

The Problem of the Stigma of Marxism for Christian Advocacy Writers
Whose Focus is Historical, Social Inequalities

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Abstract

Christian advocacy writers seek to advocate on behalf of and empower the marginalized. Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities reveal oppressions from history in order to advocate for the oppressed in similar circumstances in today's world. They must be willing to learn from all scholarship that reveals the hardship and oppression endured by the exploited of society. There is often a stigma associated with the use of Marxist sources for reasons that include Karl Marx's own anti-religious, anti-Semitic, pro-revolution, and reductionist ideas and the later association of Marxism with Soviet Communism. Christian advocacy writers must understand both the history and evolution of Marxism, the importance of class consciousness, and the Bible's stance about issues associated with Marxism and oppression in order to understand and counter the stigma. The following thesis will examine the problem of the stigma of Marxism and seek to provide solutions for this stigma.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to everyone who supported me through these incredible years of study related to the British Industrial Revolution, classism, and advocacy. This topic has become a passion for me, both in my academic writing and in my fiction writing. Thanks to my husband, Kelsey, and my two sons, Taliesin and Nathanael, who put up with my constant discussions of this topic.

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There are a few people to acknowledge for their help in my research. All my professors throughout my degrees at Liberty University have been wonderful. There are a few that helped me to understand more about myself and my studies, however. Dr. Susan Adams, who was my human growth and development professor, gave me a lot of courage to be myself. Dr. Carey Roberts was the first professor who allowed me to write about the oppression of the British Industrial Revolution. Dr. Roger Schultz and Dr. Sam Smith allowed me to write about history from non-traditional viewpoints. There is not too much difference between Karl Marx and John Brown or between Friedrich Engels and Thomas Hutchinson. These professors allowed me to write about controversial and often misunderstood people. Dr. Martin Catino allowed me first to explore Marxism in a historical study. I certainly want to thank Dr. Tess Stockslager, not only for agreeing to be the chairperson of my thesis committee, but also for allowing me to continue my historical research with “The Caste of Poverty: Nineteenth-Century Literature and the 1834 British Poor Laws.” I admit I was a bit intimidated writing that paper when I discovered her own love of British literature, but I am so thankful I wrote it. That paper served as the inspiration for this thesis. Ironically, at the same time I was writing “The Caste of Poverty,” I was also working on a faith journey essay for a class with Dr. Andrew Smith. I was not sure how he would react to my faith journey essay, but he was so supportive. His gentleness and encouragement convinced me he was the right person to also be a part of my thesis committee. He challenged me a few times in my thesis research, but those challenges made this thesis an even better project.

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Introduction

Of course, the open-mind does not accept everything indiscriminately – Marxism and capitalism, Christianity and atheism, love and lust, Moet Chandon and vinegar. It does not absorb all propositions equally like a sponge; nor is it soft. But the open-minded realizes that reality, truth, and Jesus Christ are incredibly open-ended. – Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*¹

In today's culture, those who voted for Donald Trump are accused, by the other side, of being narcissistic, racist, and bigoted. Those who voted for Hillary Clinton or supported Barack Obama are accused, by the other side, of being crazy, immoral snowflakes. With this type of mindset, there is no in-between. There is only an either-or, us-versus-them mentality. This mindset is also prevalent in the area of historical research and writing where traditional historians are pitted against Marxist historians and modern historians against postmodern historians, and where conventional historians are too patriarchal for feminist historians and feminist and revisionist historians are just too radical. As Ifran Habib writes in "Problems of Marxist Historiography," there is a war of ideas whose purpose is to attack the enemy's strongest point" (4).

The Christian advocacy writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities is often stuck in the middle of such ways of thinking. Christian advocacy writers advocate on behalf of the oppressed. The purpose of advocacy writing is to plead the cause of another (Schinke et al. 28). Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities recognize oppression throughout history in order to better understand and advocate for individuals in similar situations in today's culture. They use their writing to express such advocacy.

¹ Manning, Brennan. *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Multnomah Publishers, 2000, 65.

While Christian advocacy writers want to remain true to their own deeply-held beliefs, they also realize historical accuracy is not as clear cut as it often appears. There must be a proper perspective and proper appreciation of various versions of historical research if these writers are to fairly present their research and their findings. No source can be dismissed only because the writer may disagree with the scholar-in-question's worldview. The fact is, the Christian advocacy writer who focuses upon historical, social inequalities often finds some of the best sources for research arise from modern, postmodern, feminist, revisionist, and, because of their emphasis upon oppression and stories from the oppressed, Marxist sources. As social historians, Christian advocacy writers who focus upon historical, social inequalities must put aside the war of ideas. That is, they must put aside the political war to focus on the real people and the real problems that a war of ideas often leaves behind.

However, putting aside the war of ideas does not necessarily allow Christian advocacy writers to put aside a stigma that often arises with the use of Marxist sources, in particular. Whether the stigma arises from the history of Marxism, from Christianity's (particularly American Christianity's) historical ties to a capitalist system, or from a combination of both, there are ways for the Christian advocacy writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities to learn from and utilize Marxist sources without letting go of biblical beliefs. This thesis will examine those solutions. For the purpose of this thesis, advocacy writing will focus upon the poor or working class during the time of the Industrial Revolution since this is the area of this student's historical research and expertise and because the argument for the necessity of class consciousness during this era applies to the arguments for the necessity of class consciousness in today's society.

I began my research on the topics of class consciousness and social alienation of lower classes when I was studying for my first master's degree, a master's in human services with a cognate in Christian ministries. Through this degree program, I was able to study various forms of oppression in today's world, including the oppression of classism. I continued this research into my second master's degree, a Master of Arts in History. It was through this degree program that I began my study of the Industrial Revolution in England and attitudes toward the poor that were prevalent during this time of industrial growth. It was also for this program that I began a study to determine how industrial capitalism contributed to the rise of Communism. These studies culminated in a research paper I wrote for my third graduate degree, the Master of Arts in Professional Writing for which I am writing this particular thesis. The research in question was a paper entitled "The Caste of Poverty: Nineteenth-Century Literature and the 1834 British Poor Laws" (Crosby-Hastings). For this paper, I used Marxist sources to prove my thesis that poverty during the nineteenth century was a caste system imposed upon the poor by the 1834 British Poor Laws and that nineteenth-century British authors became advocates of these individuals (Crosby-Hastings). Friedrich Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* contributed to the idea established by current sociologist Jack Katz that those who lived in poverty were pushed into a caste system (and those who currently live in poverty are) because they were isolated to a specific, segregated location, they had an identity inflicted upon them, and they were morally unique. Katz examines the poor of the Industrial Revolution from the perspective of capitalist exploitation (Katz 251-255). These two sources allowed me to understand origins not only of poverty in this era but of stereotypical mindsets against the poor that took hold as industrial capitalism gained in momentum. However, because of the Marxist ties to these scholars' theories, I questioned how well my research would be received at a well-known,

conservative Christian university. I questioned whether I should even consider the validity of the scholars' research, even though I could clearly see the value of the scholarship.

Karl Marx and his friend and associate Friedrich Engels wrote about the conditions of the poor and of the class consciousness that arose during the Industrial Revolution. Class consciousness is an understanding not only of the conditions of the poor but of the attitudes toward them (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age 15-19*, 278-279). Many Marxist historians today also study this era of history because it is viewed as the origins of capitalism, the beginning of the working class, and the start of the subsequent oppression (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age 15-19*). Because of the controversial viewpoints of Karl Marx, the father of Marxism, Marxist scholarship naturally receives questions and sometimes condemnation from the Christian community. For example, Marx was an avowed atheist who insisted religion is an opiate of the people (qtd. in Boer 703). No Christian can, in good conscience, agree with this religious stance. Nor should any Christian agree, as Marx stated in *The Communist Manifesto*, that *violent* revolution is the answer to societal despair (Marx and Engels). However, do these disagreements automatically mean Christians should not use Marxist sources in their own research and writing?

There are several arguments that justify the Christian advocacy writer's use of Marxist sources. In order for Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities to understand the stigma associated with Marxist scholarship and to justify the need to for such scholarship, an understanding of the historical mindset toward the poor, an understanding of the works of Karl Marx, and an understanding of the evolution of Marxism are a must. Also a must is an understanding of what the Bible has to say about topics that arise from a study of both

Marxism and capitalism as well as advice from those who have been labeled Communist because of their viewpoints.

Description of Chapters in this Thesis

Chapter One: Introduction to and Presentation of the Problem:

Chapter One of this thesis will describe the problem of the stigma of Marxism in Christian advocacy writing that focuses upon historical, social inequalities. It will discuss the common arguments against Marxist scholarship, such as Marx's anti-Christian and anti-Semitic beliefs, his atheistic mindset, and his revolutionary ideas. This chapter will discuss ways Christian advocacy writers and historians could handle these arguments, will explain how class consciousness is a topic that, in Christian circles, is often associated with Marxist ideas, and will include scholarship and examples of how the inclusion of class consciousness in historical research is often deemed to be an agenda to detract from conventional, historical interpretation (Anderson and Thompson 215-228).

Chapter one will also seek to understand Marx's mindset and describe why an understanding and examples of class consciousness are important to the advocacy writer. Stephen Paul Schinke, Richard P. Barth, and Betty J. Blythe write in the article "Advocacy Skills in Social Work" of how "advocacy as a professional activity entails (1) pleading a cause, one's own or another's, (2) in an appropriate form, (3) to accomplish a certain goal" (28). The goal of advocacy writing, as presented in this thesis, is to defend the oppressed, as a people, throughout history. The goal for the advocacy writer, as presented in this thesis, is to counter the political agenda that has, throughout history, presented the poor as lazy, unintelligent, and negligent. In order to accomplish this goal, the advocacy writer that focuses on historical inequalities must be willing to examine all scholarly sources that address the conditions and behavior of the poor.

This includes Marxist sources. Marxist sources are especially important to the work of the advocacy writer because such scholarship recognizes a class consciousness that other sources often do not recognize. Chapter one will provide an introduction explaining why Christian advocacy writers must understand such class consciousness in order to “Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed” (*New International Version*, Psalm 82.3). It will explain why the stigma associated with Marxism is, thus, a problem for Christian advocacy writers. A review of the literature from both sides of the Marxist debate will be presented with the research.

Chapter Two: Methodology

Chapter two of the thesis will, through qualitative methods, address the historical and sociological evidence regarding the stigma of Marxism associated with Christian advocacy writing that focuses upon historical, social inequalities. It will examine historical documents from the time of the British Industrial Revolution as well as of theorists of previous eras, the Industrial era itself, and of later eras (including the twenty-first century) in order to understand the historical viewpoint toward the poor and how the ideology of Karl Marx relates to this era. This chapter will explain the subject of class consciousness and how this coincides with the scholarly research. This research will address stereotypes that are based upon historical theories such as the Puritan work ethic. It will examine the ties between the Puritan work ethic and capitalism and examine whether Marxism, as an ideology, was or is a threat to such ties. Historical and sociological research will be taken from a variety of sources that represent a variety of historical, political, and sociological viewpoints.

Chapter Three: Results

Chapter Three will compare the opinions of scholars regarding Marxist sources. It will describe why the class consciousness associated with Marxist scholarship is important for Christian advocacy writers. Although it is not comfortable to think of class consciousness, the Christian advocacy writer cannot truly defend the cause of the poor or the oppressed without an understanding of that oppression. It will answer agendas that form because of the stereotypes that have historically been associated with the poor or working class and whether those who advocate for the poor and oppressed, thus, have stereotypes placed upon them as well. It will question historical agendas from both sides of the debate. This chapter will explore Marxism as a reaction to the negative and oftentimes harmful effects industrial capitalism had upon the working class.

Chapter Four: Discussion

Chapter four will address the results of the scholarly research presented in the thesis. It will argue how Christian advocacy writers can, in good conscience, utilize Marxist scholarship for its historical and sociological value without necessarily agreeing with the religious and/or political viewpoints of the scholars. It will describe how Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities can include such scholarship in their research while upholding a biblical worldview.

Chapter four will also address why advocacy writing from a historical perspective is important in and to today's society and culture. When Christian advocacy writers examine today's world, they will also see examples of oppression. Sometimes these examples from today's world are remarkably similar to the issues from the era of the Industrial Revolution. Understanding how to handle oppression from a historical standpoint better enables the Christian to handle similar oppression today. When advocacy writers understand how to counter historical

stereotypes, they better understand how to advocate against such stereotypes and for those who are being stereotyped in today's world. They can better interpret, through scholarly research and examination, classism today.

This chapter will also record the advice of others who have had the label of Marxist or even of Communist thrust upon them because of their viewpoints about exploitation and poverty. The Communist and socialist labels as an insult may seem dated in some circles, but in others, it is used regularly to condemn anyone who critically examines capitalism or questions oppression within a capitalistic system. On the one hand, this label seems extreme and hurtful. On the other, perhaps it is justified since Marx also questioned the prominent system of the time. The danger lies in making an idol of any human theorist or any human theory – whether that be Karl Marx or Thomas Paine, whether that be Marxism or capitalism or anything in between. This chapter will challenge the mindset that allows such idolatry.

Chapter One – The Problem

“Obviously, philosophical ideas are never born in some isolated and self-sufficient domain of ‘pure thought’ or ‘pure spirit.’ They form, live, and evolve in the context of the actual historical life of fully determinate and real-world individuals.” – N. Motroshilva²

Common Objections to Marxism

Marxism. The word conjures up images of violence, massive-scale killings, Joseph Stalin, and the Berlin Wall. All of these are images most would prefer to forget. Karl Marx himself was not bashful about his stance regarding violent revolution, in his view of religion, and especially in his anti-Semitic hatred. It is these associations that bring the harshest criticism of using Marxist sources when examining historical, social inequalities. In order to understand Marx’s viewpoints, however, the Christian should seek to understand Marx himself. The Christian must understand the era from which Marx came. As Gareth Stedman Jones points out in *Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion*, Marx must be studied in the context of his own century, before opinions about his character or his achievements had a chance to form (5). Christian advocacy writers who study Marx within his own era may just find they agree more with the economic philosopher than they expect.

Both conventional and Marxist scholars agree the era of the Industrial Revolution was depressing for poor workers. Gertrude Himmelfarb in her *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* points out the bleakness of the situation. She describes sociologists of the time and today’s historians as falling into one of two categories: those with optimistic

² Motroshilva, N. as quoted in Anatoly V. Chernyaev. “Continuity and Succession in Contemporary Russian Philosophy.” *Studies in East European Thought*, vol. 66, no. 3/4, 2014, pp. 263–276., www.jstor.org/stable/24673264, 264.

interpretations and those with pessimistic interpretations regarding the plight of the working class. Both viewpoints are valid and neither ignores the devastation the poor endured (38). Marx and, as Himmelfarb points out, his friend Friedrich Engels came to a realization that others may not have understood, however. This realization included the ideas that the working class was radically different than the middle class, that, because of the industrial system, workers were treated as chattel, that workers could be replaced by the capitalists and, thus, were treated as though they were disposable, and, even if it is difficult to come to terms with, there was an animosity that the workers felt toward the employers who often abused them (*The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*, 275-278). Therefore, whereas other scholars saw hope within the industrial system, Marx and Engels had little expectation for improvement.

Marx's Anti-Christian Ideas

Alexander Saxton writes in “Marxism, Labor, and the Failed Critique of Religion,” there is often a consensus that Karl Marx believed a forsaking of religion was necessary for an uprising of the proletarians. He did, after all, write in his earliest works of religion being the basis of all criticism of the bourgeois (309). There are a few areas the Christian advocacy writer must keep in mind when studying Marx’s beliefs about Christianity. One must realize, for instance, the environment in which Marx himself grew up. The Germany into which Marx was born and reared saw a prospering and pietistic middle class, thanks to the new system of industrialism. Calvinism, with its emphasis upon God blessing the middle class with wealth in order to prove His own glory, was prominent in some areas, according to David McLellan in the book *Marx Before Marxism* (4-5)³. Germany also experienced a political, Catholic revolution in 1837. Prior to this year, there was a blur between Protestantism and Catholicism. However, 1837

³ This was not a belief of John Calvin himself, but of later Calvinists.

saw a political renewal of Catholics when the Archbishop of Cologne began enforcing an edict that children of mixed marriages must be reared Catholic. Political Catholics emerged to see to it that the Catholic Church dominated the state (McLellan 8-9).

Not only this, but as Himmelfarb describes, Marx and Engels viewed money as the god of the capitalists. No doubt, this love of money would have caused the revolutionaries to doubt the genuineness of such religion that placed money ahead of human suffering (*The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*, 274-275). Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, “All that we want to do away with is the miserable character of this appropriation, under which the laborer lives merely to increase capital, and is allowed to live only insofar as the interest of the ruling class requires it” (24). He labeled religion as a system of exploitation (Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* 28-29). Roland Boer points out in “Opium, Idols and Revolution: Marx and Engels on Revolution,” Marx viewed religion as “the manifestation of economic alienation” whereas Engels saw that it could be liberating (699). Silas Morgan, in his article “What Marx Can Teach Christian Theology – and the Church – about Being Christian,” quotes Marx:

The social principles of Christianity preach the necessity of a ruling and oppressed class, and for the latter all they have to offer is the pious wish that the former may be charitable. . . . The social principles of Christianity are sneaking and hypocritical and the proletariat is revolutionary. So much for the social principles of Christianity (Marx qtd. in Morgan).

For someone as passionate as Marx, hypocrisy would have caused him to doubt the validity of the claims of those whom he deemed hypocrites. In his *Das Kapital*, Marx wrote of the capitalists who exploited laborers through excessively long workdays so that there was no time for leisure, “even the rest time of Sunday (and that in a country of Sabbatarians!)” (Marx,

Capital 252). The hypocrisy of Christians justifying their exploitation was evident. As Marx wrote in a footnote in *Das Kapital*, God was “pushed into the background” (*Capital* 696). The Christian advocacy writer, as one who advocates for the oppressed, must understand that Marx viewed Christianity as just another method of exploitation by the industrialists. Engels agreed. In his essay “On the Jewish Question,” Engels accused, “Money is the god of this world; the bourgeois takes the proletarian’s money from him and so makes an atheist of him” (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 280). Silas Morgan explains Marx’s complaint against Christianity was not based upon the theological. It was based upon his hatred of oppression (Morgan “What Marx Can Teach Christian Theology – and the Church – about Being Christian”).

Christian socialist scholar Janine Giordano Drake, in the article, “Wealth, Socialism, and Jesus,” also explains Christians during the Industrial Revolution often looked at the working class as a mission field. The clergy and Christian organizations saw themselves as the true Christians” (5). While this may seem harmless enough, this mindset, no doubt, put a chasm between the Christian ministers and charities and the working class who were deemed less godly. No doubt thinking of such a chasm and the resulting alienation of the poor from the rest of society, Marx, in *The Communist Manifesto*, also discusses his idea that the working class had no country to call their own (28). To be a part of a country, that country’s inhabitants must have respect and, one could argue, trust shown toward them. Perhaps Gertrude Himmelfarb in *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* sums it up best when she writes, “It is surely important to know what conceptions of poverty inspired their efforts and what perceptions of the poor made them think that the poor (or particular groups of the poor) could or should be reformed” (16).

Interestingly, if Marx's background is not enough to convince those skeptical of Marx's religious, or rather anti-religion, ideas, Saxton points out, in fact, there is no reason to conjecture that Marx's own hatred of religion was even necessary for a proletarian revolution. A theory of religion is absent in Marxist theory. Marx only rejected religion as a bourgeoisie method of ruling the lower classes (Saxton 309). Engels saw what he considered agendas of the Anglican conservatives and the Unitarian liberals. Such agendas convinced the Marxist founders that religion kept workers in bondage to the bourgeois (Saxton 316). Marxist hope was that the workers would transcend all aspects of the middle class. Marxist anti-religious stance originates more from an idealization of the working class than from religious theory (Saxton 315).

Marx's Revolutionary Ideas

Thomas Paine wrote in *Agrarian Justice*, "A revolution in the state of civilization is the necessary companion of revolutions in the system of government" (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 95). Paine should know. His *Common Sense* was perhaps the most influential writing in the beginnings of another historic revolution. One could argue, the late eighteenth to mid-nineteenth century was an age of revolution.

The Christian advocacy writer must keep in mind the goings on of the era in which Marx wrote his revolutionary works. The 1830s and 1840s saw conflict between liberals and radicals in Marx's Germany. Radical politicians rejected governmental checks and balances accepted by liberals, proclaiming the idea that executive, legislative, and judicial power should all be in the hands of the people. They considered class inequality unnatural and opposed to logic. They stood for ideas of suffrage and political rights for all, regardless of class (McLellan 11-12).

This was also the era of anti-slavery movements. In fact, reformer Richard Oastler, who had fought for the cause of abolition and who was not a radical Marxist but a Tory, also referred

to the conditions of the factories as “Yorktown Slavery” (Driver 39-42). One evil, the evil of slavery, had been extinguished in Britain. Other countries would soon follow suit. It was now time to turn attention to another violation of human rights and human dignity. One of Marx’s most influential instructors at the University of Berlin, Eduard Gans, wrote,

The Saint-Simonians have rightly observed that slavery has not disappeared and that, even if it has been formally abolished, it nevertheless really existed in a most absolute manner. Just as once master and slaves were opposed to each other, and then later patrician and plebian, then sovereign and vassal, so are opposed today the man who is idle and the man who works. One has only to visit the factories to see hundreds of emaciated and miserable men and women who sacrifice their health for the service and profit of a single man and exchange all the pleasures of life for a meagre pittance. Is it not pure slavery to exploit man like a beast by allowing him only freedom to die of hunger? Is it not possible to awaken in these miserable proletarians a moral conscience and lead them to take an active part in the work that at present they execute automatically? (qtd. in McLellan 51).

Those such as Oastler who believed in the cause of human rights and human dignity were willing to be radical. They were willing to suffer. Although Marx was more radical in his ideas of revolution, he was radical in the midst of reforms that did little to alleviate the suffering of the poor (*The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 150-163). Although his ideas were not right, they are able to be justified. He felt the need to take action.

This was also an age of general revolution. Adam Smith was influential in initiating the Industrial Revolution which was, as Karl Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, “We see... how the modern bourgeoisie is itself... a series of revolutions in modes of production and

exchange” (10). Engels agreed. He viewed the Industrial Revolution as the crisis point for industrial workers – a crisis point that left them in poverty. The response or counter to the Industrial Revolution had to be a revolution of the workers themselves (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Industrial Age* 282). Marx viewed what has come to be called the Industrial Revolution as a *revolution* because of the struggle between man and machine, according to R.A. Bryer in the article “A Marxist Accounting of History of the British Industrial Revolution: A Review of Evidence and Suggestions for Research.” This struggle was based upon the industrialist’s want for more and more capital or more and more profit (33). Marx believed “material conditions of labour are not subject to the worker, but he to them. Capital employs labour” (qtd. in Bryer 33). He believed, because of the want for capital, “capital is constantly compelled to wrestle with the insubordination of the workmen” (qtd. in Bryer 33).

Gareth Stedman Jones, in the article “Pressure from Without: Karl Marx and 1867,” sheds new light on Marx’s ideas of revolution. He insists interpretation based upon events of the twentieth century have skewed opinions regarding Marx’s original ideas. Marx, he writes, wanted a process of revolution rather than one, bold event. He never desired a violent overthrow of capitalism but rather advocated for political changes initiated by peaceful workers. The transition from capitalism to Communism would be similar to the change from feudalism to capitalism (Jones 118).

Marx’s Anti-Semitism

The fact that Marx viewed capital as the reason for worker oppression explains somewhat his anti-Semitic viewpoints, an argument that is often used against the use of Marxist sources in Christian advocacy writing that focuses on historical, social inequalities. Is it good to use a

source decrying capitalist exploitation if that same source reflects anti-Semitic attitudes? Marx wrote in the 1843 essay “On the Jewish Question,”

We recognize in Judaism, therefore, a general *anti-social* element of the *present time*, an element which through historical development – to which in this harmful respect the Jews have zealously contributed – has been to its present high level, at which it must necessarily begin to disintegrate. In the final analysis, the *emancipation of the Jews* is the emancipation of mankind from Judaism (“On the Jewish Question”).

Later in “On the Jewish Question,” he blamed the Jews for making money a power in the world. What he called the “Jewish spirit” had tainted the Christian spirit. He concluded the Christians had become Jews (Marx “On the Jewish Question”).

In an 1890 letter to Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels addressed Marx’s hatred toward the Jews. He specifically addressed the idea that Jews, because of their love of money, were responsible for or at least took part in the exploitation of the workers. Engels wrote, “In North America *not a single Jew* is to be found among the millionaires” (“On Anti-Semitism”). He sought to convince Marx that anti-Semitism was, in fact, biased because the person hating the Jews did not know if the Jews were a part of the exploiters or the exploited – “there are here in England and in America thousands upon thousands of *Jewish proletarians*; and it is precisely these Jewish workers who are the worst exploited and the most poverty-stricken” (Engels “On Anti-Semitism”). This letter from Engels describes Marx’s mindset about the Jews.

In the midst of understanding Marx, Christian advocacy writers must also check their own hearts. Are Christian scholars judging Marx by harsher standards than they would have judged other atheistic or anti-Semitic thinkers? If Martin Luther with his anti-Jewish beliefs was a product of his time, could not this argument also be applied to Marx? Francis Wheen in *Marx’s*

Das Kapital, explains Marx was Jewish. He grew up a Jew in the midst of an atmosphere in which Protestantism was the official religion. His father converted to Lutheranism in order to become an attorney. Jews were not allowed to practice their religion (7). David McLellan notes Marx's father Heschel was a secular Jew who had taken on a more deistic theology that was prominent in the German Protestant Church. If he wanted to keep his job, he must choose to deny his Jewish identity thanks to the Napoleonic law of 1808 (28-29). While in theory Jews were to have equal rights to Christians, in reality Jews could only hold any societal position with the king's permission. In August 1817 Heschel Marx was baptized a Christian and changed his name to Heinrich (McLellan 29-30).

Volker R. Berghahn, in *Europe in the Era of Two World Wars: From Militarism and Genocide to Civil Society: 1900-1950*, describes the anti-Jewish rhetoric that was prominent throughout Europe in the later decades of the 1800s and early 1900s. Even Christian churches taught Jews were the people who murdered Christ (16-17). No doubt, this influence upon Marx could have resulted in confusion and hatred. In "Karl Marx and the Jewish Question," William H. Blanchard describes the confusion of Marx. He writes Marx showed both a bitter hatred of the Jews whom he deemed "money managers" and showed concern for their welfare when he viewed them as the "underdogs" of society (367). This is perhaps a confusion we today cannot understand. Did Marx hate himself because he was also Jewish? Was he seeking to redeem himself through his work for the oppressed of his society and culture? We may never know the exact answer to Marx's anti-Semitism. However, we can see from research his passion for the oppressed outweighed all other issues of inequality.

Marx's Atheism

In regard to atheism, it is important to note that many economic philosophers of Marx's era and those who came immediately before him were atheists. For example, Adam Smith, who was a predecessor of Marx, has been described as one who invented commandments that God should be hated, His laws be condemned, and goods should be coveted (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 42). Of course, this has not stopped Christians from recognizing good in Smith's theories even though they disagree with his religious beliefs. Marx's early education was a combination of Catholicism, the philosophy of Immanuel Kant, and Enlightenment thinking (McLellan 33). Marx wrote an early essay on religion in which he reasoned the importance of Christian unity with Christ and of sacrificing oneself for the good of humanity as a whole (McLellan 34-35). In another essay from his early years, Marx wrote of the importance of finding a career that follows an individual's truth, that allows the individual to work for humankind, and that allows the individual to obtain perfection (McLellan 37).

Marx followed the Enlightenment thinkers and Hegelian thinkers who were also atheists, according to Thomas Blakely in the article "Scientific Atheism: An Introduction" (277). It was later at the University of Berlin that Marx's development into Hegelian philosophy revealed itself. McLellan insists Marx's acceptance of Hegel's rationalism was a difficult one. It forced him to radically surrender his own idealism (49). It was a Jewish professor named Eduard Gans who was, perhaps, most influential in Marx's change of heart. Gans lectured regularly about the importance of progress and often addressed social questions (McLellan 50-51). Hegelians who addressed such issues tended to follow the atheism of the Enlightenment thinkers. These Hegelians viewed progress and philanthropy as a type of religion or at least with religious zeal (Blakely 277-278). The more Marx became involved in such zeal, the more he focused on the

economic and class struggles of humanity. His focus on the alienation of workers from their true selves, resulting in what he believed to be a dehumanization, pushed him away from other areas of study or belief (Blakely 278).

Marx's father advised him at one point to not give up faith completely because even those who denied God would at some point find the need to pray to Him. He encouraged his son to have the faith of Newton, Locke, and Leibniz (McLellan 28-29). If Marx's recognition of the sins found in the capitalistic love of money over human worth were not enough, in this way, again, Marx could be considered a child of his own era and his era's thinking. The important argument remains then, if Christians can see value in but not agreement with the theories of avowed atheists or agnostics such as the Enlightenment thinkers, Sigmund Freud, or Bill Nye the Science Guy, should they not extend the same grace to Karl Marx?

Marx's Utopian Attempts

Edmund Fuller writes in "The Moral Challenge of 'The Communist Manifesto'" of his agreement with philosophers who describe Communism as a religious heresy. According to Fuller, Marx, in the theory of Communism, replaced God with historical views. He replaced the Jews as God's chosen people with the proletariat or working class. He replaced Christ's kingdom with a working-class dictatorship (Fuller 13). Referring to scholarship from Richard Niebuhr, Fuller explains Marxism is not a political or scientific theory but a religious ideology in that it prophesies a cataclysmic event to usher in a new era. This era of Marx's classless society would put an end to struggle (Fuller 13-14). Marx's new religion was a secular religion in which materialism is viewed as a type of savior. Even Fuller recognizes, however, that Marx turned to such secularism because he viewed the religious middle class as having harmed working-class individuals (15).

Fuller's modernistic interpretation raises some valuable points. Saxton explains how Hegelian philosophy with its emphasis upon struggle between the thesis and the antithesis influenced Marx in his early years. Whereas Hegelian philosophy was somewhat symbolic of Christ's atonement to the struggle between God and man, Marx idealized the working class as such a savior (Saxton 315). In this sense, if Communism was Marx's contradiction to capitalism, the natural newness that would form because of such a contradiction would be a heaven-on-earth in the philosopher's viewpoint. As Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, "But Communism abolishes eternal truths, it abolishes all religion, and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experiences" (29). Communism was a working-class revolution. The proletariat would establish a kingdom never before known.

However, today's Christian advocacy writer must remember Marx's worldview is not what is important to advocacy writing. Whatever his viewpoint may have been, it is his emphasis upon oppression that is valuable to those who focus upon historical, social inequalities. As this thesis will reflect, there are few economic theorists from Marx's era with whom Christians would agree completely. In fact, Christian advocacy writers are not nearly as idealistic as Marx in this hope for a utopia on earth. However, disagreement should not constitute a refusal to recognize the value of such scholarship in regard to a revelation of oppression.

The Evolution of Marxism

The association of Marxism with Soviet Communism is also a valid objection that Christian advocacy writers often face. However, such an association must be remedied. As Francis Wheen points out in *Marx's Das Kapital*, "... Marxism has appeared in many strikingly different and apparently incongruous guises – Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, Spartacists and

revisionists, Stalinists and Trotskyists, Maoists and Castroists, Eurocommunists and existentialists” (103). When points out the association of Marxism with Soviet Communism is unfounded, noting that Vladimir Lenin’s philosophy was different enough from Marx’s Marxism that the Soviet founder even changed the name of Marx’s political/economical philosophy from Marxism to Marxism-Leninism (101). Blakely notes Lenin’s atheism went far beyond Marx’s ideological atheism to include overthrowing religious movements (279). When adds Marx insisted everything should be questioned, but no one who questioned Lenin’s brand of Soviet Communism survived. Both Lenin and Stalin transferred Marxist ideology into a dogma. When believes the most Marxist aspect of Soviet control was its fall, noting a bureaucratic and secretive government was forced out of preeminence by productive forces, resulting in a change of such production (101).

Today’s Marxist historical scholarship does not focus on revolution. Edwin A. Roberts, in the article “From the History of Science to the Science of History: Scientists and Historians in the Shaping of British Marxist Theory,” agrees. He points out some Marxists simply view Marxism as an application of capitalist laws in reaction to capitalist practices. To others, Marxism is an ideology that draws attention to the strife endured by oppressed people (Roberts 530). When points out Western Marxists use college campuses to study culture through history, literature, sociology, anthropology, and geography (105). David Renton, in “Studying Their Own Insularity? The British Marxist Historians Reconsidered,” explains the theorists themselves often experienced a type of evolution. For example, British Communist historian Edward Thompson’s anti-American ideas softened as he aged. Renton believes the politics of such historians deviated at times from pure Marxism into leftist nationalism. In his early studies, Thompson, in his defense of Britishness, exhibited nationalism. Eric Hobsbawm, another Marxist scholar, never

considered himself a professional revolutionary, even though he was a member of the Communists (Renton 570-573, 577). Thomas F. Mayer, in “In Defense of Analytical Marxism,” writes of the more recent struggle to define Marxism since, in his words, “the movement to supersede capitalism languishes in the doldrum” (416). Mayer believes today’s Marxism is not a specific theory at all. Rather it is a collaborative enterprise between Marxist past and present – an enterprise that focuses upon a revolutionary ethics and science. He describes this collaborative Marxism as, “the effort to create a scientific theory of the practice of human emancipation from economic domination” (Mayer 417).

According to Harold Mah’s article “Marxism’s ‘Truth’: Recent Interpretations of Marxist Theory,” contemporary Marxist scholars admit, because of the failure of capitalism to fall as predicted by Marx and Engels, the political theory of Communism is dead (110-111). Mah points to scholarship that considers this unfulfilled prophecy of Marx’s to be a dilemma for Marxist scholarship. That is, it reflects the irrationality of the theory (111-112). However, as other scholarship also mentioned by Mah points out, the important aspect of Marxian ideology lies in Marx’s humanism. It was this humanism that drove Marx (121). As with any theory, Marxism changes and develops with history and new outlooks (Mah 125). Postmodern Marxist scholarship sees no reason why Marx’s idea about a collapsing capitalism should detract from other aspects of Marxist thought. Grassroots movements championing the cause of the oppressed can take place in democracies (Mah 126-127). Mayer believes even today’s intellectual Marxism is a threat to the bourgeoisie because it seeks to emancipate the poor from oppression (417).

It is important to remember, as Prabhat Patnaik points out in “The Marxist Argument,” the meaning of Marxism is not settled or closed. Marx’s ideas are not the be-all, end-all final word. Marxism is open to all new historical and scientific advancements (34). Patnaik writes,

“His (Marx’s) own specific writings are by no means the last words on the subject; but such an investigation constitutes the basis on which mankind can escape ‘the trap of history’” (34).

Wheen agrees there is no Marxist code that all Marxists have to follow. Although Marx may have discovered a new (and in Wheen’s opinion “brilliant”) philosophy, he did not discover everything about that theory (39). Today’s Marxist scholars seek to interpret the world. Their interpretation recognizes conflict or opposition, particularly economic conflict.

Therefore, contemporary Marxists do not necessarily focus upon Marx’s political theories. At times, they do not agree with Marxist founders on important issues and events. For example, in 1889 the London dock workers initiated a strike. The dock workers were considered the most unfit of British society because they were not full-time employees (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 48). When these temporary employees organized a strike, Friedrich Engels considered the strike the first step in changing the future of these outcasts of society into a working class. Contemporary Marxist scholar Gareth Stedman Jones disagrees. He believes the strike did nothing to help workers in the long run. Even though the strike did form the dock workers into a respectable class of workers and did succeed in gaining them higher pay, it only socialized them into the middle-class beliefs regarding what they should be and accomplish socially. The strike just further divided the so-called fit from the unfit (Himmelfarb *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 51-53). Perhaps Jones’ analysis reflects his own interest in an intellectual interpretation of history, as Christopher Kent points out in “Victorian Social History: Post-Thompson, Post-Foucault, Postmodern” (102).

Contemporary Marxists do question everything including the interpretations and ideas of Marx and Engels (Wheen 101). Today’s Marxists align their research with issues of oppression

both in history and in today's world. This is how the legacy of Karl Marx coincides with current Marxist scholarship. As Civil Rights activist and educator Myles Horton wrote in *The Long Haul: An Autobiography*, "I didn't decide to study Marx. I was just trying to grasp what I was already reading. Marx was always to me a way to understand something else. I was not so much interested in his conclusions, predictions and prophecies as I was in how you go about analyzing and envisioning society" (42).

When I recently wrote a paper over "The Caste of Poverty: Nineteenth-Century Literature and the 1834 British Poor Laws," I came to similar conclusions as that of Horton (Crosby-Hastings). I was drawn to Friedrich Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* because of the author's descriptions of the conditions of the working class. Few authors would put themselves in the place of the poor, would attempt to see through the eyes of those in such conditions, and would describe the feelings these individuals must have felt. As Gilbert Shapiro points out in the article "Recent Developments in Social History," just because one cannot agree with all aspects of Marxist philosophy, that individual cannot deny the existence of a working class that experienced class struggles or class conflicts (151).

However, the idea of a Marxist agenda still looms over such scholarship. Jeff Manza and Michael A. McCarthy write in their introduction to the article "The Neo-Marxist Legacy in American Sociology" that Neo-Marxist ideology seeks to critically challenge orthodox interpretations (156). Social history in general has its basis in what Christopher Kent calls a "Soft Marxism" ("Victorian Social History: Post-Thompson, Post-Foucault, Postmodern" 100). However, as historical research shows, some of those orthodox interpretations of history and society should be challenged. If any theory cannot withstand challenge, questions will mount regarding the validity of that theory. It is important for the Christian advocacy writer and

historian to find the good in historical sources and draw upon that information without necessarily agreeing with the scholar's personal ideology. Marxist scholarship, because of its uniqueness in recognizing the struggles of individuals, must be taken seriously even though this scholarship may cause the Christian advocacy writer to feel discomfort. Perhaps it should be taken seriously because of this discomfort. This discomfort allows writers to analyze their own prejudices and agendas.

Still Reductionist

An important and valid argument against the use of Marxist sources in historical writing is the fact that Marxism is a reductionist theory. Dictionary.com defines reductionism as the theory that a complex event can be thoroughly explained through the simplest mechanism occurring during that event ("Reductionism). In an economic sense, Marxism views history through the lens of class struggle. Marx and Engels began this tradition. Marxism today often still focuses on class reductionism. Martha E. Gimenez, in the article "Marxism, and Class, Gender, and Race: Rethinking the Trilogy," reveals the criticism that Marxism is guilty of focusing so much on class that its adherents even ignore other historical struggles that are based upon race, gender, and even environment (24). David Renton explains another condemnation regarding Marxist historical interpretation is the Marxist predisposition that all workers were radicals or revolutionaries. Some were clearly not. Some even served in the British empire (560). The reductionist, class struggle may not have been as real as Marx envisioned.

Determinism is another idea that coincides with reductionism. Not only is human history reduced to class struggle, that class or the class' environment determines the quality of life for and actions of the victims of that environment. Marx wrote of the workers' "social being that determines their consciousness" (qtd. in Habib, "Problems of Marxist Historiography 4). In fact,

Marx hinted at a hierarchy of needs in his *Communist Manifesto* when he discussed “man’s consciousness changes” with the “conditions of his material existence” (28). This determinism is the basis for Marx’s idea of materialism – material conditions influence who the worker is. When workers are valued, they will see themselves in a positive light. When they are undervalued, they will view themselves in a negative light. This idea corresponds with Marx’s belief that the working class must take power from the exploitative middle class and in his prophecies that such a radical revolution will do away with “class antagonisms” (Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* 28-29). Engels, in *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, describes the condition of the poor worker as one who “is regarded in manufacture simply as a piece of capital for the use of which the manufacturer pays interest under the name of wages” (66). In other works, he condemned a capitalistic system that treated workers as animals. He concluded, “There is, therefore, no cause for surprise if the workers, treated as brutes, actually become such; or if they can maintain their consciousness of man hood only by cherishing the most glowing hatred, the most unbroken inward rebellion against the bourgeoisie in power” (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 277). Thus, it was the industrial system, according to Marx and Engels, that led to what Marxist scholars are condemned for labeling reductionism and determinism.

In the article “Problems of Marxist Historiography,” Ifran Habib writes capitalism set the stage for Marxism. Class consciousness arose from Marxist determinism which tries to prove history prior to and since the beginnings of capitalism is based upon class struggles. He points out class struggles cannot be studied without that separation of classes (4-6). Alan Gilbert, in “Social Theory and Revolutionary Activity in Marx,” describes a narrow view of Marxist economic determinism as being the idea that production and methods of production determine all

other activity in society. Political activity may play a part later, but everything stems from production (521). Habib describes how economic conditions prior to the Industrial Revolution – systems such as feudalism and colonialism – also led to class struggles (“Problems of Marxist Historiography” 6-10). Marx’s opening words in *The Communist Manifesto* – “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” – may lead to questions about reductionism and determinism (9).

The danger of determinism, according to Lawrence M. Meade, in the book *The New Politics of Power: The Nonworking Poor in America*, is that it takes away personal responsibility. In other words, even if the poor do damage themselves with inappropriate or even dangerous behavior, the environment or the system in which they find themselves is to be blamed. This is not empowering to the poor who are sympathized with but not given opportunities for independence (Meade 130-131).

While contemporary Marxist scholars do not completely reject determinism, they have taken the initiative to intentionally change the meaning of just what determinism is. For instance, as Harvey J. Kaye points out in “History and Social Theory: Notes on the Contribution of British Marxist Historiography to Our Understanding of Class,” British Marxist historians such as Maurice Dobb, Christopher Hill, Rodney Hilton, as well as Thompson and Hobsbawm have worked to utilize Marx’s belief that a worker’s means of production influences his social being into a theory of “history from the bottom up” – an approach that recognizes history was not “written” by the lower classes but was “made” by them (168). That is, the lower classes, be they peasants or workers, have something of value to contribute to history (Kaye 168-169). It is the Marxist ties to social history that often lead to criticism of such a historical approach. In fact, as

Meade points out, there are those who consider social history and sociology to be degrading studies (131).

How Reductionism or Determinism Can Assist Christian Advocacy Writers

While the idea that all of history is based upon class struggles is clearly an exaggeration and Christian advocacy writers must work to empower the poor, there is a need to see class struggles for what they are rather than to deny their existence because of such an exaggeration. For example, Alvin Y. So writes in “Class Struggle Analysis: A Critique of Class Structure Analysis,” class struggles exist because of the accumulation of capital (and, one could add, the want for more) which leads to exploitation of the workers. Class divisions first occurred in capitalistic systems. The more capitalistic systems attempt to increase profits by reducing the cost of labor, the more exploitation will occur (So 43-44). This was a problem of industrialization and is, no doubt, a problem in today’s world – a problem that is all too often justified because capital increases. A common goal of Marxist scholars is to reveal history is not just the history of the kings and other leaders (one could also argue it is not just the history of those who profit from capitalism) (Renton 560). History is also the story of the common people – those who bled, sweated, and cried while others prospered, to refer to an analogy from Renton (560). Social historians are to reveal the stories and struggles of the unknown. As Peter N. Stearns promotes in the article “Social History Present and Future,” the stories of ordinary people have much to contribute to history (9). It is the stories of the ordinary people with their ordinary struggles that Christian advocacy writers reveal. It is these very people for whom advocacy writers advocate.

In this sense, Christian advocacy writers are reliant upon a newer, revised version of determinism. Erich Hahn, in “Contemporary Marxist Sociology,” specifies Marxist determinism

relates to family relationships, class, and intellectual life. It reflects the idea that working people's interests are dependent upon the interests of their employers (460-461). That is, workers are forced to give up their interests because of "abnormal" or "unnatural" interests (Hahn 461). Hahn also specifies this determinism can be for a specific time frame. Changes can affect the fervor of the force of determinism (462). While not everything is determined by class, there are important aspects of individuals' lives that are affected by their class – aspects such as how employers treat their employees.

Despite complaints from those who see no value in Marxist scholarship, this re-using of determinism coincides well with the idea that something good can come from a system with which Christian advocacy writers may not be in total agreement. In fact, it is this recognition that lower classes can contribute to historical studies that is the basis on which advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities base their work. Therefore, determinism, in this sense, is of utmost importance to the work of Christian advocacy writers.

Such a realization is the first way Christian advocacy writers can face the problem of determinism in Marxist scholarship. They must realize, as with any scholarly source, the writer does not have to agree with the worldview of the scholar in question to value the research and to understand that something good can come from such research. The Christian advocacy writer does not have to agree that all history is based upon class antagonism to understand that class struggles have existed and do continue to exist. It is easy to see how Hahn's version of determinism is plausible. How often are people's personal lives affected by a bad employment experience (Hahn 460-462)? In fact, the Christian advocacy writer has to recognize such struggles in order to uphold the cause of the oppressed. The Christian advocacy writer should be

willing to point out the struggles that Marxist scholars reveal without necessarily agreeing with their reductionist viewpoint.

Christian advocacy writers must also understand while not everything boils down to class struggle, this struggle is something that has often been ignored in historical research. Regarding criticisms such as those from Gimenez, Michelle E. Martin, in the book *Introduction to Human Services: Through the Eyes of Practice Settings*, points out African Americans and Latinos have long recognized class conflict that whites are just now beginning to understand (197). Perhaps those who have experienced other oppressions such as racism are able to understand injustice when they come into contact with it. Whatever the reason, Martin's scholarship reflects the idea that there does not have to be the either/or mentality. Class struggle has existed throughout history because people are involved in history. Race struggles, gender struggles, environmental struggles have all been present because history is about people and anytime people are involved, struggle can and often does occur. Perhaps the problem that is greater than reductionism or determinism has been the ignoring of such struggles in historical writing. Perhaps this ignoring of such struggles is why reductionism and determinism initially developed. Gimenez states Marxist sociology and its theory of class struggles have not been taken seriously, particularly in the United States. Even those who have historically experienced labor struggles have been analyzed through lenses of race or ethnicity rather than class (Gimenez 25-26). When struggles are ignored, there will be questions and criticism when they are finally revealed.

Contemporary Marxist scholarship also recognizes that other historical struggles do exist, as Karen Brodtkin contends in "Race and Gender in the Construction of Class" (472-473). Such realization has broadened the idea of just what working class struggle is. In fact, more recent

Marxist scholarship has seen the connection between class and race (Brodkin 473). Segregation of workers has been the instigator of the emphasis upon class struggle apart from race and gender struggles. Non-white and female workers often experienced more oppression than white, male workers (Brodkin 474-475).

Perhaps the best advice for Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities would originate in the historical approach of Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm. According to John Foster in “Eric Hobsbawm, Marxism, and Social History,” Hobsbawm believed history should be studied for both its objectivity and for its approach to humanity. The first step is to realize the causes of history and how they are related, then to realize the social purposes of historical events, and lastly to recognize the relationship between societies. He considered this relationship a “web of history” (Foster 167). Such critical thinking is necessary when approaching the topic of oppression and inequality.

Reductionism and determinism can be helpful ideas for the Christian advocacy writer to understand both historical struggles and struggles in today’s world. Determinism, for example, could also be used to explain stereotypes based upon class about workers in today’s world. In an interesting article entitled “What ‘Career Success’ Means to Blue-Collar Workers,” Emilie Hannequin describes the idea that blue-collar workers are not often considered to be career-minded. They have jobs, not careers. Because blue-collar workers are not involved in ascending the white-collar ladder of success, they do not have the status to be considered for studies that examine career success. This forces blue-collar workers to invent their own theories of competence within their own circle (Hannequin 566). Just as workers were undervalued during the Industrial Revolution, so they are often undervalued today.

This idea fits well with the research of Jack Katz in his article “Caste, Class, and Counsel for the Poor.” Katz argues in today’s world, the caste of poverty is based upon moral characteristics thrust upon the poor, personal traits, and, of course, the idea of being valued or undervalued based upon their occupation (254). He promotes the idea that the division of labor being based upon the type of jobs at which individuals work has been the norm since the Industrial Revolution (Katz 259-261). The idea that blue-collar workers do not worry about rising in status could have originated in the identity that has been thrust upon poor workers and that those workers have been forced to accept.

How Early Determinism Affected Marx

Another interesting and important facet of determinism is the fact that it gained prominence through the theology of John Calvin, according to Diarmaid MacCulloch in the book *The Reformation: A History* (244). MacCulloch reports John Calvin’s ideas of eternal predestination were deterministic in nature and Calvin also realized the dread inflicted upon humanity because of this determinism (244). When questioning the Marxist rationale in promoting determinism, it could be noted that Marx’s early years were lived in a society that valued Calvin’s ideas (McLellan 4-5). Much of Marx’s theories appear to have been a reaction to what he saw as evils in society. Alan Gilbert in “Social Theory and Revolutionary Activity in Marx” points out Marx, under the influence of his determinism, viewed the peasant class as a doomed class. However, he organized one of his first Communist assemblies among German peasants (522). Much like Marx’s confusion regarding his opinion of the Jews, such contradictions reflect his idealism and his struggle with how to handle the deterministic ideas that were prevalent in his society. Gilbert explains Marx’s own attempts to provide understanding regarding the oppression and, he hoped, the liberation of the oppressed. Marx also

provided a strategy to assist those who needed this liberation (523). In short, Marx's hope for a revolution of the workers, as he wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, was one that would abolish "eternal truths, it (Communism) abolishes all religion and all morality, instead of constituting them on a new basis; it therefore acts in contradiction to all past historical experiences" (29). Marx was affected by the society with which he was most familiar and, at the same time, he wanted to counter what he viewed as forms of control that hurt the poor.

It is important for the Christian advocacy writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities to not doubt the life experiences of individuals in history or in today's world. It is important to recognize the struggles theories such as reductionism and determinism reveal, without necessarily agreeing with the worldview behind the revelations. History is generally not written by victims of isms, including classism or class struggle. As a white individual, I have never experienced racism. This should not give me the right to doubt that racism exists. Likewise, individuals who have never experienced class struggle should be cautious when saying such struggles do not exist. Those who reveal class struggles are simply revealing another aspect of history and culture – an aspect that is of utmost importance to the Christian advocacy writer who reveals historical, social inequalities and draws comparisons between stories from social history and stories from today's world. As Harvey J. Kaye writes, history and sociology have what he calls a "symbiotic" relationship. That is, a relationship in which historical studies can be enhanced by societal studies and one in which history adds perspective to those societal studies (167).

The Looming Association of Class-Consciousness and Alienation with Marxism

There is a looming association of class consciousness with Marxism and Marxist scholarship. There is also a looming association of alienation. As Karl Marx claimed the working

class was country-less, so Friedrich Engels argued the working class was forced into an alienation from the supposed civilized society. He noted the poor working class even had their own language dialect and customs as well as their own religion and politics (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 279). Philanthropist Hannah More's work *Village Politics* is evidence of this dialectical and customs-related separation as well. Cato Marks, in the article "Let Poor Volk Pass': Dialect and Writing the South-West Poor out of Metropolitan Political Life in Hannah More's *Village Politics* (1792)," describes how More, a loyalist, in her *Village Politics* used what she considered the vulgar dialect of the uneducated masses – those individuals who could not live up to the standards of good society – to convince these masses to avoid succumbing to the rhetoric of Thomas Paine and his writings (43-45). More's friend, the Bishop of London, had encouraged her to write such a work in a style, "as vulgar as heart can wish, but it is only designed for the most vulgar class of readers" (qtd. in Marks 43). (Such references from a reformer of the poor could be why Marx had such a negative opinion of such reform). Perhaps ironically, even Hannah More's *Complete Works* are divided based upon the class of people who would read them (More 19).

This type of division or alienation coincides with Jack Katz's "Caste, Class, and Counsel for the Poor," as indicated in "The Caste of Poverty: Nineteenth-Century Literature and the 1834 British Poor Laws." The idea of such alienation arose from the type of work committed to the lower classes of people – the dirty work or work that others did not want to do. This mindset resulted in an inequality drift and the acceptance of some classes of people being separated from others because of the type of work they performed (Crosby-Hastings 1-2). Engels in his *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, writes,

The brutal indifference, the unfeeling isolation of each in his private interest becomes the more repellent and offensive, the more these individuals are crowded together, within a limited space. And, however much one may be aware that this isolation of the individual, this narrow self-seeking, is the fundamental principle of our society everywhere, it is nowhere so shamelessly barefaced, so self-conscious as just here in the crowding of the great city. The dissolution of mankind into monads, of which each one has a separate essence, and a separate purpose, the world of atoms, is here carried out to its utmost extreme. (69)

This isolation or alienation, according to Engels, was due to the blatant disregard for the feelings of others. It was due to the exploitation of the poor in which, “the stronger treads the weaker under foot... the powerful few... seize everything for themselves” (*The Condition of the Working Class in England* 69). Some historians do dismiss this viewpoint of Engels as simply a bias to promote his revolutionary ideology (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 282). However, Engels was not the only person (nor was Marx) to recognize such alienation.

As I wrote in my own research for “The Caste of Poverty: Nineteenth-Century Literature and the 1834 British Poor Laws,” nineteenth-century authors also recognized such alienation and included it in their works of fiction that advocated for the poor at a time when others were discussing reform (Crosby-Hastings 2-3). Elizabeth Gaskell wrote in her novel *Mary Barton* of the separation of classes. This separation divided the classes with such a divide as separated the rich man and Lazarus in Jesus’ parable (Gaskell 56-57). In a speech before all political parties in which he listed unethical wrongs associated with the 1834 British Poor Laws, Tory reformer Richard Oastler listed as number one the fact that the poor had no right to dwell in the land and

no right to be fed. Number sixteen on his list was the poor were not entitled to have “natural, social, nor domestic feelings” (Oastler, “Damnation! Eternal Damnation to the Fiend-Begotten ‘Courser Food,’ New Poor Law” 19). Although those who had courage to claim alienation of the poor were few and far between, those who did were vocal.

Erin Gilson, in the article “Vulnerability, Ignorance, and Oppression,” claims the prevalent denial of such oppressive alienation could be either a conscious or unconscious action that ensures a privileged society does not lose the privilege afforded to them through capitalism (312). She claims some will claim ignorance of such types of oppression because it is better for that individual or that group if they remain ignorant. This individual or group will, thus, choose to remain willfully ignorant in order to gain benefits. This willful ignorance is a type of self-deception that allows the individual or group to ignore their role in the exploitation of the oppressed (Gilson 313-314). Thomas Haskell points out in his essay “Convention and Hegemonic Interest in the Debate over Antislavery: A Reply to Davis and Ashworth” the idea that workers were not viewed as victims because these workers, unlike slaves, had freedom and, thus, were somewhat responsible for their conditions. In this way, Haskell contends, Marx, with his viewpoint that workers were victims, brought in a new age that most people of the era did not understand (258). Drake agrees that such alienation was, at times, intentional. She writes of how nineteenth-century, entrepreneurial Protestants formed professional organizations, college fraternities, and alumni associations to distinguish themselves from the working class (5). By limiting who was able to become a so-called professional according to the organizations’ professional standards, they placed professional employment on a level that many, especially immigrants and blacks, were not able to reach. This meant the professional middle class were able to acquire jobs that paid more and offered pay raises whereas the working-class individuals,

who were often skilled in areas such as clothes-making, smithing, and machine-building, were given no choice but to take lower-paying factory and assembly-line jobs (Drake 5). These factors could also influence people today who attach a stigma to those who understand the value of Marxist sources when advocating for the poor through exposing historical, social inequalities. It is easier to ignore alienation by convincing oneself those who reveal it are crazy Marxists than it is to investigate the system that many claim is to blame for such alienation.

Why Class Consciousness and Marxist Scholarship Are a Must in Historical, Christian Advocacy Writing

There are those who doubt the necessity of Christians committing to the cause of equality, according to Douglas A. Hicks in the work *Inequality & Christian Ethics*. According to Hicks, some claim focusing upon inequality detracts from the Christian purpose of worshipping God (85). Those who have focused on social inequalities have been accused of attempting to liberalize Christianity rather than focus upon the redemption the church should teach. According to these arguments, to focus upon social inequalities is to establish a society in which God is not needed (Hicks 91).

An 1872 article entitled “Utopias, or Schemes of Social Improvements” brings up the argument that those who strive for reform or means of equalizing through social improvements have reached for a utopia or what the author calls a “nowhere land” (Kaufman 134). The gulf is too great between the rich and the poor for such a utopia to exist (Kaufman 134). Yet even this historic author admits that those reformers and “geniuses” who have sought a so-called utopia have worked toward and succeeded in improving human conditions (Kaufman 136). Though the search for utopia may seem fruitless, the actions of such reformers do bear fruit.

Perhaps this is the great point. As Hicks writes, Christians who work toward equality may not always maintain their distinctness in a community of both Christians and non-Christians that are working toward the same goal. However, “there is a reason to celebrate the fact that good and right actions are being undertaken” (Hicks 93). When Christians worry so much about losing their distinctness that they refuse to counteract injustices, these same Christians lose their faithfulness (Hicks 93).

This is good advice for the Christian advocacy writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities. Marxist scholars may be searching for a utopia – a place that does not exist on earth. However, if that search improves the quality of life or conditions of human beings, those actions should be celebrated. Likewise, if those scholars who search for utopia are revealing oppressions from which other scholars shy away, the Christian advocacy writer should accept that scholarship and use that scholarship in hope that it may aid those who suffer under oppression and may just bring awareness to such suffering. In short, this is the exact reason Christian advocacy writing is important. If Christian advocacy writing can reveal one oppression or improve the conditions for one individual, that advocacy writing has succeeded in its purpose.

Chapter Two – The Methodology

“This, again, was among the fictions of Coketown. Any capitalist there, who had made sixty thousand pounds out of sixpence always professed to wonder why the sixty thousand nearest Hands didn’t each make sixty thousand pounds out of sixpence, and more or less reproached them every one for not accomplishing this little feat.” – Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*⁴

Stereotypes

Stereotypes against the poor abounded during the time of Karl Marx. Marx’s writings were not the only ones to question morality and suggest revolution. Throughout history, the blame for oppression has been placed upon the oppressed. Psychologists consider this a just world mentality. According to Felix Peter, Claudia Dalbert, Nils Kloeckner, and Matthias Raddant in the article “Personal Belief in a Just World, Experience of Teacher Justice, and School Distress in Different Class Contexts,” the just world hypothesis reflects the human need for people to believe the world is just and people get what they deserve in life. The just world hypothesis reflects the human need for stability (1222). The following sections will discuss how the just world hypothesis influenced historical thinking about poverty in comparison to Marx’s ideas. They will also discuss how ideologies such as the Puritan work ethic and American Christianity’s ties to a capitalistic system can be a challenge for Christian advocacy writers who focus upon historical, social inequalities. Through this study, the historical writer can understand some of the reasons why Marxism is such a challenge to American Christian ideals. Such studies as the ones presented in this chapter will challenge the thinking of historical writers.

⁴ Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*. Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1995, 92-93.

Historical Viewpoints about the Poor

According to Himmelfarb's research, American founding father Benjamin Franklin decried the care the reformers took for the poor in England. He wrote in 1766 of how England established too many provisions for the sick, lame, poor, and aged that "In short, you offered a premium for the encouragement of idleness, and you should not now wonder that it has had its effort in the increase of poverty" (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 5). Franklin was not alone in believing poverty was simply a sign of laziness. John Locke, whose writing was influential upon the fathers of the American Revolution, believed what he called sloth could only be remedied by whipping and other forms of harsh discipline. When Locke served as Commissioner of Trade in England, he suggested schools for paupers should be formed. In these schools, children and their mothers would be put to work to be taught the evils of debauchery. Discipline for sloth would include whipping, forced service in the military, and forced labor (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*, 25).

Adam Smith's mercantile system presented the poor as individuals who wasted the nation's resources with their need for relief. The workhouses and forced labor may allow them to contribute something back to society (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 25-26). Smith, in his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, even narrows down the value of propagation of the poor to correspond with how much money the city could make from child labor. The value of children was determined by the wealth of their parents (36). By developing an economic system in which wealth was king and statistics would not lie, Smith emphasized monetary worth of individuals. The orders of society were based upon what Himmelfarb calls "the nature of income" rather than "position in a hierarchy"

(*The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 54). Poverty was not the enemy according to Smith. Rather, the enemy of society was the inability to work and produce (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 78). Perhaps nineteenth-century author Charles Dickens' quote from the novel *Hard Times* is appropriate to describe this economic mindset:

Nobody was ever on any account to give anybody anything, or render anybody help without purchase. Gratitude was to be abolished, and the virtues springing from it were not to be. Every inch of the existence of mankind, from birth to death, was to be a bargain across a counter. And if we didn't get to Heaven that way, it was not a politico-economical place, and we had no business there (226).

Smith was not alone in his use of cold statistics rather than real circumstances to determine levels of poverty, quality of life, and the poor's contribution to society. A follower of Smith, Thomas Robert Malthus viewed population control – or, rather control of the propagation of the poor – as the solution to poverty. He promoted the idea if poor people would simply put off having children until they reached middle-class status, the problem of poverty would take care of itself (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 119). He proclaimed the poor were the “cause of their own poverty” (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 119). They were the cause of their own poverty, as Jim Horner points out in “Henry George on Thomas Robert Malthus: Abundance vs. Scarcity,” because of the “vice of promiscuous intercourse” (qtd. in Horner 596). Horner explains Malthus' theory that human systems are not to blame for poverty or other such ills. There is no reason to believe all people should share in economic equality. The salvation of the poor would only come from obedience to governmental authorities and in controlling their own natural, sexual impulses

until they were of higher economic status (597). Malthus was strictly opposed to birth control, stating, “They (the poor) might escape the evils of dependency on the dole. But they would not develop the middle-class habits of self-denial, self-discipline, and striving which are the keys to bourgeois achievement” (qtd. in Horton 597). However, as he wrote in *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, all animals have an inclination to expand beyond what is provided for them in terms of care and nourishment. The only solution to the human instinct to reproduce is to consistently check the human population (2).

The two types of checks Malthus proposed were the preventative check and the positive check. The preventative check is humankind checking itself, understanding that they do not have the money to have many children, and preventing such reproduction. This may result, Malthus wrote, in a temporary unhappiness, but it works to prevent a greater evil (7). The positive checks Malthus defined as, “any degree (to) contribute to shorten the natural duration of human life” (8). He then listed, “occupations, severe labour and exposure to the seasons, extreme poverty, bad nursing of children, large towns, excesses of all kinds, the whole train of common diseases and epidemics, wars, plague, and famine” (Malthus 8). The very defining of these latter checks as positive connotes Malthus’ theory that such oppressions as poverty and severe labor could, in fact, be good for society. After all, such evils would rid that society of the burden of the poor.

Thomas Paine, also a follower of Adam Smith, had a more compassionate outlook toward the poor in some ways. He realized something was dreadfully wrong, “When in countries that are called civilized, we see age going to the work-house, and youth going to the gallows, something must be wrong with the system of government” (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 97). Unfortunately, the poor were not Paine’s concern. His revolution focused on the evils of a monarchical government rather than on the evils of poverty

and class struggles. Even though Paine at times did seem to recognize class struggles, he focused upon the aristocracy rather than the industrialist (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 97-98). Perhaps he idealistically trusted in people's goodness – "When the rich plunder the poor his rights, it becomes an example to the poor to plunder the rich of his property... When the rich protect the rights of the poor, the poor will protect the property of the rich" (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 98). The poor still did not have a powerful advocate in Paine. Paine believed wealth would be the savior of the poor (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*, 108).

Henry Mayhew published a series of articles, beginning in 1849, that shed light on poverty. These articles have been hailed as doing more to reveal statistics about poverty than any other. Mayhew was a journalist whose work often focused on radical political ideas. Though he did write about social issues, including the conditions of the poor in England, his primary concern, because writing was his livelihood, was with gaining readers. The condition of the poor was a public concern, so Mayhew tackled that topic in his writing (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 312-313). It was research for an article on a cholera outbreak in a tenement in London that inspired Mayhew to take on a series about the conditions of those in poverty. The hope was that this research could convince the government to provide more aid (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 312-315).

In his work, Mayhew sought to analyze poverty by dividing the poor of London into classes of honest poor and dishonest poor. The honest poor were further divided into the striving and the disabled. He further divided the poor into three phases – those who would work, those who could not work, and those who would not work. Of those who would work, the journalist further divided them into those who did receive relief and those who did not. Of those who did

not receive relief, he divided them into two more categories – those who were thoughtless in how they spent their money and those who did not receive enough pay. Even though he clearly sympathized with those living in waste-infected, dilapidated slums, he was determined not to automatically fault the greediness of capitalists (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 316). He wrote, “Their (the poor’s) want of prudence, want of temperance, want of energy, want of cleanliness, want of knowledge, and want of morality, will each honestly be set forth” (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 316). Mayhew recognized the enormous amount of money spent by charities and philanthropists and believed such organizations improved society. He conducted his own research which he then organized to mirror the statistics he gathered. His writing reflected the poverty of London’s poor and wealth of London’s rich (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 318).

An example of Mayhew’s work and statistics can be found in an 1860 newspaper article entitled “Henry Mayhew and the Silk Weavers” in which Mayhew, through a speech he presented, described the rise in poverty and crime over the decades of the 1800s. He even stated, “I am told that pauperism has decreased – that crime has decreased. I deny it. I take the last ten years, and I say that since free trade commenced, the crime of the country has been greater than it was before” (461). Perhaps what Mayhew’s work proves most of all is that even though Mayhew did not intend to become an advocate for the poor nor did he denounce industrial capitalism, this system was, at least in part, responsible for the poverty much of London experienced. In this same speech recorded in “Henry Mayhew and the Silk Weavers,” he admitted, “I commenced my inquiries into the state of the working classes, being at the time an inveterate Freetrader. I began these inquiries among men who gave me the first shock... The

conclusion I arrive at is, that there is a system which degenerates the working classes from their natural positions” (460).

Late Victorian social reformer Charles Booth had his own ideas about what reform should look like. His in-depth research about the poor was unique in that it focused both on the personal components and the impersonal components surrounding poverty. He was also the first person to speak of what he called a line of poverty. This line of poverty reflected a rough estimate of how much money individuals could make and still be considered poor (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 102-103). This idea of a poverty line allowed for a separation of classes based upon how much money each group made. This line allowed Booth to see who was poor and who was very poor (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 107).

Even with all of Booth's studies and classifying, he still believed in groups of poor that were fit and groups of poor that were unfit. According to his calculations, the most unfit class of poor included those who were unable to work due to physical, mental, or moral problems (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 123). He considered this group “material from which paupers are made” (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 123). His solution was what he called a “State slavery” (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 125). That is, those in this material of pauperism class would be convicted of failure to succeed in living an independent life. The individuals would be moved to industrial houses where they would be servants of the state. If these individuals refused the state industrial house, they would be sentenced to the workhouse. He would not withhold the freedom to produce children from these poor individuals. He hoped the children could be trained to support

themselves. Booth viewed his plan as a completion of what he deemed to be socialism – a necessary socialism that would expel those people who were pulling society down. Once this socialistic expulsion was complete, individuals would be more successful (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 124-125).

In his work *Life and Labour of the People in London, Final Volume*, Booth wrote of four areas in which the relief system of his time contained difficulties or needed improvement. The first needed improvement was in individual responsibility (210). As with previous reformers, Booth wrote of individuals assuming “rascality” and taking on “moral laxity” (Booth 210). Hinting at his idea for socialistic slavery, he proclaimed the need for legal action to awaken the conscience of the evil-doer. It would, of course, be the citizens of London who would enact the proper punishment on the evil poor. (Booth 211). He writes, “The owner of a house, if he be given, and if he accept, his proper place, will be but the medium by which punishment will fall on the evil-doer and order be enforced” (Booth 211).

The second improvement needed was improvement of private corporations, which Booth admitted were more selfish because of their want for advancement, than the individuals. Just as with individual responsibility, the public, perhaps in an ultimate form of peer pressure, should be influential in causing the private corporations to make better decisions. In fact, Booth wrote of the propensity of private corporations to become abusive if the public persuasion were not strong enough (212).

The third difficulty according to Booth arose from those who were attempting to assist the poor. That is, the next area of improvement was in the area of reform. Booth brought up an interesting point that charities, churches, and philanthropists were all too often too eager “to cry, ‘I am the way,’ and unable to admit any other possible salvation” (212). Public admiration of

such relief agencies was the cause of or at least promoted such a zealous mindset (Booth 212).

While Booth makes a good point, the reader is left to believe he referred to his socialistic slavery as the other means of salvation.

Lastly, Booth referred to needed improvement in the administration. He looked to a democratic, local government as a solution to economic problems. He wrote he had seen steps in the right direction, such as with the establishment of the 1888 London County Council which encouraged the city to take responsibility. Only time would tell if the government would continue working toward solutions. Not only this, but London must hold on to its status as the economic leader of the world, even if that meant monopolizing the economic sphere (Booth 212-214).

Marx's Retaliation

It is easy to see by studying the works of reformers of the Industrial Revolution that while Karl Marx was radical in his Communistic ideals, he was, perhaps, not quite as radical as one assumes when his ideas are studied in the context of the nineteenth century. In the midst of reformers who considered the poor a nuisance at best and derelicts who needed to be purged from society at worst, Marx chose to side with the poor workers. His anger at the treatment of the poor caused him to demand a revolution of the workers. Even what he labeled the “dangerous class” – the lowest level of the poor – could “be swept into the movement by the proletarian revolution” (Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* 20). Is it any wonder, Marx desired a working-class revolution that would “point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat” (Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* 22)? In an 1849 letter, Marx wrote of wreaking vengeance upon the bourgeoisie (Engels and Marx, “Full Text of: Letters to Americans, 1845-1895: A Selection”).

Christopher Kent writes in “Presence and Absence: History, Theory, and the Working Class” of how both Marx and Engels were attempting to understand the world in which they lived – a world that was run by capitalism (437). Engels was an immigrant to England and insider in the capitalistic system because he worked for his capitalist father. He saw no hope for the future in such a system – at least no hope for the workers. Marx was an outsider and wrote to prove such a system could not flourish (Kent, “Presence and Absence: History, Theory, and the Working Class” 437). In the minds of Marx and Engels, revolution was the only way to counter the evils they witnessed within a capitalistic system. As Ifran Habib points out in “Inequalities: A Social History,” when force is implemented in employment, exploitation and inequalities will naturally arise (4-5). In Marx’s mind, the way to counter such force was with another, equally powerful force.

Seeing Both Sides of the Debate over Capitalism – American Historiography

Gertrude Himmelfarb writes in *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*, Friedrich Engels brought with him revolutionary ideas about industrialism when he arrived in Manchester, England, to work as a partner in his father’s textile business. It was his experiences with German radicals that led him to be a Communist and a radical by the time he arrived in England. His Communistic, revolutionary outlook is reflected in his writings that would become *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (270-274). In short, Engels’ work in the industrial capitalist system did not convince him of the evils of capitalism. He used the system he found himself in to prove ideas in which he already believed. Himmelfarb writes, “Engels wanted to portray the workers in that condition of destitution and degradation which was a prelude not to reform but to revolution, a revolution to restore the humanity that the present system denied to them” (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*,

276). The author does concede that Engels was honest about his purpose. He admitted that he viewed the middle class as guilty of committing “social murder” and viewed the “class struggle” he presented as a type of “social war” (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 275).

Francis When gives a gentler interpretation of Engels’ motives. When notes Marx knew little about the effects of capitalism. Engels, as the son of a German cotton manufacturer who owned businesses in Manchester, England, was able to gather information about the workers who worked in such mills. Engels traveled to Manchester with the idea of working in his father’s business and of monitoring how the working class worked and lived. The result of his observations was *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (39).

While Himmelfarb may express legitimate concerns about the agenda of Marxist theorists, or it could be just the slant the historian has about Marxist scholarship, it is also important to examine the reasons behind capitalistic thought – the ideology opposed by Marx and Engels. Just as the ideology behind capitalism should not cause the Christian, advocacy writer to reject everything that originates in a capitalistic mindset, so the Christian advocacy writer should not reject everything that originates in a Marxist mindset because of disagreements with the theory.

American historiography, itself, is not as pure as one would hope. Patrick J. Gurney, in the article “Historical Origins of Ideological Denial: The Case of Marx in American Sociology (Between 1895 and 1920),” points to scholarship that suggests early American sociologists (those who produced scholarship between 1895 and 1920) attempted to show cooperation between capitalists and laborers to downplay class conflict under a capitalistic system. Because Marx fell outside the parameters, these sociologists downplayed his influence. In fact, most

sociologists from this time ignore Marx. Of the few scholars that do mention him, most offer negative suggestions of him (Gurney 196-197). Most scholars condemn Marx in arguments that promote his theories as unscientific or deterministic or because they object to his ideas about class struggle, psychology, the ownership of private property, or individualism (Gurney 198). Most arguments surrounding the belief that Marx was unscientific arise from the opinion that socialism, as a whole, is a political theory rather than a sociological examination. Thus, Marxism is political rather than scientific (Gurney 198-199).

Regarding determinism, Franklin H. Giddings and Charles A. Ellwood, who were early presidents of the American Sociological Society, argued Marx placed too much emphasis on economical struggles (Gurney 199). When the historian remembers the research regarding Marx's early life, it is ironic Ellwood's major criticism of Marx was that Marx had created "a dogma as rigid as Calvin's" (qtd. in Gurney 199). Ellwood believed Marx placed too much emphasis upon economic conditions. Because Marx's ideas originated in what Ellwood called protest, his theory did not allow for an examination of all sides. Such a focus led Marx, in the opinion of the sociologists, to be too pessimistic and radical (Gurney 199).

No doubt, the same arguments applied to Marx's ideas about class alienation. Ellwood denied such a struggle existed, proclaiming there was much more cooperation than conflict between the middle and working classes (Gurney 199). Edward A. Ross believed there were just as many struggles within the same classes as there were across different classes. He thus denied Marx's theory of animosity between classes. He also criticized Marx's ideas of proletarian uprising because the proletariat was too weak to challenge capitalistic systems (Gurney 199). Lester F. Ward claimed assisting the working class would destroy a natural development from one class to the next. Perhaps Ward's argument that individuals with lesser abilities should not

control the establishment (his idea of Communism and even less-radical socialism) reflects the mindset that the lower classes were subordinate to the upper classes (Gurney 199).

Another argument insisted Marx ignored the idea of psychological struggle in favor of the concept of economic struggle. Giddings, for example, believed any social change could only be understood from a psychological perspective. Ellwood rejected the idea that economic struggle led to psychological struggle within the individual. Believing there was a tie between the two struggles was nothing short of ignorance, according to Ellwood (Gurney 199-200).

Perhaps the argument most akin to a capitalistic mindset was that of Ross. Ross believed any socialistic mindset was in opposition to the individualism, with its roots in the ownership of private property, that was promoted within a capitalistic system (Gurney 200). William G. Sumner went so far as to herald a belief that assisting the needy contradicted nature's laws – the laws that encouraged competition and rewarded the fittest (Gurney 200). Gurney writes, “American sociology was based upon the concept of capitalism. Therefore, any theory that deviated from a capitalistic system was rejected in interest of promoting private property” (196). Thus, belief in private property prevented American sociologists from seeking to understand other, social aspects of Marx's theories.

It is, perhaps, somewhat ironic that the idea of private property was a struggle even for the staunchest capitalists. For example, it is interesting to note that Marx was not alone in his ideas of blaming poverty and class struggles on the ownership of private property. Thomas Paine wrote in a 1797 pamphlet that poverty only existed because of what he called civilized life as opposed to natural life. It was civilization that divided people. This divide could only be mended by the redistribution of private property to both the affluent and the “wretched” (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 93).

Gurney concludes early American sociologists felt animosity toward Marx because of their own beliefs in capitalism. There could be no admission of flaws in a capitalistic system. The system must be viewed by Americans as the superior theory. There had to be a different way to explain inequalities. He believes examining the history of American sociology will allow sociologists and historians to understand the thinking in American sociology today (Gurney 200-201). Even Himmelfarb, according to Stearns, wrote with the purpose of condemning social history with her claims that this type of historical interpretation was attempting to destroy the fact that a study of history should uplift youth by sharing stories from the heroes of eras past (9). While Marx, Engels, and today's Marxist scholars may have an agenda behind their writings, anti-Marxist scholars have had an agenda of their own. American writers are often taught history through a nationalistic lens of capitalism and the theories of capitalist thinkers. The Christian advocacy writer cannot be afraid to seriously consider challenges to that ideology.

The Spirit of Capitalism

This investigation will now turn its attention to a study of the concept of free trade and how it relates to Americanism and capitalism in order to understand why even today's Christians are tempted to equate poverty with laziness and theories that are skeptical of capitalism with the antithesis of Christianity. This is a study that non-Marxist scholars often ignore because the research casts a negative light on capitalism, even if such an omission detracts from historical interpretation. Henry Heller points out in *The Birth of Capitalism: A 21st Century Perspective* that non-Marxist historians often ignore how the Industrial Revolution interrupted life for the common workers. They do not recognize how the workers were, in fact, exploited. According to Heller, this is because non-Marxist historians focus on the consumption of materials produced

during the Industrial Revolution (money as a basis) rather than on the conditions the workers lived in day after day (176-177).

Marxist scholarship recognizes class struggles that other historical interpretations all too often do not. For the Christian advocacy writer, exploitation and oppression cannot be ignored. People often find themselves in situations that contradict their beliefs or, as Costas Panayotakis points out in his writing about determinism, in situations that influence their thinking (125). Their opposition to a mindset that counters their belief system must not cause them to ignore historical facts or societal evils. They must challenge their own cognitive dissonance. Marxism arose as a response to industrial capitalism. Himmelfarb points out, there were numerous reformatory responses to the exploitation of the working class. Many of these reforms attempted to ease oppression on a case-by-case basis using methods that included education and alleviation of the devastating effects of poverty (*The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 1-23). Only Marxism, however, demanded a deeper answer to the problem of the poverty among the working class by introducing the ideas of class consciousness and alienation of the poor. This class consciousness was a reaction to ideas that had been psychologically engrained through the Puritanical mindset behind the industrial system (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 24, 241-242, 251).

Advocates of the Poor Workers

An 1881 *Christian Recorder* article simply stated, “Communism possesses a language which every people can understand. Its elements are hunger, envy, and death” (1). Perhaps ironically, these are the very elements some, including Marx and Engels, believed were induced by industrialism. Whereas other economic philosophers may have taken steps to alleviate the pain of poverty, these steps did not go far enough for Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Karl Marx

once wrote, “Philosophers have so far interpreted the world. The point is to change it” (qtd. in Habib, “Problems of Marxist Historiography” 3). Marx and Engels, though often condemned, attempted to change what they deemed the errors of a capitalistic system. Communism, Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, represented the proletariat (22). Engels wrote in the introduction to *The Communist Manifesto* that Communism was the only working-class movement. Even socialism was a middle-class movement (6). The pair, however, were not the first to speak out against capitalistic exploitation. There were others who revealed such exploitation and condemned the system that brought such oppression. As George R. Boyer relates in “The Historical Background of the Communist Manifesto,” the capitalism of 1837-1848 inspired the theory of Communism but the conclusion of Marx and Engels was not radically different than other sociologists of the time (151).

Marx and later Marxist scholars are not the only ones to decry the free trade system as anti-Christian. To refer again to Tory reformer Richard Oastler, in an 1833 pamphlet, Oastler decried the capitalists who would not help the poor and equated them to the biblical Barabbas (“Richard Oastler on Tory Principles and Their Relevance to Factory Reform”). Oastler, perhaps, stands alone in his ideas. However, he, like Marx and Engels, stood alone in recognizing not just the statistics of poverty but the treatment of individuals. Oastler wrote a series of seven letters to the people of England in which he decried the validity of a free trade system. In one such letter, he objected to the idea that Adam Smith had proven the benefits of the system (Oastler, “Free Trade Not Proven” 4). He did not go so far as to say that all miseries were due to free trade, but he pointed out its supporters should admit it was not as wholesome and beneficial as they proclaimed (Oastler, “Free Trade Not Proven” 5). In another letter in the work, Oastler proclaimed his belief that free trade has been established on a “foundation of selfishness, and that

its fruits will be evil” (“Free Trade Not Proven” 11). However, because he believed in fairness, he believed it should be given a chance. He was confident its results would speak for themselves (Oastler, “Free Trade is Not Proven” 11). In a unique twist, Oastler, as recorded in “Richard Oastler on Tory Principles and their Relevance to Factory Reform, 1833,” promoted support of the poor as a way to counter anarchy. Standing against oppressive industrialists would bring peace to all citizens (2). He even promoted the taxing of machines owned by major factories but not the machines of individuals attempting to make a living on their own. These individuals who worked for themselves, the entrepreneurs, attempted to keep their children from becoming victims of the factory system (Oastler, “Richard Oastler on Tory Principles and Their Relevance to Factory Reform 1833 2).

The question then remains, if non-capitalistic sentiment was well-known in the nineteenth century and the ideas of Marx and Engels were not as extremely radical as is often believed today, where do these ideas that impose a stigma upon Marxist scholarship originate? In an interesting interpretation, William J. Byron, in the article “Christianity and Capitalism: Three Concepts from the Tradition, Three Challenges to the System,” discusses the ideological differences between Christianity and capitalism. In fact, Byron argues that capitalism is an ideology. Christianity is not. He bases this on the idea that “ideologies are always partial; Christianity is comprehensive” (311). The author explains capitalism is based upon a system of ideas that emphasize private ownership of property, decisions being made regarding that private property, and the free market system as the vehicle for the control of society based upon the uses of this private property (Byron 311). Many, however, have joined the two philosophies into one so that critiquing the economic theory connotes critiquing Christian doctrine. The following section of this thesis will approach this stigma from the perspective of an American, Christian

scholar. American, Christian scholars have been taught the value of capitalism, not only as an economic system but as the Christian way.

Capitalanity

In Colossians 3.23, Paul encouraged the Christians in the church at Colossae, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters” (*New International Version*). While this particular verse can be used as an encouragement and even an exhortation to put one’s best foot forward, this particular verse and others like it have been used throughout the years as a weapon against those who lived in poverty or those who have been oppressed by their human masters. This verse was used as a weapon against the slaves, who were kept in line with both physical chains and mental ones (Noll 78). It was also used against the poor.

According to “Christian Views on Human Labor: 1500-1860: From Martin Luther to Samuel Smiles” by Joseph Fletcher and Joseph F. Fletcher, the Reformation that began the Protestant religion also reflected a transition from feudalism to mercantilism, a system that would eventually lead to full-scale capitalism. When Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, wrote of religion and liberty that would challenge the pope, he referred to Protestantism and free enterprise (94). If Luther promoted the connection between Protestantism and a free enterprise system, another Protestant reformer, John Calvin, perfected it. Michelle E. Martin writes of how the Bible, as viewed through a Calvinistic theology or interpretation, was used to determine just who God’s chosen or elect people were. God’s elect people were those to whom God elected salvation. Based upon Calvinistic theology, there were certain characteristics God’s saved would naturally exhibit, since they were the people destined for heaven. Hard work and good morals were the epitome of such characteristics (Martin 23). As Martin records, this

idea coincides with John Calvin's own ideas that "one was called to a particular vocation and should work tirelessly as a sign of faithfulness" (23). Thus, wealth became an accepted outward sign of spiritual salvation (Martin 24). Fletcher and Fletcher compare Luther's ideas of moderate living with Calvinistic ideas that industry was a sign of God's election. Whereas Luther saw value in the process of work, a discipline he believed was necessary due to man's fall, Calvinists saw wealth, whether it came by their own hands or the hands of someone else under them, as the ultimate evidence of God's election. Those with the most money not only won worldly possessions also but reflected God's blessing (Fletcher and Fletcher 97-98).

These ideas are based on the theory of Max Weber, as presented in his book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Weber writes of Calvinism as a theology that promotes human activity as the way to glorify God. Unlike other theologies, Calvinism taught predestination (an idea that perhaps purposely set it apart from the evils of Catholicism, according to Weber). That is, that individuals are elected by God to salvation and it is the responsibility of these individuals to prove their salvation by following commandments. This working out of salvation allowed Calvinists to feel secure that they were, indeed, God's elect. Outward signs allowed Calvinists to distinguish the elect from the damned. Good works allowed the Calvinist to do away with the fear of not being elected by God since simply wanting to change one's fate from the fate of the condemned to the fate of the elect would accomplish nothing (Weber 98-115). According to Weber, this led to an attitude of "God helps those who help themselves" (115). The idea of pulling oneself up by one's own bootstraps allowed Calvinists to feel, in fact, elected to salvation (Weber 115). This idea that work and wealth

proved salvation allowed Calvinists to separate themselves from the spiritual hierarchy of Catholicism and its emphasis upon sacraments (Weber 121).⁵

It is also interesting to note that the Calvinism explained by Weber demanded isolation in salvation. That is, the elect should shut out the rest of the world in order to reach heaven (Weber 107). In this way Calvinism, at least theoretically, taught the seeking of wealth to be useless. Heaven is what matters. However, work rather than leisure is what pleases God (Weber 156-157). It is a short distance from this philosophy to that of Benjamin Franklin that “time is money” (Weber 158). Even though Calvinism did not promote the seeking of personal gain, it is immoral to refuse a calling from God that will lead to monetary wealth. One should view such wealth as wealth for God. Wealth is only dangerous if it leads to idleness (Weber 162-163). Contrary to Catholic thought, the wish to be poor is not godly. Begging is sloth and a sin against one’s brothers. Because God calls individuals to different professions, a division of labor would naturally follow and, thus, be God-ordained (Weber 163). The self-sufficient middle class reflects God’s ultimate blessing because God rewards obedience (Weber 163). Not only did Calvinism consider the division of labor a gift from God, John Calvin taught the poor and the poor laborers remained poor because they would lose their devotion to God if they were to gain wealth. That is, they were only devoted because of their poverty (Weber 177). In this way, the teachings of Calvin and later Calvinists promoted a hierarchy of workers and of classes in which the poor were distant from God and God’s favor rested upon the rich. Their wealth proved His favor.

⁵ It is important to note Calvin’s theology evolved with time and interpretations of Calvinism into the Puritanism referred to in this thesis. The basis of such Calvinism was found in Calvin’s theology, but the ideas associated with the Calvinism described here developed over time (Martin 23).

The point at which many connect capitalism and Christianity is in the idea of stewardship. Corporations can (and it could be argued should) be run on the basis of stewardship (Byron 312). Nothing can determine, however, if the private property of company and corporation will be run on Scriptural principles or on the principles of self-interest. Byron believes many, if not most companies, ignore the biblical ideals and run on the basis of monetary profits. It is, thus, up to Christians to change the system. They can only change the system through justice rather than charity (Byron 313-315). In another example of the Protestant versus Catholic opinion regarding work and free trade, Byron states Pope John Paul II addressed this justice when he wrote people should not be divided into classes by the type of work they perform. Work should be done because it is good for man not because man is good for the type of work – a idea that is prevalent in capitalistic systems even today. People must be respected over property if the capitalistic system is to be a just, Christian system (Byron 318-321).

American Mindset

A June 2018 *Christianity Today* article questioned the joining of Christianity and patriotism in American churches. In “Make Worship Patriotic Again? The Top 10 Songs for Fourth of July Services,” Kate Shellnut writes of the traditional justification of love of America being linked with a love of God. The patriotic idea of God favoring America began as early as the Revolutionary War when God was credited for giving the revolutionaries victory over the British and, thus, favoring America as a nation. Sermons of the era also stressed God’s favor upon America (Shellnut). Such equating of patriotism to loving God perhaps strengthens the just world theory as it relates to the integrity of America’s economic system.

Marx wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, “Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America has paved the way” (10). In many ways, Marx was

correct. Unlike Germany, England, and other countries, America was founded as a capitalistic country. As Mark A. Noll writes in *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Puritanism (a Calvinistic religious system) was closely linked with Republicanism. He points out both ideologies recognized virtue as what he calls a “negative quality” (Noll 117). That is, to Puritans, virtue was the lack of sin. To Republicans, virtue was the lack of corruption. Puritans yearned for a society in which sin was conquered and people stood resolutely against it coming back. Republicans wanted to create a society free from what they deemed political corruption in which the people stood against any possibility of oppressive government. Both hoped for their versions of righteousness and freedom and were willing for revolution to bring that righteousness and freedom (Noll 117-118). Noll explains a Puritan ethic set the stage for political, American patriotism. Both Puritans and Patriots viewed the past as a battle between good and evil (Noll 118).

Referring back to the information from Himmelfarb regarding Benjamin Franklin’s reaction to the British attempts at poverty reform, it is interesting to note Weber describes Franklin as being filled with the spirit of capitalism which was based upon the Puritan idea of self-discipline (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*, 5; Weber 65 and 180). This Puritan self-discipline was seen in the middle classes, according to capitalistic thought (Weber 180). Is it any wonder Franklin bemoaned, “In short, you (England) offered a premium for the encouragement of idleness, and you should not now wonder that it has had its effect in the increase of poverty” (qtd. in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 5). Himmelfarb notes, fifty years later Benjamin Franklin saw the same types of reforms in America that he had seen in England. He wrote he was thankful that in America, “we

begin now to see our error, and, I hope, shall reform it” (qtd in Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 5).

Max Weber went so far as to compare Protestant parents and Catholic parents as another example to prove the differences in thought between those affected by Puritanism and those who held to Catholic beliefs. He writes in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* of how Protestants (based upon their belief in the Puritan work ethic) criticize Catholics for their self-discipline while Catholics criticize Protestants for materialism (40). Noll describes the conflict between Americanism and Catholicism in early American history – a conflict that had ties to Puritan views of Catholic corruption (45). America had been founded as a country of Protestant freedom and Catholics faced discrimination and persecution (Noll 208-210). Noll records Catholicism became more accepted by 1900 (210-212). However, this does not mean there has not been continued conflict between the American way and the Catholic way, as two modern Presidential elections have shown and later research in this particular study will reflect.

There are other examples in today’s American culture that reflect America’s ties to mindsets that value individuals based upon how much wealth they possess or devalue them because of a lack of such wealth. For example, it is difficult to not see parallels between Malthus’ idea of population control, of the poor’s adversity to work, and of their habits of squandering money and the idea of the welfare queen made popular in America in the 1980s (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 106-107; Martin 35). As Martin points out, in today’s society, personal responsibility, which is a good thing, is often emphasized in welfare reform movements to the detriment of empathy and understanding. She writes, “While individual responsibility is certainly a trait worth achieving, it can also be a ‘code word’ for philosophies that scapegoat the poor and minimize long-standing social inequality”

(38). Such scapegoating, unfortunately, has a long history. This history while not necessarily based upon a capitalistic mindset has, perhaps, used capitalism as an excuse for its lack of empathy for those who are suffering and oppressed.

Weber writes of how the spirit of capitalism is tied to the Puritan ethics, specifically, the Protestant work ethic of Calvinistic thought. As Puritans valued the ethic that brought forth wealth, so early capitalists valued labor because it makes money (180-181). Capitalism, according to Weber, is based upon the idea of the dominance of humans making money.

Benjamin Franklin used Proverbs: 22.29 – “Do you see someone skilled in their work? They will serve before kings; they will not serve before officials of low rank” (*New International Version*) – as a justification of this mindset (53). As Puritanical Calvinism promoted the ideal of God blessing the elect, so capitalism promotes the selection of the economic fittest to dominate those who are less fit (Weber 55).

Kenneth Hudson and Andrea Coukos describe how religious ideology can intertwine with cultural beliefs. In the article “The Dark Side of the Protestant Ethic: A Comparative Analysis of Welfare Reform,” they write of how early Calvinists believed God calls individuals to their jobs. Those who do their jobs well will avoid falling into sin and, thus, will be blessed by God. As long as individuals continue to be diligent in both work and spending, they will automatically prosper. Those who do not prosper, then, must be doing something wrong. They must be ungodly because they are not working diligently enough to prosper (Hudson and Coukos 3-4). Hudson and Coukos write of how these ideas have become engrained in culture. The ideology contained in the Puritan or Protestant work ethic has become so inherent in our society that even though the religious connotations have been excluded in interest of forming a secular society, the mindset toward the poor is just as strong (4). It is this spirit of the Protestant work ethic that is

the basis of both the nineteenth-century resistance to governmental programs that sought to relieve the poor and to present-day criticism of welfare programs (Hudson and Coukos 1-2).

Diarmaid MacCulloch in *The Reformation: A History* disagrees with Weber's connection between the Puritan work ethic and capitalism. He argues a shift in economic thinking to the power of wealth has political roots, particularly the politics of the Ottoman Empire. He also points out England was not Calvinistic but was dominated by a state church (605-606). He also points to the idea that Reformed Calvinists and other Protestants built more communities than they disrupted. Therefore, the ties that bind Calvinism and the individualism associated with capitalism are limited (606).

While MacCulloch's arguments are persuasive, it is important to remember the historical lenses through which history is interpreted. MacCulloch is presenting history through a political lens. His social lens is affected by the political information. However, such political bias does not allow for the power of an ideology. Hudson and Coukos believe in such an ideological power. They write, "The distinction between the influence of Protestantism, generally, and English Puritanism, specifically, helps to explain why English and American hostility to public aid is not shared by other Protestant countries on the European mainland" (5). Martin points out the idea that monetary or material success is the result of good morals was an easy evolution from the principles presented in the Puritan work ethic (24). The notion that the poor needed to remain poor to get right with God developed into ideas that poverty was due to depraved practices (Martin 24). This is particularly true of how the ideology affected the American mindset. Mark A. Noll argues "the Puritan moral vision was so strenuous that almost all Americans since have been forced to react to it in some way. Throughout the mid-nineteenth

century, Puritan morality was widely thought to provide the foundation for the great success of the United States” (40).

The Puritan work ethic is particularly powerful when that ideology is combined with another, equally influential ideology. Social Darwinism, the theory that made use of Charles Darwin’s theory of natural selection, promoted the idea that only the fittest of society could survive. Economic competition allowed for the fittest of society to survive and the inferior to naturally diminish. Material wealth, through the lens of social Darwinism, came to be viewed as a requirement for human progress (Martin 24-25). With these factors in mind, it is easy to understand how a religious theology that promoted the idea that material prosperity was a sign of salvation and God’s subsequent blessing, when combined with a social theory that proclaimed only the so-called fittest of society would prosper, became an economic mindset in which money was the god of human improvement. Martin writes of how the Protestant work ethic and social Darwinism combined to condone approaches to poverty that left its victims to fend for themselves. This attitude that focuses upon material success as a way to gain social acceptance and condemns the poor as lazy, unproductive, and reckless has influenced American thought because of its ties to a system that promotes the importance of wealth (Martin 25). American, Christian advocacy writers must be aware of such ties.

Interestingly, Martin also notices how the debate between Catholic and Protestant theology is reflected in the treatment of the poor. She points out Catholicism focused on the conversion of society through the act of giving whereas the Puritan work ethic focused on individual people who were converted through receiving (Martin 25). When charity and reform focused upon the individuals receiving aid, they could justify differentiating between those who deserved such aid and those who did not deserve the help. The idea that some are too lazy or

deficient to receive aid is prominent in American thought even to this day (Martin 25-26). American historians are, thus, prone to view the history of the industrial poor through such interpretative lenses. Advocacy writers, however, cannot allow such lenses to cloud or color their writing. For this reason, Marxist sources that reveal class struggles are of utmost importance to such writers. Whereas other historians, particularly those who interpret through an American and/or capitalistic lens, avoid the topic of oppression or exploitation at the hands of capitalists, be they factory owners of the Industrial Revolution or corporations in 2018, Marxist scholars do not adhere to such avoidance.

It is interesting to note Marxist critic and modern historian Edmund Fuller, while decrying Marxist atheistic utopianism, believes capitalists have made a mistake in their attempts to counter Marxism. He writes, “Tragically, our so-called capitalistic society has been so frightened by the economic implications of Marxism with its threats to profits and property that it has fought with stupid and shameful methods” (16). He goes on to state capitalists have decried business practices while ignoring the idea that Marxism has promised utopia (16). In other words, the mistaken methods to which Fuller alludes are material methods rather than spiritual methods. Christians attempt to fight the economic philosophy of Communism rather than the secular religion of Communism. The greatest weapon Christianity could use against Marxism would be one that reflects its own revolutionary spirit – a revolution against the secular religion of Communism (16).

I contend Fuller makes a good point in his realization that Marx promised a solution to the problems initiated by capitalism. Even though it may not be his argument, Fuller recognizes the downfall of the capitalistic mindset is that capitalists focus on property and profits and that Marx recognized such a focus harmed the working class (14-16). However, Fuller overlooks an

important aspect. That is that Marx was correct in his analysis of oppression. The working class were exploited by capitalists. Instead of attempting to simply counter Marxist philosophy, Fuller could have highlighted ways capitalists could assist the exploited without resorting to Communist tactics. The moral challenge of Communism could be answered by admission to problems associated with exploitation.

In the article “Confrontational Teaching and Rhetorical Practice,” Virginia Anderson describes an analysis of Marxist historical interpretation that promotes the idea of a failed Marxist agenda. This Marxist agenda portrays the worker as needy and feeble. This type of label, at least during the time of Marx and his writing, produced the opposite of the intended effect. Considering the worker as downtrodden resulted in the middle class viewing the worker as someone different than themselves. Instead of uniting the middle class with the workers in an attempt to disarm exploitation, they looked to capitalism as the hero who could rescue the working class from its depravity (Anderson 200-201). This idea reverses Fuller’s challenge that Communism attempted to be the savior of the working class. Whereas Marx may have promoted the idolatry of Communism as savior, those devoted to the capitalistic cause were equally idolatrous. They simply had a different idol. As Anderson’s challenge reflects, those who examine philosophies must have their own corruptions confronted (203). Christian advocacy writers should answer such a challenge for themselves and others by realizing into what mindset they have been conditioned.

Facing Privilege

Marxist revelation of class consciousness forces the privileged to face their privilege. No one likes to think of themselves as privileged. The word privilege evokes images of kings and castles or at the very least of golf shoes, mansions, and yachts. When Karl Marx, in *The*

Communist Manifesto, compared middle-class factory owners to feudal lords; he broadened the meaning of privilege (10). He brought the word privilege to the level of everyday oppression. He forced capitalists – even Christian capitalists – to see themselves in a new light or through a different lens. When today’s scholars explain how poverty is a caste system or re-tell human stories of classist oppression, they invoke the same discomfort that leads to the same struggles (Katz 251-291). It is much easier to remember the myth of the welfare queen or adhere to ideas that those in poverty are lazy, good-for-nothing derelicts or, at least, are too unintelligent to manage money (Martin 35-38). This mindset is the safe way of thinking – the way of thinking that allows those who deny privilege to wallow in a just world mentality and condones individuals putting themselves on a pedestal of goodness and self-reliance (Peter et al. 222). Denying oppression and class struggles allows the deniers to condemn the mother at the check-out who holds up the line with her use of WIC checks or the father buying Christmas candy – perhaps, the only presents his children will have, unless the Salvation Army comes through – with food stamps.

Jessika Bohon, in an opinion article for *The Guardian* entitled “I Grew Up on Food Stamps. I’ll Never Forget the Sneering Looks,” writes of how she remembers her mother, a recipient of food stamps, receiving unwanted comments from a cashier for buying a boxed cake mix with food stamps. The cake was for her four-year old brother’s birthday. Those who sneered at her mother did not stop to think about the times the family went without electricity or that they only had a ride to go grocery shopping once a month (Bohon).

In another article entitled “Why I Buy Red Vines with My EBT Card,” a so-called welfare mom named Jenna Robertson blogged about why she purchases candy for her children using food stamps. She explained if her children want to visit a museum or purchase a book in a

much-loved series, she has to say no. They cannot afford it. If her children want to splurge on a \$3.00 movie ticket, she has to say no. It is not in the budget. Once a month, she can say yes to a package of licorice or a container of ice cream. She would take that opportunity to indulge her children (Robertson).

All too often, however, the privileged who have never been forced to deny their child a coveted toy assume the mother buying the gum with government funds is leeching off the hard workers who built this country. Meade writes of studies that reflect the popular opinion that those who receive welfare benefits are able to work but choose not to because they do not see the value of hard work (139). Such belief in the America way has clouded empathy. The belief in a just world clouds judgment.

An even more recent article that found its way into journals such as *The Atlantic* questioned a long-respected scientific test known as the marshmallow test. In this test, children are offered one marshmallow and promised a second one later if they can refrain from eating the first marshmallow for a specific number of minutes. Scientists conducting such tests have long concluded some children are more impulsive and have less willpower than other children. Those who eat the first marshmallow did not display the virtues of those children who were willing to wait (Calarco).

The article “Why Rich Kids Are So Good at the Marshmallow Test” by Jessica McCorry Calarco, however, sheds doubt on the traditional conclusions. Calarco presents the thesis that the children who choose the one marshmallow come from lower socio-economic backgrounds. These children have learned from experience that if they do not eat the one marshmallow there is a good chance they may not get the second marshmallow later (Calarco). In the same way, if the

mom buying a candy bar with food stamps does not buy that candy now, there will not be another chance.

Privilege often counters this argument by pointing out there is a difference between a need and a want. Food is needed. Candy is not. This is an argument that has been in place since the Industrial Revolution. Gertrude Himmelfarb writes in *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*,

For poverty was not only measured against the rising expectations of the working class but also against the rising affluence of the upper class... The contention now was that the poor were being deprived not so much of the means of subsistence as a means of acquiring a higher standard of living and a larger share of the national wealth (32-33).

Thus, the important question then as well as today is, is there equality in opportunity between the classes (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 33). When we deny inequalities in capitalistic systems, whether they be the industrial system of Victorian England or the American system of today, we prove we have never experienced such oppression. Denial of inequality, of privilege, and of oppression not only leads to a dehumanization of the poor but also to a hatred that the poor feel toward the rich (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 32-35). Perhaps the greatest irony is many, unlike Booth, fail to see while some individuals may abuse systems of assistance, it is the greed of individuals associated with bigger systems and corporations that is more corrupt. Most individuals, most families who utilize assistance programs are, like the individuals in these articles, grateful for the help. As Meade points out, the poor see just as much value in work and in education as the non-poor. They also see work as a way to gain self-respect

(139-140). Instead of turning privileged skepticism toward such people, Christian advocacy writers must be willing to examine systems that induce the original need.

Failing to see one's own privilege in a system that promotes inequalities causes more harm than good. Dorothy Day wrote in her book *Loaves and Fishes*, "Often I write about the past because I cannot write the truth about the present. But what has occurred in the past holds good for the present" (54). Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities force readers to face privilege of the past, knowing the truth presented for past eras still holds good today. They remind readers, as Day also points out, "St. Paul said, 'Are we comforted?' It is so that you may comfort" (54).

According to Patrick J. Gurney in the article "Historical Origins of Ideological Denial: The Case of Marx in American Sociology (Between 1895 and 1920)," throughout American history, the idea of class struggle has left a bad taste in the mouths of historians because it is more palatable to believe society is, at its core, cooperative (199). This claim is particularly concerning to advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities. When the advocacy writer studies the history of the treatment of the poor and the classifying of the poor even in today's society, that writer is left to wonder if the ideal of cooperation is based upon wishful thinking, ignorance of the social setting, or such an agenda hinted at by Gurney (199). Instead of denying privilege or inequalities in interest of the ideal of balance, Christian advocacy writers push society to admit the downfall of a system that allows such oppressions as mentioned throughout this thesis. To admit flaws does not automatically condemn the system as evil. It only means this human system needs help. It is up to society and culture – the privileged and the oppressed – to admit the world is not as just as everyone has hoped or envisioned. Only those who recognize injustices can work to provide more justice, more equality. As the work of

Charles Booth demands to know, why is there so much poverty when so much wealth abounds (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Early Victorians* 102)?

This is a question all should seek to answer. To rationalize or politicize the question away is to deny the very soul that makes us human.

Chapter Three – The Results

“Human progress isn’t measured by industry. It’s measured by the value you place on a life. An unimportant life. A life without privilege. The boy who died on that river, that boy’s value is your value. That’s what defines an age. That’s what defines a species.” – Dr. Who, “Thin Ice”⁶

Christian Marxism?

Alan Carling, in the article “Karl Marx’s ‘Theory of History’ and the Recovery of Marxian Tradition,” declares his idea that while Christian socialism may be possible, the concept of Christian Marxism does not allow Marxism to be everything it should be (279). According to Gertrude Himmelfarb in *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, Christian socialism is sometimes associated with early Christianity in that it desires no poverty, no prejudices or bias, and no opposition or animosity in society (336). Of course, the socialist portion of the term invokes the idea of government intervention when necessary to suppress such evils. Even in the earlier years of Christian socialism, there was contention between Marxists and Christian socialists who claimed the Marxist label (Himmelfarb, *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians* 336). Carling claims the secular materialist ideology of Marxism as a reason for this contention even in analytic rather than political Marxism (279).

Silas Morgan recognizes such arguments in his article “What Marx Can Teach Christian Theology – and the Church – about Being Christian.” Morgan reiterates the Christian association of Marxism with Marx’s own theory of atheistic materialism (Morgan). Morgan adds, however, Marx’s criticism of religion and journey into materialism was based upon his concern for those

⁶ “Thin Ice.” *Doctor Who*, written by Sarah Dollard, directed by Bill Anderson. BBC Worldwide LTD, 2017.

who were being alienated by religion. Morgan does not believe Marx should convince Christians to become atheists, materialists, or even socialists. However, he does believe Christians can learn from Marx about the importance of equality, of suffering with those who suffer, and of taking action in advocacy. He believes religion transforms into an opiate of the people when it is used as an excuse for people to ignore suffering and oppression (Morgan). Morgan's opinion should spur Christian advocacy writers to reveal inequalities and oppression through their writing.

The Wounded

It is interesting to note a facet of Karl Marx's life that has not yet been addressed in this thesis. Francis Wheen, in *Marx's Das Kapital*, describes Marx's own struggles with poverty. In Wheen's words, Marx and his family lived in "squalor and near despair" (24). In the midst of such squalor, the family experienced the death of three children – one from a convulsion, one from bronchitis, and one from consumption. Even Friedrich Engels, who offered the Marxes as much financial support as he could, believed the family's destitute conditions contributed to the death of at least one of the children (24-25). This child was their daughter Franziska, who died of bronchitis, according to Gareth Stedman Jones in his book *Karl Marx: Greatness in Illusion* (319). According to accounts written by Marx's wife, Jenny, "For three days, she was between life and death. She suffered terribly. When she died we left her lifeless body in the backroom, went to the front room and made our beds on the floor" (qtd. in Jones 319). Jenny Marx continued, "Anguish in my heart, I hurried to a French emigrant who lived not far away and used to come to see us, and begged him to help us in our terrible necessity. He immediately gave us two pounds... That money was used to pay for the coffin" (qtd. in Jones 319). Jenny Marx also believed the death of another of the Marx children could have been prevented had the family had a way to get him to the sea and fresh air (Jones 320-321).

In an 1851 letter to an American supporter, Karl Marx even requested that this man write to him at Friedrich Engels' address because Engels could afford the postal fees (Engels and Marx, "Full Text of: Letters to Americans, 1845-1895: A Selection"). These letters also reveal times in which Marx himself was too weak to write and, thus, relied upon his wife to communicate his wishes in the correspondence (Engels and Marx, "Full Text of: Letters to Americans, 1845-1895: A Selection"). Jones reveals Marx regularly suffered from respiratory illness, possible tuberculosis, and problems with his liver (*Karl Marx: Greatness and Illusion* 321).

Henri Nouwen writes in *The Wounded Healer* of the minister who is "called to recognize the sufferings of his time in his own heart and make that recognition the starting point of his service" (xiv). In short, wounded healers heal because they know what it is like to be wounded (xiv). Although Christian advocacy writers cannot consider Marx's ideas of violent revolution healing, it is easy to understand where Marx's passion originated. He desired to fight not just poverty but the attitudes toward the poor themselves because he experienced such oppression himself. Christian advocacy writers can share in Marx's passion for exposing privilege and oppression, for aiding those in poverty, and for countering stigmas and struggles through their revealing of historical, social inequalities. They can share stories revealed by today's Marxist scholars as a way to advocate for those facing oppression. Christian advocacy writers should understand that such empathy, such advocacy, and such revealing are biblically ordained. Such advocacy is a method of healing not just injustices in the world but also the pain the oppressed experience. Advocacy writers should, thus, seek Scripture to understand just how important such understanding, advocacy, and revealing are to God.

What the Bible Says

The most important argument for or against the use of Marxist scholarship is not what conventional scholars believe. It is not what Marxist scholars believe. It is what the Bible says. Obviously, the Bible does not directly address capitalism or Marxism. It does, though, provide guidelines for the Christian advocacy writer. There are many verses, commands, stories, and encouragements that are valuable to the Christian advocacy writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities. This should be the most important qualification for the Christian who seeks to advocate on the side of the poor and the oppressed. To reiterate, American writers and historians are often taught the Bible through a lens of American patriotism – a patriotism that joins the Bible to capitalistic systems. However, throughout both the Old and New Testaments, the Bible scholar learns of God’s feelings for those who are oppressed and exploited and of His warnings against a love of money. Even though Marxist historical scholars may not adhere to Christian beliefs, this does not necessarily mean their scholarship does not contain biblical connotations. A Christian’s writing should reflect biblical principles and the love of the Holy Spirit.

Confrontation

Prabhat Patnaik points out in the article “The Marxist Argument” that Marxist ideals do include conflict. Specifically, the theory is based upon the idea that a conflict exists between the workers who produce goods and those who are having the goods produced (28). Christians may not agree that conflict is as dire as Marxist scholars presume, however there is often a conflict that arises when Christians choose to advocate on behalf of the exploited and oppressed. Perhaps the most difficult idea for Christians to rectify in their own minds, regarding advocacy, is what they have heard about conflict and confrontation. Confrontation is never comfortable or easy. However, it is often necessary. It is easy to understand why most avoid confrontation and

conflict as much as possible. However, the Bible itself does not advocate avoiding confrontation. In fact, the Bible indicates sometimes confrontation is necessary.

I Kings 20 describes a time in the life of King Ahab when conflict was not only necessary but ordained of God. In this re-telling, the reader learns that God, through His prophet, forces the weak king to cease his appeasement of Ben-Hadad, King of Aram, and to face the king on the battle front. When Ahab fails to complete God's plan, the prophet deals harshly with Ahab for failing to finish the confrontation God had commanded.

There is an interesting and important lesson for Christian advocacy writers in this biblical event. That lesson is the writer should not feel guilty or conflicted about the confrontation that is necessary in advocacy writing. When Jesus spoke of forgiveness in Luke 17.3-4, He included confrontation. This aspect of the teaching on forgiveness is often overlooked. Jesus taught, "If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive them" (*New International Version*). He goes into even greater detail in a companion passage in Matthew 15.17-18, in which Jesus encourages the use of witnesses to confront a brother with his sin. Of course, these passages do not condone non-forgiveness, even if the individual who has sinned against us never repents. However, Jesus does stress the importance of confronting the sin. Even Paul, when he wrote about living in peace with all in Romans 12.9, began his teaching with the words, "Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil" (*New International Version*).

Love must be sincere. In order to love sincerely, the Christian advocacy writer must hate what is evil. This may sound like an oxymoron. However, if there is not a hatred of evil, there cannot be love of righteousness or peace. Do we really claim to love the exploited if we do not

hate the exploitation? Can peace come from exploitation? Standing against oppression and exploitation is not lack of the peace of which Paul writes. Appeasement of the world's evil is not the same as peace. In I Kings 20.3-4, Ahab was willing not only to give silver and gold to Ben-Hadad, but he was also ready to give wives and children to the king of Aram. Today's Christian advocacy writers must be willing to hate the practice of giving people to appease individuals who oppress through worldly systems of oppression.

Jesus, Himself, confronted the Pharisees in Matthew 23.27 with claims that they were whitewashed tombs. In the following verse, Jesus charged the religious leaders, "In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness" (*New International Version*, Matthew 23.28). These charges are similar to the charges brought against oppressive systems by Marxist scholarship. The Christian advocacy writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities can take seriously these charges and use these charges in their writing while proclaiming God's stance against such oppression. The Pharisees used Scripture to oppress people. Likewise, individuals in history and even today all too often use Scripture to justify oppression under a capitalistic system.

The Love of Money

Marx believed everything within a capitalist system comes down to capital. Everything in a capitalist society is money-based (*Capital* 43). While, as Christians, it is easy to deny such beliefs, can it be denied that a capitalistic society proves Marx's point? Exploitation, oppression, corporate greed, even denial of need for welfare benefits most often boils down to money. In fact, it could be said that Marx's reductionist viewpoint, at least in this case, has a biblical basis. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 5.10-11, "Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. As goods increase, so

do those who consume them. And what benefits are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them?” (*New International Version*). While this passage may seem depressing or even whiny, Solomon addresses the same issues Marx addressed in his writing. This passage speaks of the false satisfaction with money and material goods that is prevalent in today’s society. In today’s society, everyday success is determined by how much a position pays rather than by how much satisfaction an individual finds in the work. Children, in the name of eventual money-based success, are prepped for college in preschool – a practice that all too often denies them their childhood and leads to anxiety and depression later in life. It is sometimes difficult for members of society who were taught the value of money-based success and prosperity to realize the Bible does not promote this type of success. In fact, the Bible counters this idea of money-based success. For example, James 1.9-11 promises,

Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. But the rich should take pride in their humiliation – since they will pass away like a wild flower. For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business (*New International Version*).

Of course, there is nothing wrong with money or even wealth. However, the Bible discusses in detail, in several passages, the danger of depending upon money. I Timothy 6.10 is, perhaps, the most often quoted of these verses (and the most often misquoted by those who omit the words “love of”). “For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs” (*New International Version*). Luke 16.13 warns no man can serve both God and money. In Jesus’ parable of the sower, as found in Mark 4, He warns of the deceitfulness of riches choking the

seed of the gospel in a person's life until the gospel is thrust out by worldly temptations. In I Timothy 6.17, Paul writes of the importance of trusting in God rather than riches. Jesus met a rich, young ruler in Luke 18 who could not give up his riches to help those in need – an experience recounting Paul's exhortation about trusting in riches. Psalm 62.10 connects oppression and riches and reminds, "though your riches increase, do not set your heart upon them" (*New International Version*). Even the righteous Job, in Job 31, bemoans his own trusting in riches. With all these exhortations and warnings, the Christian advocacy writer could point to a lack of balance in theories that condemn Marxism because of unbiblical principles but accept theories such as Adam Smith's (to refer again to Himmelfarb's research) whose economics made money the savior of the world (*The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 108). This lack of balance is certainly apparent in theories that, as Marx himself pointed out, place money ahead of human suffering. It is present in a society that, as Solomon bemoaned, expresses the unquenchable want for more wealth as more is gained. This lack of balance is true even if those theories are labeled with the words Christian or American. Especially if those theories are labeled with the words Christian or American.

Inequalities and Oppression

God's stance against such oppression is made clear throughout the Bible. A quick Google search for "Bible verses about oppression" yields several websites with 55 to 60 Bible verses each. While not all these verses apply to this study and some are clearly taken out of context, there are many that prove God hates seeing His creation misused and hurt. Proverbs 17.5 warns, "Whoever mocks the poor shows contempt for their Maker; whoever gloats over disaster will not go unpunished" (*New International Version*). Psalm 68.5 promises God serves as a father to the orphan and a judge for widows. James 2.5-7 promises God (contrary to the idea presented earlier

that God blesses the rich and keeps those in poverty who do not honor Him) has “chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised to those who love him” (*New International Version*, James 2.5b). Likewise, this passage explains exploitation of the poor does exist, but the poor should not be dishonored because of God’s love for them.

God spoke regularly through the Old Testament prophets about oppression of the needy. In Zechariah 7.9-10, God describes true justice through mercy and compassion. He condemns oppression of the widow, the orphan, the foreigner, and the poor. Isaiah 10.1-3 gets into not just oppression on an individual basis, but oppressive laws and governmental actions –

Woe to those who make unjust laws, to those who issue oppressive decrees, to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed of my people, making widows their prey and robbing the fatherless. What will you do on the day of reckoning, when disaster comes from afar? To whom will you run for help? Where will you leave your riches? (*New International Version*).

In Amos 2.6, God condemns His people. “For three sins of Israel, even for four, I will not relent. They sell the innocent for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals” (*New International Version*).

Not only does Scripture express God’s hatred of oppression, but it also exhorts God’s people to speak out for the cause of oppressed. The works of Solomon contain a wealth of wisdom (pun intended) about what God expects when believers witness exploitation. Proverbs 31.8-9, for example commands, “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” (*New International Version*). From the New Testament, Hebrews 13.3 reminds Christians

God feels the pain of those who are being mistreated. These are passages that prove God expects empathy and action. Christian advocacy writers should use their passion for those enduring societal oppression to prove God's hatred of such injustice. Christian advocacy writers should not be afraid to include the Bible to justify Marxist scholarship that reveals oppression.

Hypocrisy

The question of hypocrisy is yet another perspective that should and probably does make Christian Americans uncomfortable. Marx and Engels both considered the Christianity of a capitalistic system to be hypocritical. Engels went so far as to say when capitalists, out of greed, deprived the workers of an honest pay, they made atheists of those workers (Himmelfarb, *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age* 280). The Marxist founders have a point. When money is used as a reason to oppress human beings, the charges of hypocrisy toward Christian oppressors are bound to result. Speaking of Christian viewpoints regarding the division of labor, Fletcher and Fletcher humorously point out, "St. Paul wrote in II Thessalonians 3.10, 'If any should not work, neither should he eat.' Christendom has always seen fit to apply this rule as fitting and proper, except in the case of those who enjoy a property right in the fruit of others' labors" (99).

The Bible has much to say about hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is the sin Jesus Himself often condemned. Perhaps the most fitting of Jesus' teachings on hypocrisy as it relates to a system that promotes opportunity but places burdens that are too great to bear upon the weakest of society can be found in Matthew 23. The first four verses of this chapter read,

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy,

cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them" (*New International Version*).

Jesus' teaching in this chapter is especially relevant and applicable for Christians who place more value upon money than upon the situations of people who are created in the image of God (verses 16-22). Verses 23-24 specifically condemn those who claim righteousness but ignore justice and impose upon innocent people burdens that are too great –

Woe to you, teachers of the Law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should practice the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel" (*New International Version*).

This is not the only time Jesus addressed the hypocrisy of injustice. Matthew 24.31-46 describes the final separation of the righteous from the unrighteous. Rather than righteousness being based upon outward signs of godliness, church attendance, or working of miracles, Jesus taught the true basis of righteousness is caring for the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the naked, and the imprisoned. He went so far as to say when His followers care for those in need, they care for Him. Likewise, when they refuse to care for those considered the least of all, they refuse to care for Him. Those who believe they are righteous but refuse to care for Christ by caring for the least desirable will hear His words, "Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (*New International Version*, Matthew 24.41). This is a haunting visual that what God considers pure, rather than hypocritical religion, is, in fact, to "... look after orphans and widows in their distress" (*New International Version*, from James 1.27).

Revenge

While there are positives of Marxist ideas and Marxist history, the Christian advocacy writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities must also be careful not to adopt Marx's spirit of revenge. In the article "We're All Victims Here: Toward a Psychology of Revenge," Arlene M. Stillwell, Roy F. Baumeister, and Regan E. Del Prior describe revenge as being an individual's attempt to restore an equity of power in social relationships (254). This is perhaps the definition that suits Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels the best. They saw the inequality, that reform movements and political action within the system of capitalism were not helping and were sometimes making worse the conditions of the poor, and they sought revenge on those who they deemed as the reason for the inequality. They wanted to make the middle class, who were often denying the situations of the poor or blaming the victims, understand what the victims of poverty felt like. This is a trap into which it is all too easy to fall. The Bible specifically addresses this trap. In the same passage from Romans 12 to which I referred earlier in advice regarding confrontation, Paul reminds readers, "Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath" (*New International Version*, Romans 12.19b). Paul refers in this reminder to God's admonition in Deuteronomy 32.35, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay. In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them" (*New International Version*).

When Christian advocacy writers promote such advocacy for those who are victims of oppression, even those advocates who focus upon historical, social inequalities must be careful to avoid giving into the human desire to take revenge or even to wish God's revenge upon the oppressors. The Christian advocacy writer must remember Solomon's wise words in Proverbs 24.17, "Do not gloat when your enemy falls; when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice"

(New International Version). This is a trap into which others throughout history have stumbled. Christian advocacy writers must set themselves apart by remaining true to both the cause of advocacy and to biblical teachings.

True Religion versus False Religion

A portion of David Guzik's Blue Letter Bible study over Revelation 17 reads, "Karl Marx was *partly* right when he said, 'Religion is the opiate of the masses.' He was partly right because *empty* religion *is* the opium of the masses" (Guzik). Perhaps Guzik is on to a good theory. Revelation 17 describes a great prostitute called Babylon who will lure the kings of the earth and earth's inhabitants with her sensuality and wealth. II Timothy 3.1-5 reminds of the danger of such a corrupted, or *empty*, religion,

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God – having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people *(New International Version)*.

This passage describes a time when there will be no true love for God or other people – a time when a love of money and a love of self and pleasure rule. This ideology has a form of godliness but denies its power. What Paul describes in II Timothy is just the opposite of what James describes as true religion in James 1.27 – "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their despair and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" *(New International Version)*. The Christian advocacy writer cannot be afraid to point out what God values as true religion and what He condemns as empty or false

religion. The Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities cannot be afraid to utilize sources that reveal the struggling of orphans and widows in their despair. They cannot be afraid to point out even just systems that place a love of money, themselves, and pleasure over a love of God and others. They cannot be afraid to confront false religion that claims worldly ideas as the teaching of Christ.

The Eternal Utopia

Isaiah 11.1-10 promises a time of perfect peace, of perfect understanding, of perfect diversity. This will be a time of peace in which Christ will rule and “will not judge by what he sees with his eyes or decide by what he hears with his ears; but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth” (*New International Version*, Isaiah 11.3b-4). However, this paradise will not be in today’s world, as Karl Marx envisioned. It will be a time beyond time – a time associated with eternity. Christian advocacy writers must keep in mind their advocacy is not going to bring about perfection.

The goal of advocacy, as John Samuel points out in “Public Advocacy and People-Centered Advocacy: Mobilising for Social Change,” is the empowerment of those who are marginalized. This means advocates stand against unequal relations when it comes to power, attempt to change systems that marginalize people, and are willing to be social justice activists on the part of the oppressed (616-618). These are the actions of the Christian advocacy writer. Oftentimes this message of advocacy is brought to people of the middle class, according to Samuel. Creative communication is important (618-621). However, sometimes even the most creative, educated communication will fall upon deaf ears because the earth is not a perfect place and because not everyone understands oppression. There will be stigmas attached to the advocate. This stigma does not detract from the value of the advocacy writing. There will not be

perfect peace for either the oppressed or the advocacy writer until God's appointed time. However, obedience to God and passion for the cause of the poor and the oppressed must continue to drive the advocacy writer to share awareness and seek to improve conditions.

The Christian advocacy writer can look to Jeremiah 12 for encouragement in the midst of the pain of having the message ignored. In verses 1-5, Jeremiah pleads with God for understanding: "I would speak about your justice: why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why do all the faithless live at ease?" (*New International Version*, Jeremiah 12.1b). God answers, "If you have raced with men on foot and they have worn you out, how can you compete with horses? If you stumble in safe country, how will you manage the thickets by the Jordan?" (*New International Version*, Jeremiah 12:5). Jeremiah encountered individuals who dismissed the message God had given him to deliver. Jeremiah experienced persecution and battled human misunderstanding. God understands the battle the advocate on His behalf will face. He knows not everyone who encounters His message will accept. There will be times Christian advocacy writers will be psychologically wounded by those to whom they are delivering the message of advocacy, oppression, and inequality. In fact, the Christian advocacy writer can expect such wounds even in places that seem like safe places – places that should, perhaps, understand the Christian importance of advocacy and love for the poor. God expects the advocate to remain faithful, however, even when the message falls on deaf ears and even when pain from nonacceptance occurs. Christian advocacy writers must be willing to face persecution and even stigmas because of their work.

A God of Second Chances

As the research presented in this thesis has shown, many times oppression is viewed as a righteous action. That is, there is a mindset that the poor have brought their circumstances upon

themselves, that they deserve the conditions they face. This mindset is not a biblical mindset, because even those people who may have contributed to their own downfall deserve grace. For example, we have all heard stories of individuals addicted to drugs and alcohol who lose everything they have because of poor choices or even sell everything they own to indulge in their addictions. The Bible, however, is full of examples of and teachings regarding God's grace. Perhaps the most appropriate to this discussion is Hebrews 4.15-16, in which the writer reminds readers that there is no reason to stay hidden in fear from God. Because Christ sits on a throne of grace and because He has been tempted in every way in which human beings are tempted, He understands the human struggle. Those who approach His throne can expect mercy and compassion and help to get through their own struggles with temptation. He will not turn them away. If Christ offers this grace, should not His followers, in turn, offer the same grace? Should not His followers offer hope and help to those who suffer, even if they suffer from something they may have themselves caused? Christ offers grace without condemnation. As workers for Christ, Christian advocacy writers can offer the same mercy without judgment. As James 2.12-13 points out, mercy will be shown to those who have shown mercy. Those who have refused to show mercy will only be shown judgment. Mercy does, indeed, triumph over judgment (*New International Version*).

Chapter Four – The Discussion and Application

“Public advocacy is a set of deliberate actions designed to influence public policies or public attitudes in order to empower the marginalized.” – John Samuel⁷

Christian Reactions

It is unfortunate that often anyone who tackles class-related problems and the problem of poverty, anyone who critically analyzes capitalism and/or its history, is often labeled a Communist. Horton writes in *The Long Haul* of how those who have worked on the side of unions are labeled as Communists (48). On May 27, 2018, politician Bernie Sanders posted a meme to his Facebook page that pictured a quote from Pope Francis that read, “Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression or assassination, but also by unfair economic structures that create huge inequalities” (Sanders). The first comment from a visitor to the site reminded the author that the pope is Communist (Sanders). In today’s society (it is regrettable to admit, particularly Christian society), the adjective Communist is often the worst insult that can be used to describe another individual. All too often anyone who tackles the problem of poverty or, especially, shines a critical eye on capitalism is stigmatized with just such a label. No doubt, this is due to the effects of Soviet Communism upon its enemies. However, this label is all too often applied to individuals who simply recognize economic and social oppression and inequalities and issue a call to action.

Douglas A. Hicks writes in *Inequality & Christian Ethics* of how theologians who focus upon the liberation of those facing inequalities are, also, often accused of Marxist ties (141). It

⁷ Samuel, John. “Public Advocacy and People-Centered Advocacy: Mobilising for Social Change.” *Development in Practice*, vol. 17, no. 4/5, 2007, pp. 615–621. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/25548260, 616.

seems fields of study, whether they be theology or, in the case of this study, history, experience such a stigma. Is the idea of revealing inequalities so offensive as to warrant a label of Communism? It turns out the Facebook commenter reacting to the Pope Francis meme may have simply been mirroring statements made by those in more influential and powerful positions. When the pope previously described capitalistic systems as only as good as those in power within that system and shed doubt on how good such systems are for those excluded from its justice, conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh condemned Francis for spewing Marxism, according to John L. Allen in *The Francis Miracle: Inside the Transformation of the Pope and the Church* (146-147). Fox News has also accused the pope, with his critical view of capitalism, as being ignorant of how economics work in the real world (Allen 217).

Response One: A Revolution of Love

Yitzchac Blau, a professor at Yeshivat Hamivtar in Israel, in the article “Rabbinic Responses to Communism,” expresses his belief that a godly scholar need not adhere to either Western capitalism or Communism. He believes Communism arose because of a corrupted system of free trade. Neither man-made system can change the world. Only God can change the heart of humankind (7). Following Blau’s lead, the Christian advocacy writer must see value in the research of both conventional and Marxist scholars without allowing the lack of compassion of either system to infiltrate the heart of the matter (Blau 20-21). The heart of the matter is that Christian advocacy writers must follow their passion of advocating for the rights of the poor and the oppressed, even if that casts a skeptical eye on a capitalistic system, as Marxist scholars claim. They must advocate for the rights of the poor and the oppressed, even if that means they will glean important information from Marxist scholars. However, these same Christians must not allow the bitterness of revolutionary theories associated with early Marxist ideals to cloud

their love and compassion for others. That May 2018 Bernie Sanders social media post causes advocates to question how those who stand for the rights of the poor and oppressed can counter the stigma associated with Marxism. It is a question that must be answered, or is it?

The so-called Communist pope answered a question about how to denounce injustices without falling into the politicizing of issues,

I think the word “partisan” comes closest to the answer I want to give. It’s a matter of concerning oneself not with partisan politics, but with the great politics born of the Commandments and the Gospel. Denouncing human rights abuses, situations of exploitation or exclusion, or shortages in education or food, is not being partisan... When we come out and say things, some accuse of playing politics. I say to them, yes, we are playing politics in the Gospel sense of the word, but not in the partisan sense (Ambrogetti and Rubin 94).⁸

Perhaps this is the best advice for the Christian advocacy writer. Christian advocacy writers cannot deny the politicizing of ideas regarding inequality, as much as they may like to do so. That politicizing war of ideas is too engrained in our culture. Despite politicizing and stigmas, Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities must, in the words of Samuel, focus on deliberate actions that empower the marginalized (616). A focus upon social inequalities will bring out the haters and the accusers. However, this hate and those accusations cannot stop the Christian advocacy writer from promoting the rights of the oppressed and standing for equality.

⁸ Pope Francis had just answered a question regarding how liberation theologians right social wrongs in the wrong ways. He was then asked, “So up to what point should the Church involve itself in contemporary matters, such as denouncing injustices, without falling into improper politicization?” (Ambrogetti and Rubin 94). The quote as recorded above was Pope Francis’ answer to that question.

Reports from a 1966 World Conference on Church and Society, as presented by J. Brooke Mosely in the book *The Technical and Social Revolutions of Our Times*, investigate the idea of the Christian church as a revolutionary entity – an organization that does not anticipate utopia on earth but that is revolutionary in its movement of taking seriously social concerns (31-32). Perhaps instead of distancing themselves from the idea of Marx’s vision for a revolution in response to poverty and class struggles, Christians can embrace the idea of revolution in a biblical sense. Mosely insists Christians have long ignored revolution. Instead of ignoring, Christians should look at the reasons behind revolution (32). Instead of fighting labels or even attempting to counter stigmas, Christian advocacy writers can focus on the need for advocacy and garner support for biblically revolutionary ideas and actions. That is, Christian advocacy writers can call for a revolution based upon biblical concepts such as love for one another, caring for the poor, and advocating on behalf of the oppressed.

Henri Nouwen writes in *The Wounded Healer* of such biblical revolution. Nouwen writes of a connection between Christian conversion and revolution because the highest revolution is that of conversion to Christianity. Both the change of the human heart and the change of society come from the same place – the place of the cross of Christ (19-20). He writes, “Jesus was a revolutionary, who did not become an extremist, since he did not offer an ideology, but Himself” (20). Christian advocacy writers must focus on their social advocacy coming from the place of the cross. The Christian advocacy writer should work toward bringing about a revolution of love because this is what Christ demands. The Christian advocacy writer brings healing to the oppressed. As Nouwen writes, those who promote liberation must not only care for wounds but make those wounds into a source of healing power (84).

Ronald W. Duty, in the article “Doing Christian Ethics on the Ground of Polycentrically: Cross-Cultural Moral Deliberation on Ethical and Social Issues,” points out Martin Luther’s call for parishes and their leaders to castigate rulers who were not doing their part to ensure justice. Duty believes it is a Christian duty to stand by the poor and the oppressed as an example of God’s liberation and creative power (46-47). He recommends Christians become involved in activities that work toward social development and growth, toward advocating for laws and public policies that will assist the oppressed, for social justice movements, and for demanding corporate responsibility (Duty 47). This is especially good advice for the Christian advocacy writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities. Through revealing such historical inequalities, the Christian advocacy writer can paint a picture of how today’s world mirrors times past. By revealing historical inequalities, the Christian advocacy writer can issue a call to action for Christians today – a call that fights oppression with a revolutionary movement of love and compassion for all and a movement that focuses its energy on pleading the cause of those affected by injustices, rather than wasting that energy on attempting to counter political labeling in the war of ideas.

Terence O’Keefe writes in the article “Paul Tillich’s Marxism” of theologian Paul Tillich, who has at specific times labeled himself a Marxist Christian. In 1912 Tillich, who was a conservative military chaplain during World War I and who considered socialism a criminal activity, encountered the working class. This encounter caused him to question all that he believed about Marxism (O’Keefe 474). His experiences led him to challenge three ideas: that religion is only an inner-person experience, that charity is the only way to express love for the poor, and that the gap between the rich and the poor is appointed by God (O’Keefe 477).

Though many Christians will not agree with Tillich's theology, these points deserve attention. As the biblical guidelines already presented suggest, religion that is valuable to God seeks to help those who are oppressed. While Christian giving is honorable, is such charity the only method of assistance or is it the only method that fits easily enough into today's lifestyle and American worldview? Jesus taught in Luke 10.25-37 the parable of the good Samaritan. In this well-known and well-loved parable, a priest and Levite are too preoccupied or busy to assist a man who, through no fault of his own, had been beaten and robbed. Only a despised Samaritan offered his assistance. The Samaritan did not give money to a charity who offered soup or Kraft macaroni and cheese to the man in hopes that it would feed him for the next day or two. The Samaritan took action. He picked up the wounded man, bound his wounds, took him to an inn, and paid for the man's lodging and needs. So, likewise, today's Christian advocacy writers must not lean on even the most well-intentioned charities. They must take action. They must take action to show inequalities are, indeed, not ordained by God. They must take action to show the wounded are not always or even most of the time wounded by any fault of their own.

Another important point is made by Horton in *The Long Haul*. He explained, "Since I chose to work with poor, oppressed people, I had to take into consideration that they'd never been allowed to value their own experiences... and that only teachers and experts know what was good for them" (57). The oppressed must have a voice of their own. Marxist scholars, through their revelation of oppression and class consciousness, give a voice to the exploited. Christian advocacy writers also give such a voice to those who are affected by poverty and the stereotypes surrounding them. This is yet another reason why Marxist scholarship is valuable to the Christian advocacy writer. From Marxism, the Christian advocacy writer can learn to reveal

issues of exploitation and inequality and stand alongside the exploited and abused in hopes of empowering them (Mayer 419). Silas Morgan writes

To be clear, I am not simply suggesting that in Marx, the Christian church (especially in the United States) finds reasons to disentangle our theologic from our longstanding affiliation with the economic and social goals of capitalism. Nor am I arguing that returning to Marx represents an opportunity for a liberal, religious socialism akin to the now defunct Social Gospel of the early twentieth century... Instead, what I want to say here is that Marx can teach us something about the nature of religion and theology, and so he can help us revitalize our own understanding of what Christianity is and what it means to be a Christian in today's world (Morgan "What Marx Can Teach Christian Theology").

Marxism can, in short, assist the Christian and the Christian advocacy writer in following the biblical mandate to care for those deemed the least of all.

To refer again to Karl Marx's criticism of Christianity as hypocritical, the Christian advocacy writer should also consider the danger of hypocrisy. The Christian advocacy writer should remember the quote from Marx,

The social principles of Christianity preach the necessity of a ruling and oppressed class, and for the latter all they have to offer is the pious wish that the former may be charitable. . . . The social principles of Christianity are sneaking and hypocritical and the proletariat is revolutionary. So much for the social principles of Christianity (Marx qtd. in Morgan).

Christian advocacy writers can assist in countering the hypocrisy of claiming to care for the least of these while denying issues of oppression and inequality exist. While labels of Marxist or the even stronger Communist may follow the Christian who sheds a critical eye on exploitation in

the name of capitalism, the label of hypocrisy does not. Better a label that arises from misunderstanding and from assuming a war of words than a label that is too honest. Better to be falsely accused than accurately considered a whitewashed tomb (Matthew 23.27).

Response Two: Fight Alienation

As Blakely points out in “Scientific Atheism: An Investigation,” it was Marx’s understanding of economic alienation that took precedence over religious beliefs and, perhaps, contributed to the atheism behind his theories (278). There is a lesson here for the Christian advocacy writer. Marx’s theory of alienation proclaims workers lose their identity by producing goods for others because such production does not allow them to use their own creativity, according to Wayne Plasek’s article “Marxist and American Sociological Conceptions of Alienation: Implications for Social Problems Theory” (319). Marxist theory also recognizes problems related to alienation – problems of exploitation and exclusion, as pointed out by Mamadi Corra in “Separation and Exclusion: Distinctly Modern Conditions of Power?” (43-45). Friedrich Engels recognized both the segregation or exclusion of poor workers and the fact that their value was based upon their contribution to labor (Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* 66). Likewise, he realized even charity workers were often indifferent to the needs of the poor laborers, “The English bourgeoisie is charitable out of self-interest; it gives nothing outright, but regards its gifts as a business matter, makes a bargain with the poor... this charity of a Christian bourgeois” (Engels, *The Condition of the Working Class in England* 277).

Today’s Christian advocacy writers must challenge their fellow Christians to not allow such alienation based upon opinions about quality of labor or exclusion of the poor. All too often, those who are poor hear accusations of laziness and of taking advantage of governmental programs from Christians who then invite them to church on Sunday. As Martin points out, the

United States and the United Kingdom have a higher percentage of lifetime homelessness but, on average, display less compassion than non-English-speaking countries for those who are without homes. The prevailing mindset in more economically-advanced countries is still the poor are to blame for their condition. Most cite lack of morals, poor money management, poor work ethic, and lack of talent as reasons for poverty even though statistics show the real causes are lack of affordable housing, lack of technological education, and oppression and discrimination themselves (Martin 196).

Christian advocacy writers should confront such attitudes that state those who are of a low socioeconomic bracket or even those that seek governmental assistance are somehow less important to God or more deserving of condemnation and judgment. Twila Yates Papay, in the article “Countering Privilege: A Pedagogy for Undermining Classism,” advocates using writing as a way to open up dialogue about differing outlooks, even outlooks about class consciousness, by encouraging diversity (78). Christian advocacy writers cannot be afraid to challenge even their friends or colleagues if need be to open the dialogue that critiques stereotypes. Through writing of historical, social inequalities, Christian advocacy writers can present scholarship that proves blaming the poor has been a problem throughout history, and throughout history such a viewpoint has been inaccurate. It is no more accurate today than it was during the time of the Industrial Revolution. Christian advocacy writers should also show no fear in promoting the biblical mindset that exploiters alone are to blame for exploitation, even if those exploiters claim the name of Christ. As Tim Clinton, Archibald Hart, and George Ohlschlager write in *Caring for People God’s Way: Personal and Emotional Issues, Addictions, Grief, and Trauma*,

The scandal of modern-day Pharisees who abuse and mistreat those needing mercy and a “safe-haven” is that these people are never brought before Christ. Instead, the abusers

think they have the “mind of Christ” and those who suffer depression and chronic mental disorders – those among the “least of these” that Jesus calls to special ministerial commitment – are often among the first that many churches scrub from their ranks. Think about this being normative in the American church. The mentally and emotionally disabled are often too embarrassing and unrepresentative of the bright and shiny Christians the church wants to show off to the world. Stepping down to care for those with ugly dispositions and repulsive traits is exactly opposite of the step up we want to take in a life of ever-growing satisfaction with the abundant life God promised on the other side. No wonder Jesus wept. No wonder the scandal of the church shooting its wounded keeps growing. And no wonder there will be many expressions of shock and disbelief on judgment day when many will hear the Lord say, “Depart from me, for I never knew you” (11).

Those who live in poverty are not representative of what we, as Christians, often want to portray to the world. It is easier to blame the victim than it is to stoop down to offer help and advocacy. The advocacy writer must point out such inconsistencies between biblical doctrine and what is, all too often, church theology.

Christian advocacy writers must challenge fellow Christians to offer the same respect to individuals in low socioeconomic brackets as they offer to those who are not. As historical research shows, there was a chasm between the relief workers and the poor during the time of the Industrial Revolution (Drake 5). Charities and relief workers treated the poor as though they were a project or a mission field instead of recognizing those in poverty were human beings who needed assistance, as we all do at times (Drake 5). Today’s Christians must not fall into this mistake of believing only the ungodly are poor or in need of extra financial help. Today’s

Christian advocacy writers who focus upon historical, social inequalities are able to present lessons from history that reflect how lack of respect can distance those who need help from those who are offering help. Being able to empathize with experiences of others, experiences we may not ourselves have ever experienced nor may we ever experience, is the key to advocacy writing. Marxist scholars have revealed a non-traditional interpretation of historical and current social events that admonishes Christian advocacy writers to understand what a lack of empathy allows.

In today's Christian society, there is also a prominent mindset that any work for God has be accomplished within the walls of a church or under a denominational label. Christian advocacy writers, however, should not be afraid to buck this tradition. I Kings 17-18 introduces readers to two workers for God. Obadiah is a worker within King Ahab and Queen Jezebel's kingdom. He hides God's prophets, who are in danger of Jezebel's execution. Elijah, the prophet, is sent far away from this kingdom. He only emerges to confront Ahab with his own wickedness. This comparison of the church to the kingdom of Israel during the reign of Ahab may seem harsh. However, when we study the words of the prophets toward God's people when they ignored many of the same oppressions we in our Christian country and even our churches ignore, the analogy may seem more appropriate. Likewise, Christian advocacy writers are a type of prophet. They will, at times, find themselves confronting the Christian viewpoints addressed earlier in this thesis. They can confront and call a biblical revolution that demands justice from inequalities and favor for all people regardless of socioeconomic status. There is no sin in working outside a church setting in such a ministry of advocacy. Oftentimes, this is where their revolution of love will be heard.

Changing Society or Changing Opinions: A Man's Heart versus A Man's Circumstances

Marxist scholar Maurice Dobb wrote in "Marxism and the Social Sciences" of the debate or conflict between the idea of "You can only change society when you have brought about in men a change of heart" and "You can only change human nature by changing the economic conditions in which men live" (Dobb). The second idea originates from ideas as presented earlier in this thesis that men will behave as they are treated. This argument is the basis for class consciousness (Dobb). The first idea seems to be rooted in biblical theology. Proverbs 4.23 reminds, "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it" (*New International Version*). Romans 12.2 exhorts believers to renew their minds to be able to test what is God's perfect will. In Psalm 51.10, the Psalmist pleads for God to create within him a clean heart and steadfast spirit. These verses certainly leave no doubt the heart must change before other, material changes can take place.

However, placing the two ideas against each other may not be as biblical as it seems. As Patrick J. Hill writes in "Emmanuel Mounier: Total Christianity and Practical Marxism," such recognition of biblical truth of the importance of the heart should not detract from the Christian's concern about what occurs on earth. Unfortunately, with Christians' concern for salvation (the ultimate change of heart), they have all too often not shown enough concern for their presence in the world. He refers to this as the Christian's dualist mindset (80). According to the theology presented in this article, the Christian is bound to care for the conditions of earth's inhabitants. Seeing the needs of the unliberated is a Christian duty (Hill 82). Denys Turner agrees. The author writes in "Can a Christian Be Marxist?" Christian theological doctrine does not have to be at odds with the idea that God acts through material circumstances or physical events (248-249).

Christians should, thus, seek to improve the physical and emotional conditions of the oppressed, even if they are labeled as materialists.

If Christians avoid the dualistic, either/or mindset, there is no reason to reject the ideas of alienation or class consciousness as presented by Marxist scholarship. Alexander Saxton in “Marxism, Labor, and the Failed Critique of Religion” writes of how Marx never clearly defined religion in his complaints against it. He only considered religion a ploy of the bourgeoisie in their quest for dominance (309). The sooner the recognition of oppression begins, the sooner steps can be taken to halt such oppression. Christian advocacy writers must remember their purpose in advocating for the victims of such oppression.

Conclusion

“It is well that while we rage, Science, glorifying in Time,
 City children soak and blacken soul and sense in the city slime?
 There amongst the looming alleys Progress halts on palsied feet,
 Crime and hunger cost our maidens by the thousand on the street.
 There the Master scrimps his haggard sempstress of her daily bread,
 There a single sordid attic holds the living and the dead.
 There the smouldering fire of fever creeps across the rotted floor,

And the crowded couch of incest in the warrens of the poor.” – Alfred Lord Tennyson, from
 “Locksley Hall Sixty Years After”⁹

The wise and wealthy King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 5:8-9, “If you see the poor
 oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one
 official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still. The increase of the
 land is taken by all; the king himself profits from the field” (*New International Version*).
 Oppression and exploitation should not come as a surprise and neither should they be denied.
 Oppression does not begin with the victims being oppressed. As these verses from Scripture
 point out, oppression is a hierarchy. Oppression in capitalistic systems is no exception.

The poor and the oppressed are important to God. Psalm 146.7-9 promises God upholds
 their cause, sustains the orphan and widows, and vindicates those who suffer. God’s
 righteousness demands those who are bowed down will be lifted up. The Christian advocacy
 writer whose focus is historical, social inequalities uses available resources not to bring about a

⁹ Tennyson, Alfred Lord. From “Locksley Hall Sixty Years After,” *Poverty and Compassion: The Moral Imagination of the Late Victorians*, by Gertrude Himmelfarb, 1991, p. 62.

utopia or a revolution based upon anger and revenge, but to ease the burdens of others through revelation of inequalities and advocacy for the oppressed. Many times, these available resources will include Marxist scholarship. Marxist scholarship is valuable to the Christian advocacy writer because of its emphasis upon not just poverty but the oppressive condemnations thrown at those who are caught within poverty's grasp. Marxist scholarship so often takes the side of the victims in debates that accuse these victims of being responsible for their own circumstances. Christian advocacy writers who focus on historical, social inequalities must be willing to examine all sides of history, buck the stigma associated with non-traditional sources, including Marxist scholarship, and challenge even what they have been taught or conditioned to believe. Christian advocacy writers must then use what they have learned to fight oppressions in today's world – a fight that is based upon a revolution of love and a devotion to grace. Instead of fighting with weapons, Christian advocacy writers fight with empathy and words of conviction and a confidence in their work of spreading mercy to those who need it the most.

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