The medievalism of Carlyle

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Recommended Citation
https://doi.org/10.17077/etd.594u8rfr

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THE MEDIEVALISM OF CARLYLE

A Thesis Submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate College
of the
State University of Iowa

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the degree of
MASTER OF ARTS

by
MARY ELEANOR EAKINS
Iowa City, Iowa

June, 1914
### THE MEDIEVALISM OF CARLYLE

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THE MEDIEVALISM OF CARLYLE

OUTLINE OF THESIS

I. Introduction
   A. Object of Thesis: to explain Medievalism, and to show its prophetic and perennial value
   B. The perennial truth of Carlyle's Doctrine of Medievalism is in the eternal necessity of spirituality

II. Conditions which constrained Carlyle to preach Medievalism
   A. Unique epoch of England's development
      1. Territorial expansion, industrial supremacy and development of mechanical inventions
   B. The almost universal suffering caused by changes in industrial and agricultural methods
      1. Process of adjustment to new methods painful
      2. Miserable factory conditions
      3. Introduction of the enclosure system in farm lands
   C. The Corn Laws - cause of famines
   D. Universal acceptance of the Laissez-faire theory of government

III. Reasons for Carlyle's discussion of the present from the viewpoint of the past
   A. Disagreement with the contemporary school of thought
   B. Carlyle's philosophy based upon history, "The Bible of Universal History"
   C. His theory of progress
IV. Medievalism - The Spirituality of the Middle Ages - as manifested in its ideals, individuals, organizations, methods, and hero-worship

A. Medievalism is the spirituality of the Middle Ages, - "A world based upon the belief in God"

B. Ideal of the Middle Ages - Duty

C. Ideal man of the Middle Age
   1. Ideal then the saint
   2. Pictures of different saints, Samson, St. Edmund,

D. Organization
   1. Contained the "two vital elements of society"
      a. Aristocracy - The Feudal Class
      b. Priesthood - The Monks
   2. Based on Carlyle's principle; "Might is Right"
   3. Essential nobleness of the very real governors

E. Hero-Worship
   1. Theory of Hero-Worship
      a. Advance of a period in civilization due not to its scientific discoveries but to the virtuous character and big achievements of its best men
   2. Hero-worship in the Middle Ages
   3. Hero-worship opposed to democracy
   4. The events of history, especially of Carlyle's early years, point to the necessity of a true hero-worship, resulting in a true aristocracy
OUTLINE (continued)

F. Methods

1. Work and silence

V. Need of Medievalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

A. Conditions cannot be bettered by specific things done, or laws passed, but by a change in spirit, a revival of spirituality

1. No religion - cause of all trouble

B. Ideal of the times - money-making

1. Ideal of Middle Ages - The ideal of duty needed to be revived

C. Organization of times

1. Aristocracy
   a. Governing class - an idle aristocracy
   b. Industrial aristocracy needed in this epoch.
      "A Chivalry of Labour" should take the place of "A Chivalry of Battle"
   c. The end of government - "To keep the taxes coming in" - should be changed

2. The church remains as an institution but no longer affords spiritual guidance

VI. Influence of the Medievalism of Carlyle

A. Gradual revival of spirituality

1. Based on change in ideal

2. Less selfishness and more altruism increasingly apparent

B. Change in the Ideal of the times
C. Change of standards - A citizen who serves his community rather than a man who makes money

D. Organization

1. A real governing class
2. Doctrine of Laissez-faire theory
3. Industrial changes
   a. Organization of labor
   b. The development of factory legislation
   c. Permanence in contract
   d. Profit-sharing
   e. Employment -solution necessary
   f. Fair distribution of wealth
   g. Emigration service
   h. Education
   i. Playgrounds

E. Hero-worship in modern times

1. In industry and in politics

VII. Conclusion

A. Need of Medievalism remains
B. Medievalism is Spirituality
I A The writings of Thomas Carlyle indicate, time and again, that he regarded literature merely as a means to an end - the end that of seeing "God's Kingdom incessantly advancing here below, and His will done on earth as it is in Heaven".\textsuperscript{1} From his journals, letters, and books, many statements may be taken showing his attitude toward literature. At thirty-one, he enters in his diary: "The end of man is an action, not a thought,"\textsuperscript{2} - Aristotle - and he even goes so far as to say: "It often strikes me as a question whether there ought to be any such thing as a literary man at all"\textsuperscript{3} For: "Wisdom is intrinsically of a silent nature".\textsuperscript{4} Fundamentally, however, he did believe in the nobility of his work, and sums up his profession beautifully: "Men of letters are a perpetual priesthood, from age to age, teaching all men that a God is still present in their life... He is the light of the world, the world's priest guiding it like fire in its dark pilgrimage through the waste of time."\textsuperscript{5} The object of this thesis is to show

\begin{itemize}
  \item 1. Carlyle, Latter-Day Pamphlets. The New Downing Street, p. 131.
  \item 5. Carlyle, Heroes and Hero-Worship. Hero as Man of Letters.
\end{itemize}
how this man of letters, Carlyle, particularly through
his doctrine of medievalism had a most active part not
only in the affairs of his own time, but in ours as well.

I B Carlyle's consideration of the twelfth century had
as its aim, not so much a beautiful interpretation of the
Middle Ages as, rather, an illustration from history of
his theory of society and what he thought should be its
ideals and organization. Carlyle's medievalism is
Carlyle's modernism; that is to say, he believed that the
spirituality which resulted so happily in medieval society
would have to be revived, if the present generation ever
expected to progress. In order to understand what con­
straint forced him to preach such a doctrine, a brief sur­
vey of conditions during his lifetime must be given.

IIA 1. Carlyle's life from 1795 to 1881 extended over
England's great epoch of territorial expansion and industrial
supremacy. Mr. Cheyney says that the period was far more
important in its economic than in its political development.1
Because of the close of the wars with France in 1815, England
acquired vast colonial possessions and "was able to get
possession of most of the commerce of the world";2 a com­
merce possible by mercantile use of the ships in the new
navy built up by Nelson. It was indirectly due to this
territorial expansion and consequently increasing demand
for England's manufactures that there occurred at this time

a great change in the industrial world. Previously to
the eighteenth century, England's exports of cotton and woolen
goods were prepared, woven, and spun in isolated cottages by
weavers and weaver farmers. The great demand led to time-
saving inventions, and the invention of the spinning jenny
in 1764, of Arkwright's spinning machine in 1769, and of
Cartwright's loom in 1784 revolutionized society. The
cottager's home was too small and his purse too scant to
accommodate the new machinery, and thus there sprang up
machinery buildings, later known as factories, where were
gathered under one roof a group of laborers.

II B 1. There were at least three reasons why these in-
dustrial changes resulted so disastrously for the majority
of the laborers of England. The process of adjustment to
new methods was necessarily painful; the sudden commercial
boom resulted in a greedy money craze on the part of the capi-
talists; and the economists and the government maintained
toward conditions a fatal attitude of stand-off-ism, or of
Laissez-faire. Mr. Cheyney says: "The period of transition
from the domestic to the factory system of industry, and from
the old to the new farming conditions, was one of almost un-
relieved misery to great masses of those who were wedded to
the old ways, who had neither the capital, the enterprise, nor
the physical or mental adaptability to attach themselves to
the new."¹

¹. Cheyney's Industrial and Social History of England, p.236
2. The factory system itself was wretched. "The early mills were small, hot, damp, dusty and unhealthy. All had to conform alike to regular hours, and these were in the early days excessive. Twelve, thirteen, and even fourteen hours a day were not unusual."

Pauper children from the workhouse constituted a large percentage of the factory hands. They were not given an education and were subjected to severe foremen. Because of the fact that the employee was given no protection by the law, the accidents, diseases, and deformities always resultant from certain factory work were at that time much more universal than now.

3. The introduction of the enclosure system into agriculture impoverished the poor man whose stock was no longer permitted to graze in the common pastures and open fields. New methods of agriculture were introduced practical "only to the man who had some capital, knowledge and enterprise." The smaller tenants had to give up their holdings. "The result was that the landlord class, a comparatively small body of nobility and gentry, owned by far the greater portion of the land." The small tenants had to become farm laborers. "Few classes of people have ever been more utterly without enjoyment of prospects than the modern English farm laborers."

2. Ibid, p.220
II C One of the other causes of wretchedness among the poor people was the English system of corn bounty, a system of subsidizing corn exportation, very profitable for a certain class but very destructive for consumers, when the corn crop was low. The Corn-Law seemed especially unjust to Carlyle.

II D The change in the industrial system must necessarily have caused disaster to many individuals throughout England. Had not the economists and the government, however, cooperated with the capitalists in the exploitation of the masses of workers, the wretchedness of Carlyle's time would have been very much less. Toward the close of the eighteenth century, there grew up a new school, whose dominant teaching was: "that the duties of government should be reduced to the smallest possible number and that it should keep out of the economic sphere altogether." Therefore: "government regulation, in so far as it restricted men's freedom of action in working, employing, selling, etc., was an interference with natural liberty." They had attained "the development of a consistent body of economic teaching," which "tended toward the destruction of the system of regulation." Adam Smith, Malthus Picardo, and James Mill had a finely worked-out creed "definitely opposed to the continuance or extension of the supervision of govern-

ment over matters of labor, wages, industry, commerce, agriculture, or other phenomena of production, distribution, exchange or consumption."¹ As to the influence of these theories, at least during "the first half of the nineteenth century it may be said that their acceptance was general and their influence dominant."² The resultant condition was inevitably the exploitation of the laborers of England.

III A   Carlyle was by no means the only thinking man in England, but he probably was the man with the strongest convictions, and his belief was that justice will inevitably be secured in this world. At that time, and ever before and ever after, it was a most easy thing for men in contact with other thinking men to receive perhaps too open-mindedly the standards of the day. Carlyle had too keen a conscience and too practical a sense to be deluded by any plausible theories such as those of the "Laissez-faire" economists. He retained that strict sense of "what is what on this God's earth"³, a sense which was his by inheritance and strict Scottish training.

The state of affairs oppressed him: — "the look of the world is really quite oppressive to me. Eleven thousand souls in Paisley alone living on three half pence a day, and the governors of the land all busy shooting partridge and passing Corn-laws the while."⁴

². Ibid, p. 235.
In considering how he might best throw light upon the falseness of his day, he decided upon the method of contrasting his present age with that of the same England in a time when men worshipped something other than Mammon as a God. There were perhaps three principal reasons for choosing this method: first, because spirituality, which was the greatest need of the nineteenth century, was the dominant quality of the twelfth; secondly, because of his belief that not only justice but also the manner of social progress would necessitate a return of medievalism, of the spirituality of the Middle Ages; and, thirdly, because of his doctrine that history was the only code of laws by which society could regulate its behavior.

III B In order to understand Carlyle's use of the past and his theory of progress, one should know something of his philosophy - of his religion. Thomas Carlyle believed in no special creed. He was a close student of the German philosophers, and with Kant believed in a "Central doctrine of Duty".¹ Duty, not Happiness (which "belongs not to the old heroic times"²), should be the moving force of all individuals and peoples. The pursuit of Duty is obedience to God's law, and only as an individual or a nation obeys Duty or "the eternal laws" will that individual or that nation pros-

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1. Triggs' Chapters in the History of the Arts and Crafts Movement, p. 4
per. Carlyle believed that we should (as nations) know how to live up to our duties, by looking at history. "History is my Bible and experience my religion", he says. "Of all Bibles frightfullest to disbelieve in is this 'Bible of Universal History', this the eternal Bible and God's Book, which every man, till once the soul and eyesight are extinguished in him, must with his own eyes, see the 'God's finger writing', - to discredit this is an infidelity like no other." He believed that the different epochs of history demonstrated the inevitable relation of cause and effect.

1. Something of his interest in Kant is indicated by the following entry in his diary when twenty-eight years old; "I wish I fully understood the philosophy of Kant." Carlyle once said: "If it had not been for the French Revolution, I should not have known what to make of this world," and so he believed that a similar state of injustice in England would irrevocably be followed by justice and by righteousness.

III C  Carlyle's theory of social progress was what the ancients called the spiral or pendulum theory of progress. Today we think of it in terms of a zig-zag line. In speaking of the necessity of the return of medievalism because of social progress, he says: "He (The Editor) will endeavor from the Past, in a circuitous way, to illustrate the Present and the Future. The Past is a dim inadmissible fact: The

Future, too, is one only dimmer; may, properly, it is the same fact in new dress and development, for the present holds in it both the whole Past and the whole Future."¹ He illustrates his theory of social progress by the phoenix, the burning of whose wings symbolizes reaction, while the new growth stands for forward progress. Sometimes he contrasts society to the life-tree Igdrasil. With this statement about his theory of history and social progress for the explanation of medievalism as a text for his reform sermon, we may not proceed to a consideration of medievalism itself.

IV A. If one had asked Carlyle to express in one word what he meant by medievalism, he would have said, "Spirituality". Carlyle believed that this quality, which the Middle Ages possessed so supremely, was the most necessary thing for all times. "To know God, Θεός, the maker, to know the Divine Laws and inner harmonies of this universe, must always be the highest glory for a man; and not to know them, always the highest disgrace for a man".²

Froude tells us that Carlyle "believed that every man had a special duty to do in this world;" his own, he considered "was to force men to realize once more that the world was actually governed by a just God,"³ and Carlyle himself

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¹. Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 52.
speaks of past times as "a practical world based upon belief in God, such as many centuries had seen before, but as never any century since has been privileged to see."¹ Carlyle preached medievalism because he saw supremely manifested in the Middle Ages a "belief in God" as expressed in the individuals, their ideals, their organizations, and their methods.

IV B What were the ideals of the Middle Ages? Certainly not "the making of money". The monks speak for themselves. "Imperfect as we may be, we are here, with our litanies, shaven crowns, vows of poverty, to testify incessantly and indisputably to every heart, that this earthly life and its riches and possessions, and good and evil are not intrinsically a reality at all, but are a shadow of realities, eternal, infinite; that this true world as an air-image, fearfully emblematic, plays and flickers in the grand, still minor of beauty; and man's little life has duties that are great, that are alone great, and go up to Heaven and down to Hell."² The spirituality of the Middle Ages results from their sense of values; they did not overbalance the importance of this short earthly life against a very disproportionally small interest in eternal life.

The ideal, the motive force, of the Middle Ages, then, was Duty, and Carlyle firmly believed this to be the secret

¹ Carlyle's Cromwell, Vol. 1, p.79.
² Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 92.
of all spirituality. Obedience to Duty, or obedience to God's laws, the Bible of universal history promised, should be followed by prosperity. No obedience to duty would as surely be followed by retribution. In those times "wonder, miracle encompass the man; he lives in an element of miracle; Heaven's splendor over his head; hell's darkness under his feet. A great Law of Duty, high as these two infinities, dwarfing all else, annihilating all else."\(^1\) He considered that this ideal of the Middle Ages was the only right one. "Happiness our being's end and aim', - all that very paltry speculation is at bottom, if we will count well, not yet two centuries old in the world,"\(^2\) and "there is in man a Higher than love of Happiness; he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find blessedness."\(^3\) The ideal of the Middle Age, then, needs to be brought back again, because it was the ideal which resulted in spirituality.

IV C 1. The Middle Ages had as their ideal man the saint. The most truly good man to them was the greatest man. The predominating ideal of an age, undoubtedly, sets the standard to which the majority of men seek to attain, and the medieval ideal was the saint.

2. Carlyle has given us several vivid pictures of different saints of the Middle Ages, which clearly indicate why

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he wished for a revival of medievalism. Of the Abbot Samson, he says: "The great antique heart; how like a child's in its simplicity, like a man's in its earnest solemnity and depth." And he also emphasizes the simple virtues of St. Edmund; "doing justly and having mercy constitute the grounds for his rising into favor." This man, it would seem, had walked 'humbly with God'; humbly and valiantly with God; struggling to make the Earth heavenly as he could, instead of walking sumptuously and pridefully with Mammon, leaving the Earth to grow hellish as it could." How Carlyle wished that the men of his day would stand by that order to which St. Edmund belonged, "the oldest, and, indeed, only true order of nobility known under the sun, that of just men and Sons of God." IV D 1. A "belief in God" was then apparent in the ideals and in the individuals of the Middle Ages. The organization, too, seemed ideal to Carlyle: "Aristocracy and priesthood, a governing class and a teaching class", are absolutely "indispensable to any society". Not only did the ideals and individuals of the teaching class seem "the right ones to Carlyle, but so also did those of the governing classes. He believed that his contemporaries needed something of the organization of the Middle Ages. "Truly a splendor of God, as

2. Ibid, p. 74.
4. Ibid, p. 75.
in William the Conqueror's oath did dwell in those old, rude, veracious ages, did inform more and more with a heavenly nobleness all departments of life and work, and "even of fighting, in religious Abbot Sampson's days, see what a feudalism had given, a 'glorious chivalry' much besung down to the present day." "When you catch any glimpse of William the Conqueror ... do you not discern veritably some rude outline of a true God-made King?" And as an interpretation of feudalism, he says: "The Feudal Aristocracy, I say, was no imaginary one. To a responsible degree, its Jarls, what we now call Earls, were strong men in fact as well as in etymology."

IV D 2. The organization of the Middle Ages, too, illustrated Carlyle's theory of "might is right", or: "The Tools to him who can handle them (which is our ultimate political Evangel, wherein alone can liberty lie") 5. "Truly enough", he says, in explanation of how might is right; "we cannot enough admire, in those Abbot Samson and William the Conqueror times, the arrangement they had made of their governing classes... The Bravest Men, who ... are also on the whole the wisest, strongest, everyway Best, had here, with a respectable degree of accuracy, been got selected. These Vice-Kings, each on his portion of the common soil of England

5. Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, p. 194.
Nobleness in Feudalism

with a Head-King over all, were a "Virtuality perfected into an Actuality" really to an astonishing extent.\(^1\) The mightiest men Carlyle considered were not predominantly the strongest physically, but the strongest in courage, wisdom and executive.

**IV D 3.** Carlyle believed in Aristocracy, but not in a false Aristocracy. He endeavors in this phase of his medievalism to point out the essential spirituality of feudalism. There was in William: "a conscious abhorence and intolerance of Folly, of baseness, stupidity, polroonery... The essential element of this Conquae stor is, first of all, the most sun-eyed perception of what IS really what on this God's earth:-- which then will find does mean at bottom, 'Justice' and 'Virtues not a few'". The true leadership of the feudal rulers was one of the most admirable things in those days: "William Conqueror, William Rufus, or Red-beard, Stephen Courthouse himself, much more Henry Beauclere and our brave Plantagenet Henry: - the life of these men was not a vulturous fighting; it was a valorous governing - to which occasionally fighting did, and alas must yet, though far seldomer now, superadd itself as an accident."\(^2\) He sums up the spirituality of the feudal people in the following: In the heart of "the noble, devout-hearted chevalier" there was "forever legible, that as an Invisible Just God made him, so will and must God's justice and this only, were it never

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\(^1\) Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 333-334.

\(^2\) Ibid, p. 333.
so invisible, ultimately prosper in all controversies and enterprises and battles whatsoever."¹ The different phases of the Middle Ages - the individuals, the ideals, and the organizations - are merely expressions of that spirituality which was the basis of everything at that time.

IV E 1. But as Carlyle thought of medievalism as the quality which the Middle Ages really possessed and that which his own day most of all needed, he came to the conclusion that the highest expression of spirituality in human hearts, the most just basis of human relationship, was hero-worship. The German philosophers, with whom Carlyle was so familiar, "said that every nation, period, civilization had its idea; so that philosophy, religion, arts and morals, all the elements of thought and action, could be deduced from some original and fundamental quality. ... When Hegel proposed an idea, Carlyle proposes a heroic sentiment. ... To complete his escape from the vague he considers this sentiment in a hero."² This is a somewhat learned statement for the fact that Carlyle considered that the welfare of the world depended upon the virtue of good men and the respect on the part of the people of that virtue. The standards of one age differ from those of another. In the Middle Ages the saint was the hero before whom men bent the knee. In Carlyle's time and our own, the man of wealth is more univer-

¹. Past and Present, p. 333.
². Taine's History of English Literature, pp. 468-469.
sally looked up to than any other person. Carlyle believed that the prosperity of a people depended upon the kind of heroes they had, and this phase of his medievalism suggests that he thought that there was a need in his own day for the hero of the Middle Ages. "Given the men a people choose, the people itself, in its exact worth and worthlessness, is given. A heroic people chooses heroes and is happy. A valet or flunky people chooses sham-heroes, what are called quacks, thinking them heroes, and is not happy. The grand summary of a man's spiritual condition ... is this question put to him - which is they ideal of a man, or nearest that? So, too, of a people," and he repeats, "the manner of men's hero-worship is the innermost fact of their existence and determines all the rest."¹

IV E 1. We have said that Carlyle's medievalism is his doctrine of society based upon an epoch in the "Bible of Universal History". The central doctrine of Carlyle's theory is that of hero-worship, a doctrine which he probably emphasized all the more strongly because it was maintained in his age that civilization progressed coincidentally with the growth of knowledge. Scientific discoveries were more important than great men who were "creatures of their age, not the creators of it, scarcely ... its guides."² Carlyle was vastly opposed to this theory and its corollary, the

¹. Taine's History of English Literature, p. 169.
equality of all men. He believed that the prosperity of a people depended upon the character of its leaders, and that all forward progress "was due to special individuals supremely gifted in mind and character, whom Providence sent among them at favored epochs."¹ So Society, and even religion, was founded upon hero-worship. "Hero-worship done differently in different epochs of the world is the soul of all social business among men. The doing of it well, or the doing of it ill, measures accurately what degree of well-being or of ill-being there is in the world's affairs."² Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the fundamental importance with which hero-worship was regarded by Carlyle. It, indeed, took the place of Fichte's "Divine Idea." "Hero-worship, is not that the germ of Christianity itself. Faith is loyalty to some inspired teacher, some spiritual hero. And what, therefore, is loyalty proper,...... but an effluence of hero-worship, submissive admiration for the truly great. Society is founded on hero-worship."³

IV E 2. Carlyle saw in the Middle Ages an expression of hero-worship, worthy of the emulation of later times. "A most practical hero-worship, went on consciously or half-consciously everywhere...... The difference between a good man and a bad man was as yet felt, what it forever is, an immeasurable

². Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 47.
³. Carlyle's Heroes and Hero-Worship. Hero as God, p.16.
one.... I think that they were comparatively blessed times in their way.\(^1\) In observing the burial of St. Edmund, he says: "Let the modern eye look earnestly on that old midnight hour in St. Edmund's Church.... and consider mournfully what our Hero-worship once was and what it now is"\(^2\), and, relating the grief which the monks felt because of the loss of their leader, he remarks: "How might all Angle-land once follow a Hero-martyr and true son of Heaven."\(^3\)

IV E 3. Perhaps this phase of Carlyle's medievalism, the organization of society according to hero-worship, would be the most opposed of any of his beliefs. The prevailing political tendency was toward democracy, while Carlyle believed in the control of the masses by the few best people among them. He had believed in Democracy as a young man. "He began not only by sympathizing with the people, but by believing in their capacity to manage their own affairs: a belief that steadily waned as he grew older until he denied to them even the right to choose their own rulers."\(^4\) "It was not true", he thought, "then or ever, that men were equal. They were infinitely unequal - unequal in intelligence, and still more unequal in moral purpose. So far from being able to guide or govern themselves, their one chance of im-

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2. Ibid, p. 164.
4. J. A. Froude's Thomas Carlyle, First Forty Years.
provenance lay in their submitting to their natural superiors, either by their free will, or else by compulsion."¹ Carlyle himself says that "society everywhere is some representation, not insupportably inaccurate, of a graduated worship of heroes,"² for men are not equal. "Man is forever the born thrall of certain men, born master of certain others, let him acknowledge the fact or not; it is unblessed for him when he cannot acknowledge this fact; he is in a chaotic state, ready to perish, till he get the fact acknowledged."³

IV E 4. The organization of society as existing in the Middle Ages, the organization of which Carlyle did approve and which has already been mentioned, was founded upon hero-worship. "Aristocracy and priesthood, a governing class and a teaching class, sometimes separate, - sometimes organized as one, - there did no society exist without these two vital elements, there will none exist."⁴ The aristocracy should possess the land - "no right aristocracy but a land one,"⁵ He summarizes; "If the convulsive struggles of the last half century have taught poor, struggling, convulsed Europe any truth, it may perhaps be this as the essence of innumerable others: - That Europe requires a real Aristocracy, a real priesthood, or it cannot continue to exist. Huge French Revolutions, Napoleonisms, then Bourbonisms with their

² Carlyle's Heroes and Hero-Worship, Hero as God, p.15.
³ Carlyle's Past and Present, p.42.
⁵ Ibid, p.240.
corallary of three days... All this may have taught us that no aristocracy, liberty - and - Equalities are impossible; that true aristocracies are at once indispensable and not easily attained."¹ The teaching class, a priesthood, should "discover our new real Satan, whom he has to fight". The governing class should, in return for the land, "furnish guidance and government to England. True government and guidance, not no-government and Laissez-faire, how much less, mis-government and Corn-law."²

IV F We have seen how Carlyle observed in the past a manifestation of spirituality in the ideals, the people and the organization based upon hero-worship. One other chapter belongs to his work of medievalism - the place of work and its corollary silence in the affairs of the world. "All human talent, especially all deep talent, is a talent to do, and is, intrinsically, of silent nature."³ The monks of the old days were silent workers; their motto, which appealed to Carlyle so strongly, was "Laborare est orare", "Work is worship".⁴ The monks combined the two sorts of labor, physical and spiritual. "Unspeakably touching is it, when I find both dignities united; and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants, is also toiling inwardly for the highest,"⁵ In a chapter on labor, he says:

². Ibid, p. 332.
⁴. Latter Day Pamphlets, S.O. 199.
⁵. Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 275.
"The latest gospel in this world is, Know thy work and do it," "for there is a perennial nobleness and even sacredness in work ... work is of a religious nature: - work is of a brave nature." Perhaps even more important is the fact that Carlyle believes that work or action is the solution to all individual doubts, everlasting nays and searchings for a life purpose. He quotes both in Sartor Resartus and Past and Present the maxim, "Doubt of any sort cannot be removed except by action," and he also states that "Conviction is worthless till it convert itself into conduct."\(^1\) In Carlyle's day, people were likely to talk very much of what they felt and did, a phenomenon which to Carlyle seemed very unwholesome. He admired the silent go-ahead-and-done-one's-work character of the Middle Ages. "May not this religious reticence in those devout good souls be a sign of health in them?"\(^2\)

\(\text{V A} \quad 1.\) The medievalism of Carlyle is the modernism of Carlyle; that is, the qualities of spirituality, which make those times superior to Carlyle's, must be revived in his and our own epochs; for the medievalism of Carlyle points forward as a prophecy of what must come in the development of the English nation. One is surprised in reading his suggestions to his contemporaries to find how applicable

\(^1\) Carlyle's Past and Present, pp. 269, 273.
\(^2\) Carlyle's Sartor Resartus, p. 212.
\(^3\) Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 83.
to our own. Then, too, medievalism is the perennial necessity for spirituality, and may therefore be applied to any period. We must now consider, first, the need of medievalism in that and this later time, and, secondly, the extent to which Carlyle's prophecies have been verified by the events of the past century.

A It is very doubtful whether any one of that time would have preached medievalism except Carlyle. While others thought conditions would be changed by a reform act, a repeal of the Corn-Laws, or an Emigration law, Carlyle, with his morally sensitive intellect, went to the heart of the matter, and said that conditions would not be bettered until the people themselves were better. A state of universal contentment would not come about as long as the leaders of the nation were all mammon-worshippers. What the times needed was a conversion to a state of belief in God. "This is verily the plague-spot; center of the universal social gangrene, threatening all modern things with frightful death. You touch the focal-centre of all our diseases... when you lay your hand on this, there is no religion; there is no God; man has lost his soul and vainly seeks for antiseptic salt."¹

¹ Carlyle's Past and Present, p.190.
of the nineteenth century was its ideal of making money, its universal mammon-worship. The hell of the Englishman was "the terror of 'not succeeding'"¹ which means "not making Money". "The midas-doomed Englishman ... reckons that all pay is in money."² He has yet to learn that "Cash-payment is not the sole relation of man with man." Carlyle saw clearly the fallacy of England's proposing at one and the same time to believe in Christianity and a political economy which in reality was nothing but legalized selfishness - "pig philosophy".³ With regard to such an ideal, Carlyle prophesies: "If at any time a philosophy of Laissez-faire, competition and supply-and-demand start up as the exponent of human relations, expect that it will come to an end" for "all human things do require to have a soul in them."⁴ The worship of money had resulted in the worst curse which the English people could suffer - spiritual blindness. "All moral duties address themselves in vain. Money he can be ordered to pay, but nothing more."

V C 1. a. He contrasts the organization of those holy days with his own. His own day sees only a phantom - aristocracy - "Our governing class ... have not yet learned to sit still and do no mischief".⁵ Again he prophesies: "The fate of the idle aristocracy ... is an abyss that fills one with

3. Ibid, p. 293.
5. Ibid, p. 244.
despair. The stuffed Pope, too, is a symbol of their
extinct religious life. There was no true governing class
nor even a true priesthood. If the convulsive struggles
of the last half-century have taught poor struggling, con-
vulsed Europe any truth, it may perhaps be this the essence
of immeasurable others: that Europe requires a real aristo-
cracy, a real Priesthood, or it cannot continue to exist.

New
Industrial Aristocracy needed

1. b. Carlyle saw that a governing class was needed,
but not an old feudal class. He says: "The epic, verily,
is not Arms and the Man, but Tools and the Man. An actual
new Sovereignty, Industrial Aristocracy, real not imaginary
aristocracy, is indispensable and indubitable for us." It
seems strange that Carlyle should have tried to direct the
leaders of industrial workers by preaching to them his doc-
trine of medievalism, but he clearly felt that spirituality
was the one quality which these new rulers lacked. "The
leaders of industry, if industry is ever to be led, are
virtually the captains of the world; if there be no noble-
ness in them, there will never be aristocracy more... Captains
of Industry are the true fighters, henceforth recognizable
as the only true ones; fighters against chaos, necessity."
But "the law of industrial captain and industrial soldier will
need to be remodelled, and modified, and rectified in a hundred

1. Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 245.
2. Ibid, p. 191.
3. Ibid, p. 329
Chivalry of Labor

and a hundred ways ... with two million industrial soldiers already sitting in Bastilles, and five million pining on potatoes." There must be a soul even in Industry. "Some 'Chivalry of Labor', some noble humanity and practical Divine-ness of Labour, will yet be realized on this earth," and he sums up his injunctions with the command: "Let inventive men cease to spend their existence incessantly contriving how cotton can be made cheaper; and try to invent a little how cotton at its present cheapness could be somewhat justly divided among us. Let inventive men consider whether the secret of this universe, and of man's life there does, after all, as we rashly fancy it, consist in making money."

V C l. c. We have seen that Carlyle thought William the Conqueror and his Vice-Kings did their governing well. He contrasts with their success the method and aims of nineteenth century England. He says: "what is the end of government? To guide men in the way wherein they should go; Forwards their true good in this life, and the portal of infinite good in a life to come,"1 and: "to see God's kingdom incessantly advancing here below and His will done on Earth as it is in Heaven."2 What seemed to be the actual purpose of the English government was far below this ideal; it was: "To support the four pleas of the crown, and keep the taxes coming in; in very sad seriousness, has not this been ... almost the one admitted end and aim of government?"3

Not only did the governing class need to revive the spirit of medievalism, but the priesthood, or teaching class, lacked the true godliness necessary for any adequate guidance of the people. "Religion, Christian church, Moral duty, the fact that man had a soul at all; that in man's life there was any eternal truth or justice at all, has been as good as quietly left out of sight. Church indeed!"

Alas, the endless talk and struggle we have had of High church, Low church, Church-Extension, Church in Danger; we invite the Christian reader to think whether it has not been a too miserable screech and phantasism of toil and struggle, as for a "Church" which one had rather not define at present."

We have seen that in the nineteenth century (and we may consider it true also of the twentieth) the most manifest goal of individual and national effort is the accumulation of wealth. An altogether unwholesome valuation has been placed upon "this little life" and its material possessions. Carlyle seems to have had a sort of public conscience and to have felt keenly that the level of life upon which such a Nation lived could not carry them very far toward progress. Spirituality was absolutely necessary for advance in civilization, for, as he somewhere says:

"Human intellect is the exact sum of human worth",

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tellect depends upon the power to see life as it is. He sums up the condition of affairs as follows: "The poor perishing, like neglected, foundered draught cattle, the rich still more wretchedly, of idleness, satiety, and overgrowth!"\(^1\) The highest in rank without honor from the lowest. The Church and State, absolutely necessary institutions of society, meaningless institutions, their once-sacred symbols fluttering as empty pageants, whereof men grudge even the expense, a world becoming dismantled, in one word, the Church fallen speechless, from obesity and apoplexy, the state shrunken into a police office, straightened to get its pay."

VI A 1. We have now to consider to what extent Carlyle's prophesies have been verified by the events of the past century. Mr. Froude claims that Carlyle did a great deal to open the eyes of the legislators of his own day, and that much of the progressive legislation passed during Carlyle's own life-time was due to his influence.\(^2\) Carlyle cared more about changing the spirit of the times than about carrying through specific reforms. In suggesting definite changes, he assumed that an entire change in the moral constitution of society would have to take place - they would need to return to medievalism. "If I believed Mammonism with its adjuncts was to continue henceforth the

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1. Carlyle's Sartor Resartus. Summary of chapter on symbols
one serious principle of our existence, I should reckon it idle to solicit remedial measures from any government, the disease being insusceptible of remedy. Government can do much, but it can, in no wise, do all."¹

2. The nineteenth century and the twentieth, by no means, have returned to medievalism as much as Carlyle would wish, but not only do historians but business men and politicians say that there is an increasing altruistic tendency. Even as conservative a thinker as A. Laurence Lowell, in his Government of England, writes: "If an advance in civilization may be measured by the broadening of sympathy, the forward movement begun in Europe in the middle of the eighteenth century, has continued at an increasing rate."² Of our own country, a representative business man, speaking on the Ethics of Speculation, said that he thought there was "a very genuine improvement in the moral standards of the business world, which I sincerely believe to be the most important achievement of the first decade of the new century."³ Along the same line, Mr. Usher, who has written so much upon the ethics of business, says: "There has probably never been a time in the history of the world when so large a proportion of the population of the community are as anxious to do right as today."

¹ Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 367.
³ Everyday Ethics - Lecture by Henry C. Eneery.
VI B We saw that Carlyle found fault with the ideal of his times; it was not the ideal of duty toward God and responsibility of the governors to the governed; it was the ideal of pleasure in accumulating money. Lowell says of England today: "The old belief that, if riches increased, every one would be a gainer has been replaced by solicitude for the condition of the less prosperous people..... In striking contrast, therefore, with the ideas dominant three-score years ago, political interest in England at the present day seems to be greater in the distribution than in the production of wealth, and this is in spite of the many business men in the House of Commons." For this country, too, Graham Taylor in the "Survey" enumerates the legislation which indicates the advance of "social consciousness and social conscience" – the existence of such in an association for Labor Legislation, a Consumers' League, a National Child Labor Committee, and an American Institution of Criminal Law, and the existence of a so-called Progressive party. We see, then, that there has come to exist more of social service, of spirituality in the ideals of the century.

VI C The man who was the ideal of the day Carlyle said was the wealthy man. Today Mr. Biddle says: "We are ranking men not according to wealth ... but according to their

social efficiency. The new aristocracy is appearing of those who render to the community capable, disinterested service."¹ Is not this the aristocracy Carlyle predicted, an aristocracy which gives us "government" and not "no government"?

VI D 1. We find, too, that the present organization of society includes at least one of the necessary elements, a true governing class. Lowell says: "The fact is that the upper classes in England rule today not by means of political privileges which they retain, but by the sufferance of the great mass of people, as trustees for its benefit. Their leadership is highly popular with the masses, but it depends upon keeping the respect of the nations by a generally sustained reputation for probity of character, for if that reputation were seriously impaired, the ruling class would be swept from power."² The condition of England today is one to which Professor Burgess refers as "government of the people, by the people, for the people."

The greatest improvements in organizations, however, have been made in industrial changes, and the aim of the following examples will be to show how there has come something of the spirit of medievalism into that more important branch, the Industrial Aristocracy.

¹. Outlook, Vol. 97, p. 33. J. A. Biddle.
VI D  2. The first change was the decay of the Laissez-faire theory, which Carlyle prophesied would have to come to an end. Lowell says: "The doctrine of Laissez-faire propounded by the classicist economists, and carried into practical politics by the Manchester school, was in fact founded upon the assumption that the enlightened self-interest of each individual must be in general harmony with that of everybody else; and the more ardent spirits looked forward to a state of universal prosperity based upon universal selfishness." This theory begins to wane, and government regulation comes back with the beginning of the factory acts.

VI D  3.  a. It is astonishing how very modern Thomas Carlyle's suggestions are: they read like the planks in a recent party platform. We have seen that the greatest need of Europe is an Industrial Aristocracy who should undertake the task of organizing labor. "This that they call 'Organizing of Labour' is, if well understood, the problem of the whole Future, for all who will in the future pretend to govern men,"¹ and""Organization of Labour" must be taken out of the hands of absurd, windy persons and put into the hands of wise laborers and valiant men ... if Europe, at any rate, if England, is to continue habitable longer."² Although the organization of labor has not reach-

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¹ Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 381.
ed an ideal stage, because the laborers and the employers are organized into separate associations somewhat antagonistic and polemic toward each other, yet the day seems to be arriving nearer when, by means of arbitration, these organizations shall stand for mutually helpful representations of each side rather than as organized armies of opposition. Cheyney says: "Whether we look at the rapidly extending sphere of government control and service, or at the spread of voluntary combinations which restrict individual liberty, it is evident that the tendencies of social development at the close of the nineteenth century are as strongly toward association and regulation as they were at the beginning toward individualism and freedom from all control." 1

Organization takes place at times at least from the viewpoint of the laborer. "The aim of all industrial organization and welfare work is a combination of business efficiency gathered into an all-around development of the workers as individuals and citizens."

VI D 3. b. Again and again, Carlyle had spoken of the need of government regulation over industries, selling and buying, and other forms of business. 2 He even went so far as to call for Factory and Mine inspections, sanitary regulations in factories and other reforms. The agitation for factory legislation was begun by Sir Robert Peel, whom Carlyle thor-

2. Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 360.
oughly admired for the course which he took in Parliament. ¹ There was much opposition to factory legislation upon the part of the leaders of the industrial world on the grounds of unjust interference, consequent inability to compete with nations unrestricted by labor laws, and ruin of a class who gave commerce to England. Gradually, notwithstanding, regulating laws were passed all during the early and middle part of the nineteenth century, and even up to our own times: the Textile Mills Act, 1833; the Children's Half-Time Act, 1844; the Mine Law, 1842; the Ten Hour Act, 1847; and so on until 1878. "The Factory and Workshop Consolidation Act" repealed all the former special laws, and substituted a factory code combining a vast number of provisions for the regulation of industrial establishments.

VI D 3. c. Included in his scheme of the organization of labor Carlyle saw the possibilities of many other plans for the working man, some of them very distinctly modern. "Permanence" is considered one of the greatest assets in adjusting the relationship between capital and labor. "Let us here hint at simply one widest universal principle, on the basis from which all organization hitherto has grown up among men, and all henceforth will have to grow - the principle of permanent contract instead of temporary."² Some permanence of contract is already almost possible. We have

¹ Cheyney's Industrial and Social History of England.
² Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 380.
not yet attained permanence of contract to any universal extent, but certain inducements, such as pensions, progressive scale of wages, etc., are offered to cause men to attach themselves permanently to a certain business.

VI D 3. d. Carlyle also suggested profit-sharing. "A question here arises whether, in some ulterior, perhaps some not far distant stage of this 'Chivalry of Labour', your master-worker may not find it possible and needful to grant his workers permanent interest in his enterprise and theirs; so that it become in practical result, what in essential fact and justice it even is, a joint enterprise; all men, from the chief master, down to the lowest overseer and operator, economically as well as loyalty concerned for it."¹ These plans for profit-sharing have been tried with varied results. Failures seem to be due not to the plan, but to the method in which it has been carried out. Profit-sharing at the present time, although in itself considerable, is but small in comparison with the vast extent of the world's commerce. Failure many times is due to the fact that profit-sharing is undertaken for the purpose of detrating men from their unions, of contenting them with lower wages. "Profit-sharing has been a step to actual partnership, the workman has not only received

¹. Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 382.
a share of the profit, as added remuneration for his labor, but has been led to invest in the capital of the business, and, as a shareholder, to take his share of the profits paid as capital as well as of responsibility, and loss if any, and of control. This system of profit-sharing plus shareholding is now known as co-partnership and is making undoubted progress."

VI D 3. e. Carlyle suggests that the problem of unemployment needs solution when two million out of fifteen of the "strongest, the cunningest, and the willingest" workers on earth "sit in work-houses, poor law prisons." The problem of unemployment is one of the gravest in the present industrial situation. Robert Hunter says that in some districts the proportion of men necessarily unemployed from four to six months of the year is perfectly appalling.

VI D 3. f. "Fairer distribution" of the wealth of the land seemed to him absolutely necessary for the attainment of a right state of affairs. He speaks so many times of the irony in overproduction. "Millions of shirts, and empty pairs of trousers", they say, and he replies: "Too many shirts? Well, that is a novelty in this intemperate earth with its millions of bare backs", and he accuses the leaders who: "were appointed to preside over the distribution and apportionment of the wages of work done..."
But the community commanded you, see that shirts are well apportioned... Two million shirtless or ill-shirted workers sit enchained in workhouse Bastilles, five million more in Hunger-cells." Anyone acquainted with city conditions especially, throughout American and Europe, will not live under the illusion that we have reached a "fair distribution of wealth", but the sentiment of the age is turning against the amassing of great fortunes. Lowell says: "political interest in England today seems to be greater in the distribution than the production of wealth."¹

VI D 3. g. He also thought that this new country, America, with its abundance of room and opportunities for workers, might be made accessible for the laboring classes of England! Like many others, Carlyle made the mistake of thinking that immigration from Europe would make more room in Europe. He thought that an Emigration service would see "that every honest, willing, workman who found England too strict and the organization of labour not yet sufficiently advanced might find a bridge built to carry him into new western lands," where he might "organize with more elbow-room some labour for himself."² The Encyclopedia Britannica says: "Emigration has not succeeded in diminishing the population of Europe, which, on the contrary, doubled during the nineteenth century."³

². Carlyle's Past and Present, p. 363.
VI D 3. h. Carlyle was very sensitive about the limited opportunities of the masses for education. In Sartor Resartus, he says: "that there should one man die ignorant who had capacity for knowledge, this I call a tragedy, were it to happen more than twenty times in the minute, as by some computations it does," and he asks for a "right education Bill." "To irradiate with intelligence, that is to say, order .... the chaotic, unintelligent, how, except by educating, can you accomplish this?" 1

VI E Playgrounds we usually think of as distinctly modern, but Carlyle, back in 1839, asks if, in the industrial city, there ought not to be "a hundred acres or so of free green field, with trees on it, conquered for its little children to disport in?" 2 The phenomenal adoption of playgrounds in all cities and towns in recent years hardly needs to be mentioned.

That element of medievalism called by Carlyle Hero-worship would probably seem unsound to many politicians of this century. However, the prevailing tendency in business and government can easily be seen from recent events, to be toward the centralization of responsibility upon individuals — men who can be trusted, who are industrial or political heroes. In the recent troubles of Mr. Mellen and the New

Haven Railroad lines, Mr. Howard Elliott was called to become President of the company. This following statement surely shows that he alone must be the guiding force, the hero of that industrial situation. "The industrial life of New England is involved in Mr. Elliott's success, and if that sags, the social life will sag with it. Mr. Elliott and his opportunity have become the hope of New England."¹ This is but one of numerous instances. In the government, there is a perpetual tendency towards centralization upon individuals of authority, as is indicated by the short ballot movement, and the increasing adoption of the city manager plan. If, as Carlyle says, the character of a people is to be estimated from the character of the leaders it chooses, much might be said for Americans in their choice of Woodrow Wilson for their chief executive. Such facts do not mean that our democracy is a monarchy, but is not the most ideal Democracy attainable in this world an Aristocracy of Good Men?

VII A These reforms have been described not to suggest that we have attained to any such state of medievalism as Carlyle saw in the Middle Ages, but to show that he, although a man of letters, saw the truth of both present and future society, when almost all the rest of mankind did not see it, and that we, today, are more and more finding our need of medievalism. The sense of values which the American people

have today is probably much higher than that of twenty years ago. Our political institutions, however, are especially in need of some infusion of spirituality, and the enactments of the present administration are carrying us forward in moral progress. Our government did worse than let industries alone on the Laissez-faire plan. It actually cooperated with "the interests" for their "special privileges". The same thing is true in Europe. David Starr Jordan, in an article on "Higher Politics", has indicated that the "national authority" in its promotion of outside interests has merely been "a tool for private" interests.1 We have need of spirituality to solve aright our social problems. Mr. Usher says: "In fact, it is hardly an exaggeration to say that every issue now largely discussed by the public is one which can be decided only by agreeing upon a standard of right and wrong."2 That is to say, the solution of our social situation depends upon our moral standards. This surely is what Carlyle said so many years ago when he told people that "no Morrison's pill" would cure the ills of the state, but a "belief in God" would be the solution of all things.

These advances in the right direction in no wise mean that we have reached anywhere near the high place of living in the Middle Ages. We have far to go. Robert Hunter tells

2. Atlantic, vol. 110, p. 44.
in his "Poverty" how fourteen percent of the population in the time of *prosperity*, twenty percent in hard times, are in actual poverty; how a large proportion of these are sick without place to recuperate or money to secure medical aid.¹ He tells us how many of the most hard-working and independent laborers are forced into pauperism and vagrancy because the conditions in which they live are positively unendurable. He tells how much of the misery is due to the over-population caused by immigrants who are brought here merely as the exploited products of the ship companies and "cheap-labor" seekers. The picture is a very sad one, and would seem to say that all is not well in this twentieth century world of ours. There is need of "God, of religion," of something besides "cash-payment, the sole relation between men". There is need of medievalism right here in America this very day.

VII B Carlyle did not wish to reconstruct the age of monasticism, not the manner of life, political, social or religious; not the peculiar creeds or particular way of acting; not the seclusion or the feudalism did he wish to reestablish among the English people. He did not desire that the citizens of London should take the vows of poverty, nor the members of Parliament say so many litanies a day.

¹. Robert Hunter, *Poverty*. 
He did not want society to separate itself into a number of secluded groups, or people to devote all their time to the development of their inner natures. All these things belonged to a certain time - they were temporal. But there was something else in the Middle Ages which could be limited to no specific time nor place, and that was the spirituality which, because made the basis of the whole life, resulted in well-being and prosperity.