilson, Dr. Cooke, Father McGrady, Stewart Sheldon, Noll, Collison, Spence, Curtis, Wasson, and many others, besides thousands of Christian laymen who have supported the parties and voted the tickets of Socialism.

Owing to the fact that a persistent effort has been made by some to force upon the Socialist movement of America the brand of atheism, various efforts have been made to rally and unite the Christian forces of Socialism in order to prevent the movement from being crippled by the atheistic idea, *and to reach in a more effective manner the religious people of the nation with the Socialist mes-*

sage. Among these efforts were the publication of *The Dawn* at Boston over 20 years ago, the first Christian Socialist paper, edited by Rev. Dr. W.D.P. Bliss and liberally supported by Comrade [Rufus] Weeks and others. The Christian Socialist League, of which Rev. E.D. Wheelock was President and Rev. Frederick D. Strickland was Secretary, afterwards obtained members in various parts of the country.

The Social Crusaders, organized by Herron, Wilson, Wentworth, Wise, and Hollingsworth, made a fine start, published an excellent monthly called *The Social Crusader*, edited by Wentworth, and would have permanently succeeded doubtless but for the tragedy which removed Herron from the religious field.

The Collectivist Society, founded by Rufus W. Weeks, which is still doing splendid work, though not distinctively religious, has published some superior pamphlets, such as *The Socialism of Jesus*, by Weeks. And the Brotherhood of the Kingdom, which is about to hold its 13th annual conference at Marlborough-on-Hudson, fathered by Rev. Leighton Williams and other leading ministers of the East, though not exclusively Socialist, deserves to be mentioned as a Christian Socialist organization because of its *personnel* and the discussions it engages in.

Thus we see how a common purpose filled the hearts of many religious men in various parts of this country. Rev. E.E. Carr and wife had made arrangements to issue *The Christian Socialist* at

Danville, Illinois, in January 1904, when they learned of a paper by the same name edited by Oscar F. Donaldson at Webster City, Iowa, started the month before. A correspondence between the Carrs and Donaldson resulted in a visit of several days at Danville, at the close of which Donaldson united with the Carrs in the Cooperative Printing Company and *The Christian Socialist* was removed to Danville and changed to its present form and scope. In November 1906 the paper was moved to Chicago, where Rev. J.O. Bentall became identified with it.

The Christian Socialist has not only succeeded beyond any of its predecessors, but has been able to unite religious people of all denominations in all parts of the country in the common work. And out of the agitation accomplished by this paper the Christian Socialist Fellowship was born.

The first conference of the Fellowship was held in Louisville, Ky., June 1906. Among those present were Rev. W.D.P. Bliss of New York, Rev. E.E. Carr and Prof. Harvey P. Moyer of Illinois, Rev. A.J. Collison and Mr. W.L. Wilson of Penn-

sylvania, Rev. and Mrs. Fred D. Strickland of Indiana, Rev. W.A. Ward and Rev. Lucien V. Rule of Kentucky, Oscar F. Donaldson of Iowa, and Judge Slanker of Missouri. Addresses, sermons, and songs were enjoyed and the following constitution and a resolution endorsing the Socialist Party were adopted. Rev. Lucien V. Rule was elected General Secretary and Rev. W.A. Ward General Treasurer.

The 2nd annual conference met at Chicago, June 1-4, 1907, and was too large an affair to report here in detail. Rev. Edward J. Ward of Rochester, NY, was elected General Secretary, and Rev. W.A. Ward of Henderson, Ky., was re-elected Treasurer. No amendments were proposed to the constitution. *** Plans were adopted, and, if successful, will probably be placed in the constitution later...

Let everyone who desires further information or wishes to join the Fellowship write to the nearest District Secretary or to the General Secretary, Prof. Edward J. Ward, 8 Joslyn Place, Rochester, NY.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

Published by 1000 Flowers Publishing, Corvallis, OR, 2006. • Non-commercial reproduction permitted.