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Nineteenth-Century British Christian Socialism

Association rather than Competition

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This article traces the origins, varieties, and trajectory of Christian socialism in Britain in the nineteenth century. Reacting to theological acceptance of the new science of political economy, particularly as articulated by the Rev. T. Robert Malthus, as well as, after his time, the divergence of mainstream economics from theology, the Christian socialists sought a foundation for Christian political economy other than competition. They believed to have found it in cooperation, but what that meant to conservative Anglican clergymen F. D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley differed from the more radical J. M. Ludlow. Nevertheless, together their grassroots efforts differed from later generations' advocacy for state action, which would ultimately taint the movement's reputation in the twentieth century, though it has seen a resurgence since the ministry of Tony Blair.[1]

Introduction

Christian socialism emerged in Great Britain in the mid-nineteenth century in the wake of the failure of the Second Reform Act of April 1848. At the beginning of the next month, a newspaper appeared bearing the auspicious, Chartist-inspired title *Politics for the People*.[2] The authors, who were identified only by pseudonyms, informed readers of the first issue that the goal was to examine questions such as "the relation of the Capitalist to the Labourer" or what "a Government can and cannot do to find work or pay for the poor." They go on to argue that while "politics have been separated from Christianity in the mind of the people," and religious people believed "their only business was with the

world to come," the authors of this new newspaper intend to show that politics "cannot be separated from Religion."[3]

While the paper's publisher, editor, and author was identified simply as John Townsend, it soon became known that the name was a pseudonym for the trio of Frederick Denison Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and John Malcolm Ludlow. These three are the key players in the original formation of British Christian socialism, and are our focus here. Maurice (1805–1872) was the best known of the three. Originally educated at Cambridge in civil law (he was a founding member of the "Apostles" discussion group), he spent several years writing for independent outlets (including the *Westminster Review* and the *Athenaeum*) before deciding to pursue ordination in the Church of England, despite his father's Unitarianism and his mother and sisters' participation in the Society of Friends. Thus, in 1830 he entered Exeter College, Oxford, to prepare for ordination. He was baptized in 1831, ordained as a deacon in 1834, and appointed to serve as assistant curate in a small parish near Coventry, where he remained until a year after his ordination as a priest in 1835. After taking up the chaplaincy of Guy's Hospital in London in 1836, where he also lectured on moral philosophy, Maurice wrote *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838), criticizing classical liberal theories of individual rights, competition, and social contracts, as well as providing what turned out to be the general theological framework for his subsequent endeavors on behalf of Christian socialism. In this context, he used the metaphor of digging, rather than building, to explain his general approach to theology:

> My business, because I am a theologian, and have no vocation except for theology, is not to build, but to dig, to show that economics and politics ... must have a ground beneath themselves, and that society was not to be made by any arrangements of ours, but is to be regenerated by finding the law and ground of its order and harmony, the only secret of its existence, in God.[4]

Kingsley (1819–1875), an Anglican priest serving Eversley in Hampshire, was soon to gain a reputation at least equal to that of Maurice. He, too, was a child of the clergy and lived in Devon and Northamptonshire before attending King's College, London. He entered Magdalene College at the University of Cambridge, graduating in 1842, after which he sought ordination in the Church of England, and became rector at Eversley in 1844. Kingsley employed his historical knowledge and poetic lens to preach sermons and write novels and other books that circulated widely within Britain and North America, including, among others, *Alton Locke* (1848), *Cheap Clothes and Nasty* (1850), *The Water-Babies, A Fairy Tale for a Land Baby* (1863), and *Sermons on National Subjects* (1880), all of which touched on themes related to the economic condition of the working

class. He was also a student of natural history, who, in 1859, became chaplain to the young Queen Victoria and private tutor to her son, the Prince of Wales (who eventually became Edward VII), and then, in 1860, Regius Professor of Modern History at the University of Cambridge. At the turn of the next decade (the 1870s), Kingsley resigned his Cambridge position to became a Canon of Chester Cathedral, where he also served as president of the Chester Society for Natural Science, Literature, and Art, which led to his service in the one-year presidency of the Birmingham and Midland Institute, which at the time was a fledgling academy for scientific knowledge and technical education. Returning to 1848, however, he was at that time relatively unknown, and used the pseudonym "Parson Lot" for the entries in *Politics for the People* that he authored.[5]

Ludlow (1821–1911), two years younger than Kingsley, was a London barrister who understood the possibilities of cooperative businesses, owned by either a group of producers or consumers—the latter usually considered to be members of the working class. He admired Maurice, but had disagreements with him over free trade (he believed that cooperative producers needed access to foreign materials that cost less than domestically produced supplies), as well as some practical issues regarding cooperative production. In 1848, he was the least known of the trio, and is certainly the least mentioned even today in the academic literature on the Christian socialists because he was not a theologian, professor at Cambridge, tutor to royalty, or novelist.[6] Born and raised in British India, Ludlow moved to Paris after his father died, and thus became acquainted in his youth with Fourier's *phalanxes* as well as Henri Saint-Simon's recognition that the needs of the working class required changes in the social structure of society, replacing heredity with merit, based on the contribution of one's employment as the foundation of any hierarchy in society. Thus, his socialism was an amalgam of his appreciation for the French experiments and his interactions with Maurice.[7] If Maurice and Kingsley were the public face of the movement, Ludlow was what today we might call the chief of staff—the one who got things done.[8] He invested his energy in initiating and sustaining worker cooperatives, and organizing support for their involvement in political movements. He worked directly with the enterprises to find start-up funds and source materials, and to configure their production and distribution, while also maintaining the network among Christian socialist cooperatives that enabled them to enhance their workplace cooperation. He also was called upon to quell disputes among them.[9] Later efforts by John Ruskin (1819–1900), Thomas Hughes (1822–1896), and others carried Ludlow's work forward into the latter half of the nineteenth century, and then beyond.[10]

In July 1848, disappointed by the few responses to their message that they had received, Maurice, Kingsley, and Ludlow made the seventeenth issue of *Politics for the People* their last. But two years later they tried again, initiating another newspaper, this time called *The Christian Socialist: A Journal of Association*. Once again, their new effort fell short of their hopes, although it lasted a little longer this time, ending in 1851. In both cases, they hoped to use the newspaper as the launchpad for their agenda, which they at this time identified as Christian socialism. But the reason for ending the newspaper the second time was not just its lack of readership, but also the realization that the three men did not share exactly the same social vision. Maurice and Kingsley saw the movement as primarily educational. They sought (1) to promote through their writings and sermons both a greater concern for the plight of the working class and the Church's role as a model of cooperation rather than competition; and (2) to initiate, as acts of Christian charity, educational institutions for the working class. Ludlow had a different vision both of the relation of socialism to the Church and of what could be practically done.[11] He believed that "the root of the matter lay rather with the socioeconomic system founded on competition.… The real problem was the assumption of competition as the main spring of individual and social existence."[12] For Ludlow, *mutual association* should be the hallmark of a Christian social existence, including economic production.

Ludlow considered workplaces to be spaces in which workers associate with each other to produce goods and services: thus, "associating for work" meant the formation of *cooperative* workshops. As a barrister, he was in a position to create and legally defend such cooperatives. He became the legal backstop for the producer workshops that sprang up in London, and sought to empower forms of business operation which allowed laborers to be the owners of their own work—that is, cooperative producers.[13] His goal was to create something on the producer side that might match the consumers' cooperative that the Rochdale Pioneers had created for grocers in the 1840s.[14] The passage of the Friendly Societies Act in 1846 had given hope to Ludlow's cause, and, with Thomas Hughes, he went on to pursue creation of the legislation (eventually passed in the 1860s) that would facilitate the creation, promotion, and protection of various forms of cooperative activity, including cooperative workshops.

Maurice's deep suspicion that any form of economic competition would harm social betterment was the foundation for the movement. He believed, as did Kingsley, that education provided the means for the creation of a workforce that would regenerate English society, led, of course, by their socially-minded clergy. However, Maurice's political mindset was inherently more conservative

than socialist. Not only did he favor leadership by the clergy, who mostly came from the upper class, but also his advocacy for moral and educational programs for the lower classes required that they be administered by or through the church.

Their theological vision of cooperation, therefore, placed workplace association upon a foundation that many English working people would find familiar, even if they could not articulate all its nuances. Practically, however, the two Anglican divines focused on worker education in general knowledge and workplace skills, undertaken in an educational context administered by Church of England clergy. In the Queen's College, Maurice sought to provide basic knowledge as well as practical skills that young women might need as they entered service in the households of the upper classes. In the Working Men's College, he had the same goal, although the skills considered practical for men were different than those for women, and the men would hopefully go to work in Ludlow's producer cooperatives, or similar establishments elsewhere in London. For Maurice, it was important for the success of the two colleges that their leadership come from the Church of England (although there was no formal affiliation), rather than commercial or industrial establishments.

Between the 1850s and the 1880s, then, two distinct strands of British Christian socialism emerged, although linkages between them still survived, especially through Ludlow's friendship with Maurice. Both strands believed that a Christian nation should reject the language of competition and build instead on cooperation. Maurice and Kingsley provided the intellectual and literary materials to keep Christian socialism in touch with calls for social and political reform in the 1860s and 1880s, while Ludlow went about the more practical work of providing legal assistance to worker cooperatives and encouraging legal changes that would make cooperatives more functional. However, Ludlow was more open to the competitive economic system, because he realized that worker cooperatives needed competition between themselves to prompt cost savings, further productive innovations, and keep prices within reach of the working class.

By the turn of the twentieth century, however, the argument that socialism needed a Christian foundation, and that the Church's social message was socialist, had lost ground among the English public. The Fabian Society, which had a history similar to Christian socialism, albeit coming from nineteenth-century humanist traditions that attracted left-wing intellectuals in the late Victorian era, had become the voice of the emergent Labour Party, and established in the early twentieth century the London School of Economics and Political Science in order to provide an educational and research institute to promote collectivism.[15]

Contemporary Classical Liberalism and Anglican Theology

So far I have discussed the themes of association rather than competition without considering the intellectual backdrop of the combination of classical political economy and Anglican theology in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, against which the Christian socialists reacted. It is common to argue that, thanks to the legacy of Newtonian physics and the Enlightenment, the work of economists from Adam Smith forward clearly demarcated economic knowledge from theological beliefs. The truth of the matter is, of course, a more complicated story, especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Anthony Waterman has argued that there are good reasons to accept Smith's famous work as a contribution to English eighteenth century theological reflection on economics.[16] Unlike the Europeans who followed the French fashion, the British effort to extend Newtonian science in all directions was generally "not perceived as subversive of orthodox religion."[17] Indeed, some of the earliest British political economists, including Smith and T. Robert Malthus, became well-versed in Newtonian science and did not disavow their national church. Also, even before Smith's great work in 1776, the major themes of political economy had been identified and defended by others: (1) wealth need not be a zero-sum game, and thus, on the whole, it was a social good; because (2) almost all conditions of humankind allowed for the possibility of wealth creation; and (3) wealth-creation was consistent with the Christian duties of self-love, virtue, and a faithful life; thus, (4) the pursuit of wealth creation could be consistent with the interest of society.[186] Following this logic leads to the conclusion that, in Smith's time, the *Wealth of Nations* could have been understood "as wholly compatible with orthodox Christianity."[19] That is, it could be read, at least partially, as "an Augustinian account of the way God responds to human sin by using the consequences of sin both as a punishment and as a remedy."[20] But if Smithian political economy was compatible with Anglican theology, then when did they cease to be viewed that way? Waterman's answer is simple: "The origin of 'political economy' as a distinct inquiry, clearly to be demarcated from Christian theology, is the publication of Malthus's first *Essay on Population* of 1798."[21] Why? And of what relevance is this to British Christian socialism?

Malthus's analysis is different from Smith's because, without denying any of the major themes of Smithian political economy, his *Essay on the Principle of Population* complicated the analysis of each of them.[22] First, Malthus agreed that wealth creation is a positive good for any society, but goes on to add that the natural forces of human reproduction, as well as the production of any soci-

ety's food supply, threaten its wealth and/or its capacity to maintain both its wealth and its people. Competition for scarce resources enters the economics discourse at this point. Second, Malthus agreed that the interaction of a society's moral precepts with its social and political structures may enable a society to succeed in maintaining a surplus, but human procreative urges are as strong if not stronger than any society's moral precepts. And, finally, Malthus argued that, in any community, population will rise fast enough to keep average income near subsistence, even with positive wealth creation. Thus, the number of societies that are capable of maintaining surpluses amidst rising populations are few, and regress is always possible. Malthus's population principle turned Smith's world of plenty into "a world of scarcity and *necessary* inequality of access to resources."[23] The Smithian optimism is turned, not into pessimism, but into an economic world that always faces limits imposed by scarcity.

The Christian social doctrine that emerged from responses to Malthus by the likes of William Paley, J. B. Sumner, Edward Copleston, and Richard Whately is summarized by Waterman as follows:

> Poverty and social inequality are the inevitable outcome of scarcity: more particularly of population pressures in a world of limited resources. Because of original sin and redemption by Christ, human life on this earth is to be regarded as a state of "discipline and trial" for eternity. Though poverty and inequality may entail some genuine suffering—to be accounted for by the Fall—they may be regarded, for the most part, as a deliberate "contrivance" by a benevolent God for bringing out the best in His children and so training them for the life to come. The social institutions of private property and marriage are economically necessary (and indeed inevitable), suited to human nature, and consistent with scriptural teaching. *A combination of the institution of private property with the competition produced by scarcity, results in the market economy*. The efficacy of the latter in organizing human activity for the maximization of wealth is evidence of the divine wisdom and mercy in turning human frailty to socially beneficent ends. The impossibility of achieving social progress by legislation is evidence both of "design"—in the creation of the self-regulating economy—and of the moral and religious need of Christians to practice charity and compassion. True happiness in this life is largely independent of wealth and station. But in any case, wealth is positively correlated with moral worth, itself the result of faithful Christianity. Universal Christian education is then of the highest practical importance, and an essential feature of the traditional union of church and state.[24]

By the middle of the nineteenth century, then, this union of Christian theology and Malthusian political economy had largely won the day, creating an industrialized, politically stable nation with a technological edge in many industries, a vast trade-based empire, and a declining population of slaves in the empire as first the slave trade, and then slavery itself, had been abolished. British *laissez-faire* policies and humanism had succeeded. And despite the fact that prominent political economists such as Malthus, Thomas Chalmers, and Richard Whately had defended markets while being ordained members of their respective churches,[25] one could demarcate between their economic analysis and their religious beliefs. They also promoted the separation of church and state, the freedom of the press, and the ending of the slave trade in 1807. Economic historians today agree that in the middle of the nineteenth century, Britain had a strong economic, legal, and cultural foundation, which allowed it to lead the world in industrial strength and adoption of new technologies, and to be at the forefront of global trade and the appropriation of new innovations, both domestic and foreign. The British humanist tradition created synergies with the *laissez-faire* tradition, providing a foundation for economic success.[26]

At the same time, the rewards of this strong foundation were not perceived to be fairly distributed. The distribution of scarce resources among competing demands in cities and on the land resulted in inequalities. The land-based order that conservatives valued was being transformed, not only by the impact of trade and the development of factory production, but also from the accumulated effects of the movement of people to towns and cities over the previous century. The Chartist movement, and the landed elite's responses over the course of the mid-nineteenth century, were a response to those transformations. On the other side, various forms of socialism were advocated, all oriented toward improving the social, political, and economic condition of the working class. Central to the promotion of the Christian socialist cause, then, had to be the emergence of a theological foundation that allowed Christian socialists to believe that socialism (by their definition) was a natural extension of their Christian beliefs and their role as religious leaders in English society. In other words, the origin of British Christian socialism lay, not specifically in concern for the condition of the working class, but rather in the rejection of the claim that political economy, however conceived, could be demarcated from Christian theology.

A Political Economy of Association, Not Competition

In order to develop a theologically-informed argument about economic and social life, the Christian socialists needed to respond to the dominant narrative of the time, the classical—especially, Malthusian—argument outlined above. A significant utopian, rather than Christian, early response came from industrialist Robert Owen (1771–1858), who is additionally useful here because the Christian socialists often engaged his ideas. In *A New View of Society*, Owen never once mentions Smith or the "invisible hand," but does see it necessary to counter Malthus:

> Mr. Malthus is however correct, when he says that the population of the world is ever adapting itself to the quantity of food raised for its support; but he has not told us how much more food an *intelligent and industrious people* will create from the same soil, than will be produced by one ignorant and ill-governed. It is however as one, to infinity.[27]

Owen, however, built his vision of industrial production in a socially uplifting environment on his rejection of both Christianity and classical political economy.

The Christian socialists had their argument against classical political economy, but Maurice was also theologically skeptical of Owen's vision of a society redeemed by economic reorganization and social leveling—arrangements made by human minds. He argued, instead, for finding "the law and ground of [society's] order and harmony, the only secret of its existence," in what God has provided; that is, in the Church that Christ has already established.[28] For the Christian socialist, then, poverty and social inequality were the outcome of a competitive economic order, which taught people not to follow the "greatest" of God's commandments: to love one another. Instead, competition encouraged people to focus their attention away from God and even other people to pursue their own desires and goals. Furthermore, competition expanded the opportunities for people to place their own desires above God's commands, pursuing money and other false gods, and forsaking their responsibility to protect their neighbors. The consequences of pursuing one's own wealth began with separation of family members and friends, whether by necessity in the pursuit of a job, or through preoccupations that do not become shared goals. Capitalism's promise of personal success hid its dark sides—selfishness, separation, and injustice. It also led to the pursuit of personal accumulation rather than sharing with others, and to prioritization of our personal benefits rather than seeking justice and social beneficence for all.[29]

What the Christian socialists thought was needed, therefore, was an *associative economic order*, in which human work was not merely the quest for personal

advantage and fortune, but rather activity that taught us to focus on cooperation with others and to provide collective aid in support of those who we individually could not assist. In such a context, God is present in the association of people working together. Because individuals are weak in isolation from others, the Church, both corporately and in the actions of its members, especially priests, was thought to have a responsibility on our behalf to assist with education, provide for support of cooperative workplaces and jobs, and comfort when we are no longer able to contribute meaningfully to society's economic production. Additionally, the Church was believed to function as both the moral foundation upon which State action is built and as the voice that reminds us of our inheritance from God.[30]

The radicalness of Maurice's vision had already become apparent in a letter he wrote to Ludlow in 1852, saying that "socialism meant an acknowledgement of brotherhood in heart and fellowship in work," and that this was "the necessary fulfillment of the principle of the Gospel."[31] Whatever way the word might be twisted, *democracy* implied "a right on the part of the people to choose, cashier, and depose their rulers,"[32] and this was not Christ's way. People might govern themselves, but "What I wish to know is, *do they make* Christ their king?"[33] No earthly king is above the law if the people are under Christ. On the contrary, the king stands as "the witness for law from generation to generation,"[34] whereas when people govern themselves they tend to mere majorities to defend "self-willed power."[35] "The Gospel … begins with the proclamation of an invisible and righteous King,"[36] and since earthly polity was to imitate the heavenly, the established order had to retain the elements of an organic Christian society, comprising "Monarchy, Aristocracy, and Socialism or rather Humanity."[37]

Thus, Maurice's mindset was inherently more conservative than socialist. Not only did he favor leadership by the clergy, who mostly came from the upper class, but also his advocacy for moral and educational programs for the lower classes required they be administered by priests of the Church of England. Maurice and fellow Anglican cleric Charles Kingsley were the public faces of Christian socialism from the start, each speaking and writing with the aim of reshaping (or one might say rescuing) the social role of the Church of England. Maurice provided the theological message; Kingsley reinforced Maurice's message through his ability to attract and stir up an audience (either in person or in his writings). Yet neither were simply priests who gave "Christian asceticism a Socialist tinge," as Marx and Engels once said.[38] For one thing, neither was an ascetic or advocated ascetism! Indeed, Maurice's vision was almost a complete inversion of Marx's: the Church is the antidote to social injustice, and to the extent that economic injustice existed in English society, it reflected negatively on the Church's (not the State's) "inability to effect the comprehensiveness of its vocation."[39] Maurice

and Kingsley regularly called upon the Church of England and the English people to engage with the concerns of the working class. They also participated in educational institutions aimed at improving the lives of working-class men and women. Usually, behind the scenes, Ludlow was at work as well, helping the cooperative workshops and friendly societies to be financially viable and the social movement impactful.

Contra Smith, and especially in opposition to Malthus's political economy of competition over scarce resources, Christian socialists believed that association should be understood as the fundamental human reality. For the Christian socialists, competition pitted us against others, which is contrary to God's moral standard, Jesus' commandment to "love one another" (John 13:34; John 15:12), and the Church's "communion of saints" (Apostle's Creed). They also believed that the Malthusian logic of scarcity and competition was responsible for the inequality and poverty Britain experienced during the nineteenth century. If competition was the main driver of classical economics, then its reversal would emerge from worker collaboration and association. Unsurprisingly, Maurice declared the associative message boldly:

> Competition is put forth as the law of the universe. That is a lie. The time has come for us to declare that it is a lie by word and deed. *I see no way but associating for work instead of strikes*. I do not say or think we feel that the relation of employer and employed is not a true relation. I do not determine that wages may not be a righteous mode of expressing that relation. But at present it is clear that this relation is destroyed, that the payment of wages is nothing but a deception. We may restore the whole state of things, we may bring in a new one. God will decide that. His voice has gone forth clearly bidding us come forward to fight against the present state of things.[40]

The second theme of my argument, then, is that, in hindsight, we can say that the Christian Socialists believed that the biblical injunction to "store up treasure in heaven," implied that (1) the wealth creation the classical economists advocated was often inconsistent with, and detrimental to, one's Christian duties; (2) wealth creation and accumulation via the expansion of markets was detrimental to society's pursuit of "true wealth"; and therefore, that (3) the pursuit of individual wealth was inconsistent with both the interest of society and oneself. For the Christian Socialists, association should replace competition in order to reorganize society's production to reflect the divine cooperation of the Trinity in the redemption of Britain's people, and the Church of England's contribution to the sustenance of its social, political, and economic order.[41]

Conclusion: From Maurice and Ludlow to Twentieth-Century British Socialism

In 1886, the American institutional economist Edwin R. A. Seligman told his audience that up to that point,

> English socialism ... [had] been neither anarchic, political, nor disruptive; and in so far as it has remained untinged by the infiltration of continental ideas, it has been peaceable, deprecating all endeavours to excite fiery opposition among the masses, and has expressly disavowed faith in state aid as a universal panacea.[42]

He was right. But as British Christian socialism entered the twentieth century, and especially after the Russian Revolution gave hope to socialists and communists of all stripes across Europe, British Christian socialism also became more concerned about state power than the expansion of consumer cooperatives and producer workshops.

The nineteenth-century British Christian socialists tried to create a theological foundation for British society that would promote an associative, rather than a competitive, economy. At the root of their opposition to the new economic world created around them was the claim that, while British society was founded on the constitutional union of monarchy, the Church of England, and Parliament (all land-based aristocratic institutions), the success of Britain in an industrial age would require a focus on the working class. That focus required a turn away from competition and *laissez faire*, toward workplace cooperation—in Maurice's words, "*associating for work*." Christian socialism set out to build, both in theological reflection and in workplace practice, a cooperative society and economy. Rather than retreating into hallowed halls and soaring cathedrals (although they did find places there as well), the Christian socialists believed that the Church should engage the working class itself as co-proprietors of their work. And yet, there remained throughout its history (which extends even up to this day), the tension between building the theological foundation for personal and business responsibility, or seeking political or legal change.

Thus, while Maurice and Kingsley attracted followers to the movement with their vision and rhetoric, Ludlow, Hughes, and others built networks among workers who sustained Christian socialism's cooperative endeavors and maintained its connections to other worker movements. The first step toward successful cooperatives was the British legislation that permitted "friendlies": that is, organizations that individuals or families joined for the purpose of mutual insurance and pensions, possibly also other insurance and social benefits. They were

voluntary self-help associations that families joined generation over generation. The Friendly Societies Act was passed by Parliament in 1846. As the work of Elinor Ostrom has shown in other contexts, these types of organizations can successfully offer benefits to the "commons," the shared space of the membership.[43] Friendlies offered members a mix of services, ranging from burial expenses and some life insurance to also providing a lodge or club where members could gather for friendship and a pint. Some friendlies also provided credit union services. The next step was the extension of limited liability to producer and consumer cooperatives, which provided similar protection to private enterprises.

Until 2000, Ludlow's cooperatives continued to operate with the risk of personal liability resting on the cooperatives' members. But in 2000, Prime Minister Tony Blair, who often acknowledged his intellectual debt to earlier Christian socialists, pushed through legislation that allowed agglomeration of businesses that were historically cooperatives, and also expanded provisions made before the World Wars to provide limited liability to cooperatives. The original legislation dated from the Rochdale Pioneers' cooperative stores on the consumer cooperative side, and Ludlow's cooperative workshops on the producer side. At that time, Ludlow had been unable to include limited liability for cooperative members into the enabling legislation because they were small and employee-owned (Ludlow had advocated limited liability, but legislators refused). But cooperatives in Britain in the past century have grown larger and often compete with supermarket chains. Indeed, there were sufficient assets in one of the cooperatives that a private, for-profit, supermarket conglomerate made a move to buy out the cooperative's members. To ensure the cooperative movement's continuation, Blair encouraged legislation that expanded the meager limited liability provisions in prior cooperatives acts, and also allowed for their merger.[44]

In terms of public engagement, during the last decade of the nineteenth century, several Anglican divines forwarded the Christian socialist cause by creating, and then leading, the Christian Social Union.[45] Their message gradually moved away from Maurice's vision of working-class education in charitable institutions toward encouraging state policy actions to alleviate working conditions, as well as state-provided benefits for workers and their families, and state-funded education. Edward Benson's *Christ and His Times* argued that the social difficulties of the time (and their proposed solutions by various parties) highlighted the fact that they were "the phenomena of the very world in which Christ is now living." Surely, Benson argued, Christ's "principles of unmistakable application" were not that "struggle and survival [were] the one law of development" and the "Kingdom of Heaven was not the reign of private interests."[46] Scott Holland followed on Benson's message by establishing the Christian Social Union, which became

increasingly a forum to call for public support of Christian Socialist objectives. William Temple (Archbishop of York and then Canterbury, 1929–1944) addressed an audience estimated to be ten thousand at the Albert Hall in 1942, supporting their demand for central planning of employment, housing, and social security after World War II. Of course, because those demands were met by the post-war labor government, they contributed to the lag the British economy experienced behind economies that kept more market-friendly policies in the post-war period.[47] Thus, despite the presence of members of the Christian Social Union among the Church of England's prelates—Charles Gore, William Temple, and the current Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, author of *Can Companies Sin?*,[48] their influence became marginal at best in the twentieth century.

Notes

1. An earlier draft of this article served as the keynote lecture at the 2nd Annual Academic Colloquium of the Acton Institute, "From Christian Political Economy to Christian Socialism," October 7, 2022. The author would like to thank the participants in that Colloquium for their comments, which led to a complete reorganization.

2. The title *Politics for the People* was meant to resonate with the British working class, because the Chartist reforms would have granted voting rights to all adult males. However, even the later 1867 Reform Act (the first successful voting reforms since 1832) had property-related restrictions, although it did extend voting privileges to far more men than before. Propertied women in England had to wait to vote until 1918; other women only received voting rights ten years later.

3. "Prospectus," *Politics for the People*, no. 1, May 6, 1848, 1.

4. F. D. Maurice, *To Mr. J. M. Ludlow*, The Keble Beau, Shrewsbury, September 24, 1852, in [John] F. Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Dennison Maurice: Chiefly Told in His Own Letters*, 2 vol. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), 2:137.

5. For more on Kingsley's "Parson Lot," see Edwin R. A. Seligman, "Owen and the Christian Socialists," *Political Science Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (1886): 226. For a different take on the connection between Kingsley's work and classical economics, see David M. Levy and Sandra J. Peart, "The Secret History of the Dismal Science. Part 5. Parasite Economics and Market Exchange," *EconLib*, December 17, 2001, https://www.econlib.org/library/Columns/LevyPeartdismal5.html.

6. See N. C. Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow: The Builder of Christian Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963); Edward Norman, *The Victorian Christian Socialists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 58–79. One historical contribution of Ludlow's was his set of notes on the work of deaconesses

and sisterhoods in church history, a good example of how he wed attention to what some might consider minor details with an appreciation for significant contributions to efficient operation of a collective operation. See J. M. Ludlow, *Woman's Work in the Church: Historical Notes on Deaconesses and Sisterhoods* (London: Alexander Strahan, 1865).

7. See Peter R. Allen, "F. D. Maurice and J. M. Ludlow: A Reassessment of the Leaders of Christian Socialism," *Victorian Studies* 11, no. 4 (1968): 461–82; J. M. Ludlow, *The Autobiography of a Christian Socialist*, ed. A. D. Murray (London: Routledge, 1981); Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow*, 51–94.

8. See Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow*.

9. See Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow*; J. M. Ludlow, *Christian Socialism and Its Opponents: A Lecture Delivered at the Office of the Society for Promoting Working Men's Associations* (London: John W. Parker, 1851); idem, "The Christian Socialist Movement of the Middle of the Century," *Atlantic Monthly* (January 1896): 109–18, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1896/01/the-christian-socialist-movement-of-the-middle-of-the-century/635358/; idem, *Autobiography*.

10. See Norman, *Victorian Christian Socialists*; Arthur V. Woodworth, *Christian Socialism in England* (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1903); Anthony A. J. Williams, *Christian Socialism as Political Ideology* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021).

11. See Allen, "F. D. Maurice and J. M. Ludlow"; Ludlow, *Autobiography*; Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow*.

12. Ronald Massanari, "The Christian Socialism of J. M. Ludlow," *Theology* 77, no. 646 (1974): 195.

13. See Philip N. Backstrom, Jr., "The Practical Side of Christian Socialism in Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 6, no. 4 (1963): 305–24.

14. See Stuart Chase, *The Story of Toad Lane: Being an Account of the Twenty-Eight Weavers of Rochdale and How They Founded the Cooperative System That Went Round the World* (New York: The Cooperative League, 1944).

15. See Edward R. Pease, *The History of the Fabian Society* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1916). Readers may have already wondered why there has been no mention of any connection to *The Communist Manifesto* (Marx and Engels 1850 that was originally released in German in 1848 (the year that British Christian socialism announced itself, and also the year in which Karl Marx arrived in Britain). See Karl Marx and Freidrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," *The Red Republican*, 1850. Friedrich Engels, who sponsored Marx's flight from Paris to London (where Marx remained for the rest of his life), was the son of a textile manufacturer with factories in Lancashire, and had published *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (in German) three years earlier. See Friedrich Engels, *The Condition of the Working*

Class in England in 1844, trans. Florence Kelley (London: Swann Sonnenschien, 1892). *The Communist Manifesto* was circulated to movements around Europe after 1848, and in the process was translated into various languages. The English translation first appeared the same year (1850) as *The Christian Socialist* was published. Karl Marx lived in England after 1848, was instrumental in the founding of the International Working Men's Association at an international meeting held in London in 1864, and was writing the first volume of *Capital* (published in German in 1867, but not appearing in English until 1887, with two subsequent volumes published later). See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey & Co.), 1887. However, there is no evidence that the nineteenth-century Christian socialists knew anything of his work (Kingsley and Marx were closest in age: born in 1819 and 1818, and died in 1875 and 1883, respectively). As Phil Magness and Michael Makovi have recently shown, it was really the Russian Revolution of 1917 that vaulted Marx (who had been dead for almost thirty-five years by that point) to the top of the list of communist thinkers for the twentieth century, displacing many of the movements, like Christian socialism, that had competed for prominence in the second half of the nineteenth century. See Phil Magness and Michael Makovi, "The Mainstreaming of Marx: Measuring the Effect of the Russian Revolution on Karl Marx's Influence," *Journal of Political Economy* (forthcoming, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1086/722933.

16. See A. M. C. Waterman, "Economics as Theology: Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*," *Southern Economic Journal* 68, no. 4 (2002): 907–21.

17. A. M. C. Waterman, "The Sudden Separation of Political Economy," in idem, *Political Economy and Christian Theology Since the Enlightenment: Essays in Intellectual History*, Studies in Modern History (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 108.

18. The fourth theme was challenged by Bernard Mandeville (1714), but in the British context, Joseph Butler (1726) successfully defended its consistency with Anglican orthodoxy in his Rolls Chapel sermons. See Bernard Mandeville, *The Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits* (London: J. Roberts, 1714); Joseph Butler, *Fifteen Sermons Preached at the Rolls Chapel* (London: James and John Knapton, 1726). Waterman points out that Butler established "that this putatively providential outcome might arise from a wholly virtuous attention by all individuals to their 'interest' as determined by the Christian duty of self-love" a decade or so before Hume began to write. See Waterman, "The Sudden Separation," 111.

19. A. M. C. Waterman, "The Beginning of 'Boundaries': The Sudden Separation of Economics from Christian Theology," in *Economics and Interdisciplinary Exchange*, ed. Guido Erreygers, Routledge Studies in the History of Economics (New York: Routledge, 2001), 107–12.

20. Waterman, "The Sudden Separation," 113. See also Paul Oslington, ed., *Adam Smith as Theologian* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

21. Waterman, "The Sudden Separation," 107.

22. See T. Robert Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London: William Pickering, 1798); idem, *An Essay on the Principle of Population: Or, A View of Its Past and Present Effects on Human Happiness; with an Inquiry into Our Prospects Respecting the Future Removal or Mitigation of the Evils Which It Occasions*, 2nd ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1803), available at https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t6ww7bb74.

23. Donald Winch, *Riches and Poverty: An Intellectual History of Political Economy in Britain, 1750–1834* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 239, emphasis original.

24. A. M. C. Waterman, "Establishment Social Thinking," in idem, *Political Economy and Christian Theology*, 213–14, emphasis added.

25. Smith's position relative to the Church of Scotland has long been debated. Compare Waterman's (2002) account with Kennedy's (2011) for some of the complications. See A. M. C. Waterman, "Economics as Theology: Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*," *Southern Economic Journal* 68, no. 4 (2002): 907–21; Gavin Kennedy, "The Hidden Adam Smith in His Alleged Theology," *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 33, no. 1 (2011): 385–402. Malthus was a priest in the Church of England; ordained in 1790 and licensed to assist the nonresidential curate of St. John the Baptist, Okewood Hill, Surrey. He became Rector of All Saints Church in Walesby, Lincolnshire in 1803. In that same year the second edition of his *Essay* appeared, and he accepted appointment as professor of Political Economy at the East India Company College—commonly referred to as Haileybury College—where he regularly preached in the chapel until his unexpected death in 1834. See Patricia James, *Population Malthus: His Life and Times* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979). Chalmers was a minister in the Church of Scotland, although in 1843 he led the Great Disruption that led to the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland, with Chalmers as moderator. And Whately, who in 1829 was elected Drummond Professor of Political Economy at Oxford, was two years later appointed Archbishop of Dublin, a position he held until his death.

26. See Deirdre N. McCloskey, *Bourgeois Equality: How Ideas, Not Capital or Institutions, Enriched the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016); Roderick Floud, Santhi Hejeebu, and David Mitch, eds., *Humanism Challenges Materialism in Economics and Economic History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

27. Robert Owen, *A New View of Society or, Essays on the Formation of the Human Character Preparatory to the Development of a Plan for Gradually Amliorating the Condition of Mankind*, 3rd ed. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1817), 174, emphasis added.

28. F. D. Maurice, *To Kingsley*, Rodington, Sunday, September 19, 1852, in F. Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Dennison Maurice*, 2:135.

29. See Allen, "F. D. Maurice and J. M. Ludlow"; Ludlow, "The Christian Socialist Movement"; idem, *Autobiography*; Norman, *Victorian Christian Socialists*; Matthew Peter Cadwell, "In Search of Anglican Comprehensiveness: A Study in the Theologies of Hooker, Maurice, Gore," Dissertation (Toronto: University of St. Michael's College, 2013); William Temple, *Christianity and Social Order* (London: Penguin Books, 1942); Maurice B. Reckitt, *Maurice to Temple: A Century of the Social Movement in the Church of England* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946).

30. See Allen, "F. D. Maurice and J. M. Ludlow"; Ludlow, "The Christian Socialist Movement"; idem, *Autobiography*; Norman, *Victorian Christian Socialists*; Cadwell, "In Search of Anglican Comprehensiveness"; Temple, *Christianity and Social Order*; Reckitt, *Maurice to Temple*.

31. F. D. Maurice, *To Ludlow*, Rodington Rectory, Shrewsbuty, September 8, 1852, in F. Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Dennison Maurice*, 2:128.

32. F. D. Maurice, *To Ludlow*, Rodington Rectory, Shrewsbuty, September 8, 1852, in F. Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Dennison Maurice*, 2:129.

33. F. D. Maurice, *To Ludlow*, Rodington Rectory, Shrewsbuty, September 8, 1852, in F. Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Dennison Maurice*, 2:129, emphasis original.

34. F. D. Maurice, *To a Son [Charles Edmund]*, Hamilton Villa, Weston-super-Mare, September 25, 1867, in F. Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Dennison Maurice*, 2:558.

35. F. D. Maurice, *To a Son [Charles Edmund]*, Hamilton Villa, Weston-super-Mare, September 25, 1867, in F. Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Dennison Maurice*, 2:559.

36. F. D. Maurice, quoted in Merrie Shannon Carpenter, "The Discourse of Working-Class Self-Education in Victorian Narrative," PhD diss. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee, 2023), 39.

37. F. D. Maurice, *To Ludlow*, Rodington Rectory, Shrewsbuty, September 8, 1852, in F. Maurice, ed., *The Life of Frederick Dennison Maurice*, 2:131.

38. Marx and Engels, "The Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), 29.

39. Jeremy Morris, *F. D. Maurice and the Crisis of Christian Authority* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 139.

40. F. D. Maurice, *Faith and Action: From the Writings of F. D. Maurice* (Boston: Lothrup Publishing Company, 1886), 94–95, emphasis added.

41. See F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ, or Hints to a Quaker, Respecting the Principles, Constitution and Ordinances of the Catholic Church* (London: Gilbert & Rivington, 1838); idem, *Theological Essays* (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1853); Morris, *F. D. Maurice*.

42. Seligman, "Owen and the Christian Socialists," 207.

43. See Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

44. See Alan Wilkinson, *Christian Socialism: Scott Holland to Tony Blair* (London: SCM Press, 1998).

45. See Williams, *Christian Socialism as Political Ideology*.

46. Edward White Benson, *Christ and His Times* (London: Macmillan, 1889), 66–67.

47. See Larry H. White, *The Clash of Economic Ideas: The Great Policy Debates and Experiments of the Last Hundred Years* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chap. 7.

48. See Justin Welby, *Can Companies Sin?: "Whether," "How" and "Who" in Company Accountability* (Cambridge: Grove Books, 1992).