

Mammon Rules? A Critical Enquiry

In his Christmas 2012 speech David Cameron referred to the importance of Jesus Christ's coming to be the Light of the World. The reference is to John 8.12: 'I am the Light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but have the light of life'. Jesus said of authority figures in his own day: 'They do not practise what they preach' (Matthew 23.3). Jesus' way is not just to be admired but to be followed. Does he, David Cameron, practise what he preaches in that Christmas message? Is he saying words for effect or for real?

Following Christ involves overcoming many forms of darkness. Is that the Cameron agenda or just Cameron propaganda? How does the agenda square with Jesus' mother's perception of the promised effect of the Light:

'He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich empty away'

Jesus said 'You cannot serve God and Mammon'. Giving money a crucial determinative role at points which shape peoples' lives is a road that leads to destruction. Look at what happens on the ground. Is wealth a decisive factor when it comes to governmental policies and programmes?

Senator Salonga, in the Philippines, spoke to me of the 'Evangelical necessity of research (into the doings of corporations) lest the world get into a powerful grip which is other than God's'.

We must look into the intentions and substance of policies being pursued to make a true judgement. That will cover management of the economy, austerity measures, welfare provision, NHS changes, employment, and the culture which attaches to these. We may then see whether God or Mammon occupies the controlling position when it comes to the bit.

This approach is in line with biblical prophecy. Concrete developments in the world are addressed and the revelation of God in Christ Jesus, the Light of the World, is brought to bear to sort out what belongs to the light and what to darkness.

Management of the Economy

At a time of financial contraction fiscal discipline becomes imperative. How does H.M. government rate?

There is a fall at the first hurdle. Genuine fiscal discipline will not focus on one major factor to the diminishing of other important ones.. Concentration on the debt deficit has put fiscal policies askew. It is as if a Lord said of a servant 'his application to the job is so poor that he does not deserve his porridge. I'll halve his portion'. Deprived of proper nourishment the servant will be even less able to provide the service required. A concrete case illustrates: In 2010 George Osborne imposed a 'stealth tax' in the increase of V.A.T.. Thereupon High Street spending fell by £12 billion, directly affecting budget income.

There was an effective alternative approach to which the Chancellor turned a blind eye. By a judicious balance between dealing with the debt and encouraging growth – he brought forward a projected £30 billion programme of infrastructure investment – Alistair Darling was guiding the country out of recession when the result of the election plunged it back in. The country had to pay for that with the present skewed fiscal approach.

High borrowing was forsworn. That is, until the Chancellor got into difficulties. What followed was not, as was Alistair Darling's, investment to produce growth, but borrowing to cover holes in failed policies. Austerity was meant to save borrowing.

It might accompany it! In the March 2013 budget the extent of that unfruitful borrowing was concealed by a manipulation of financial statistics related to underused financial resources.

Loans to allow business enterprises to get on their feet have been denied to them by banks which, though bailed out by taxpayers, act as if they owe nothing in return. As Chamberlain came back waving a paper which was supposed to remedy a tough situation, George Osborne has returned triumphantly from colloquies with bankers, with a remedy for the drought in lending. But bankers hugged the money to themselves, even when cheap money was on offer to resolve the situation. Their bad faith went unpunished. The Institute of Fiscal Studies puts on record that business investment continued to be 16% below prerecession levels. Bankers, saved from bankruptcy by the taxpayer continued to make exorbitant demands. They stood guilty of embezzlement, taking other peoples' money and gambling it to their own advantage; of blackmail, threatening to take their skills and experience to another country unless they continued to be overpaid; of holding the country to ransom. Rioters were hunted down remorselessly and given heavy sentences, while bankers, guilty of offences on an immeasurably larger scale, go unpunished. Money talks. Fiscal discipline goes out of the window when a section of society is treated as untouchable.

Fiscal discipline should ensure that big corporations pay their dues and not leave the ordinary taxpayer to pick up the tab. When they attempt to exploit the hospitality of their country which has provided education, social sustaining with profitable outlets for their products, and secured financial gains which keep the company in business and, it could be, in highly profitable business – and then try to dodge paying their dues in taxation – they must be brought to book. They may delay payment, seeking to negotiate a reduced taxation total. They may have recourse to tax havens and the like. They must be dealt with.

Margaret Hodge, chair of the Commons Public Accounts Committee is refreshingly direct in dealings with the Artful Dodgers of taxation responsibilities. She tears a strip off the H.M. Revenue and Customs Committee who have 'an appallingly bad record of giving in feebly to forms of tax avoidance'. Wealthy businessmen take them to the cleaners, encountering flabby resistance. A secret deal with Goldman Sachs allowed the investment bank to get away with paying £20 million less than it were due. The H.M.R. committee called the negotiated deal 'reasonable' it should be called treasonable! Vodafone were let off with £7 billion less than they were due. The National Audit Office, instead of challenging the result of five negotiated settlements which took billions out of the public purse, feebly described them also as 'reasonable'. When Starbucks was exposed it made an offer of what it was prepared to pay - as if paying your dues were an optional extra to be haggled over. When did ordinary taxpayers get leave thus to haggle over the prescribed amounts to be paid?

The Public Accounts Committee has also targeted tax avoidance, noting that 'there's a lot of money to be made in selling tax avoidance schemes'. Margaret Hodge accosted Lin Homer, chief executive and permanent secretary of the HMRC, about its signal failure to deal strictly with such avoidances 'There has been a huge growth, and appalling proliferation in tax avoidance and what has the HMRC been up to? It has taken only 11 cases to tax tribunals' – that is since 2004.

Jesus Christ, in his day, recognised that the Mosaic Law could be almost submerged under accretions, and could be got round. The Sabbath law was so laden with multiple prescriptions for conduct that Jesus burst out ‘The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath’ – it was meant to be a blessing and resource for human beings not an obstacle race of restrictions. He accused authorities of his day of holding to the letter of the law and avoiding its main obligations ‘justice, compassion and good faith’. He said he had come not to destroy the law but to fulfil it – to adhere not just to its strictures but to its deep intention and goal. Paul called the Law ‘a ‘paedagogos’ to bring us to Christ’. The paedagogos was a slave-guide to whom a growing child would be entrusted to see that he was educated and taught to live truly. Law has a limited but important role. But to live truly and justly asks more than law can provide.

Bodies which find means to circumvent the law and lawyers who find loopholes in it must be required to go beyond the codes and codicils and seek ways of ‘justice, compassion and good faith’.

At root in all the above points is the contention that ‘the love of money is the root of all evil’ and holds back authentic human development.

Austerity

It has already been noted that the extent of austerity willed on the population could have been mitigated for those who have to bear the brunt if the way of dealing with the financial situation adopted by Alistair Darling had been taken.

It is officially acknowledged that 200,000 children will be thrown into poverty by present cuts while £3 billion in taxation reductions will be secured for the wealthy. What is put in place is One Way Austerity, those least able to bear it having to suffer. George Osborne, with the cheerful insouciance of those who do not have to bear burdens they impose on others has said ‘We are all in this together’. Yet like two athletes attempting a high jump, one with the latest of light trainers the other with clogs, he acts as if fairness will be achieved by taking the same percentage off income from everybody. But to the rich, the percentage may be a fleabite while to those on life’s margins it can be bread out of the mouth. The wealthy, who have gained highly disproportionately from the resources society provides, should be highly proportionately taxed compared with those who have benefited little from national resources.

Osborne’s claim that his hard austerity plan is a painful but responsible approach has now been punctured by Christine Lagerde head, of the International Monetary Fund, who once tholed it but now condemns it.

Simon Barrow of ‘Ekklesia’ has pointed out ‘In the recent (2012) spending review tax changes hit those at the top by around £1 billion but this is but a drop in the ocean of wealth. By contrast, almost four times as much money, some £3.7 billion, has been cut from the incomes of the poorest’. The top 10% own 47% of the country’s assets. One Way Austerity cushions the wealthy. Mammon calls the shots.

Polly Toynbee has pointed out that recent Local Authority provisions face Liverpool, with all the deprivation which it has to deal with, with 7.7% in cuts while the prosperous West Oxford constituency has to face only 1.1%. It happens that the latter is David Cameron’s constituency.

Welfare

To suit political propaganda, the word 'welfare' has been twisted out of its meaning. The large Collins Dictionary defines the word as meaning a) 'health, happiness, prosperity and wellbeing in general' b) 'financial and other assistance given to people in need'. It is being changed to suggest it indicates charitable acts of beneficence on the part of generous donors to aid those who are less well-fitted for life, for which recipients should show gratitude and not be demanding.

A first claim on the government of any country is to attend to the welfare of all its inhabitants – *all* its inhabitants, whatever their state. The post-war creation of a British Welfare State should be a matter for pride and satisfaction, a sign of a caring, mutually supportive, responsible society.

Liam Fox has spoken of 'welfare addiction' as if it were like some drug-dependence, something which could not be shaken off or which was indulged in by feckless people without any attempt to be rid of it. All this is propaganda to demean a good word which implies honourable, mutually supportive relationships in society. The word 'scroungers' has been given currency when 'lesser breeds' are targeted. The word applies more accurately to Fox's own class. Hiring lawyers, whom ordinary people cannot afford, they take advantage of perks, subsidies, allowances, legal get-outs. They are the ones who seize opportunity for easy gains and have the funds to take advantage of opportunities. They, not the 'lesser breeds', are the ones who have recourse to tax havens and other ways of tax-avoidance, for which others have to pick up the tab.

Two devices are used to divert attention from their depredations. One is to resort to nasty insinuations, the other to resort to patronage.

The first of these attempts is to stir up spirits of envy and jealousy, encouraging feelings of spite directed to those who are rumoured to be 'playing the system' sponging, getting off unscathed, with different forms of benefit fraud – an insinuation which disrupts community, stirs up rage.

Iain Duncan Smith patronises the poor. He, who without any experience of the conditions in which those on benefits have to live today, assumes that many welfare claimants lack mettle and a spirit of independence. It should be instilled into them by depriving them of resources which they claim - to force them to adopt what he considers to be acceptable behaviour. His witless claim to be able to live on £53 a week shows inability to live in the real world. It is as if the parable of the Good Samaritan were rewritten, so that those who passed by on the other side congratulated one another, applauding their behaviour as responsible: 'The assaulted man is reported to be half dead. Put it another way - he is half alive. As such he can recover. Once he stands up and can walk ten paces he can be declared to be fit to work. We have protected his independence'. While they thus argued, the Good Samaritan turned up and found that the mugged man had died.

Iain Duncan Smith seems not to worry about the lack of a spirit of responsibility and independence among the wealthy. Those who benefit largely from inheritance do not have to lift one finger to gain riches bestowed on them. We do not hear him advocating a much higher Inheritance tax to stimulate their spirit of independence. Those who are *disabled by privilege* from any ability to stand in the shoes of those who have difficulty in making ends meet, should surely also be enabled to get shot of their dependency.

We cannot afford a welfare state? What we cannot afford is the mean-spirited self-regarding approach which destroys community by the lack of ‘justice, compassion and good faith’ which the Light of the World pointed out as taking priority over all else.

The N.H.S.

The character of the NHS as it has been till the last election had a top rating internationally. No democratic mandate has been given to change its character as a service which should be a) for all who are in need of medical treatment b) available to deal with every kind of health need c) free for richest and poorest alike. At its heart is a theological insight that every one born is in the image and likeness of God and should be treated accordingly. In Scotland that character is preserved. In Wales an integrated system is retained and health service assets are owned by the government and the people. English ‘reforms’, however, are in process. Does the evidence show that the changes involved will benefit the whole population or do they belong to what T.S. Eliot called ‘an age which advances progressively backwards’?

The changes in England have been put in place by deceit. In an interview, Michael Portillo put his finger on the salient point – if David Cameron had come clean on what he would do the NHS, he would not have had a hope of being elected. So he fudged. The NHS would be safe in his hands. He did not say safe for speculators and privatisation predators. All he wanted to cut out was excess and waste? He should have remembered Portia – you cannot extract your pound of flesh without spilling lifeblood.

Nick Clegg and Shirley Williams wrote their party’s MPs and peers assuring them: ‘We will introduce measures to protect the NHS from any threat of takeover from U.S.-style healthcare providers by insulating the NHS from the full force of competition law’. If the NHS is being pushed exactly in that direction – in the USA around 50 million people are without any adequate healthcare cover – why has Nick Clegg lamely given in?

We get assurances. But what are they worth when set against what is happening on the ground; for which there is no electoral mandate whatever. There was smooth talk till the levers of power were grasped. Then the will of the people was simply ignored. In 2012 an Ipsos Mori survey showed that the NHS was ‘the number one area that the public wanted to be protected from cuts’. The survey was sponsored by the Nuffield Trust which identified clear signs that the NHS was already moving into a 2-tier system where those who could pay had direct access to medical care and where healthcare for others was not readily available and the provision was significantly restricted in character. When the nose of the privatisation camel comes into the NHS tent the bulk will follow and profitability instead of need will take over as the motivating factor. The legitimate occupiers will be pushed out into the cold. Note the following

When profit rules, the quality of service takes second place. On 7th March 2013 the Audit Office reported that SERCO, the chief private contractor for NHS private services for the government, was guilty of regularly providing insufficient staff for clinical duties.

The British Medical Journal has revealed that 36% of family doctors on the board of commissioning groups have a financial interest in healthcare firms. Even if that interest is declared a bias towards privatised treatment exists. Doctors with such interests should surely be excluded from commissioning groups.

Under the Health and Local Care Act, Primary Care Trusts have no clear obligations to meet health needs wherever they occur! Is it realised that local services can be closed on the basis of unprofitability by decision makers who are unelected? Here is an example of this latter. There are plans to close Lewisham's Maternity and Accident and Emergency departments. It is proposed that a 'midwife-led' unit without specialist equipment and consultants replace the maternity unit. A and E is needed on the spot, not some distance away. What is the basis for making the change? Not a failure on the part of existing services but the financial failure of a neighbouring Trust. Profit rules where need once had priority.

Employment

Much is made of the creation of 580,000 private enterprise created jobs as an unparalleled achievement of the present government. Propaganda needs to be checked against realities.

There are things which do not square. A principal one is that the large number who are statistically employed produce no notable increase in productivity, in fact the opposite, rising employment is accompanied by falling national output! The Institute of Fiscal Studies' Think Tank on Spending attributes this to a) more people working for less income and b) weak investment. Pressure is put on people to take any kind of work. Charities which had taken part in the Department of Work and Pensions' Mandatory Work Activity scheme which requires jobseekers to work on community projects for at least 30 hours per week, unpaid, became uneasy about what they called 'forced volunteers'. Charities include British Heart Foundation, Cancer Research, Age UK, Scope, PDSA, Sense, Sue Ryder. ATOS, the firm which is paid £110 million a year to assess fitness of work of those on benefits, has had these assessments bluntly described by the British Medical Association as 'not fit for purpose'. 2,200 died while still in the process of assessment, another 1,300 died who were declared to be fit enough to prepare to resume work.

Margaret Hodge, Chair of the Public Accounts committee, has seen young people especially let down by the Work Programme introduced in June 2011, estimated to cost £3 billion to £5 billion over five years: 'It is shocking that, of the former incapacity claimants referred to providers only 20 people have been placed in a job that has lasted three months, while the poorest performing provider did not manage to place a single person in the under-25 category into a job lasting six months'. This was well below the official estimate of what would happen if no Work Programme had been brought into being and if billions had not been squandered!

The Public Accounts Committee observed that only 3.6% of long term unemployed moved into sustained employment. The Department of Work and Pensions had anticipated over 11%. Employment failures are writ large.

The recruitment firm Manpower has bluntly asserted that 'a large proportion' of work statistically registered as jobs is of an insecure and temporary nature.

The statistics which are flaunted, *even including jobs which are not real jobs*, when put into perspective as a percentage of the population, in fact show a decline. A March 2013 report of the Resolution Foundation notes that, since 2008, there has been an increase in population of 1.7 million – there happens now to be 1.7% *lower* employment than in 2008.

Is it not a despicable way of dealing with fellow human beings when people of privilege, who make sure they get jobs which suit their aspirations, inclinations and pockets, impose on others conditions which force them, desperate for survival, to grab

for any job however severely taxing, low paid, insecure – in our Aspiration Society with multiple bonuses for the wealthy few and a scrimped and marginal existence for the many! Beneath the propaganda is not a direction being taken for a low-wage society which demeans and degrades human beings, all made in the image of God? Especially for young people, unemployment deprives them of a stake in society which would encourage responsible participation.

Culture

What kind of culture is fostered by the present government's priorities? What drives it forward? Is it Mammon-inspired? Is it marked by what Hugo Young in his biography of Margaret Thatcher called 'a mood of tolerated harshness. Materialistic individualism was blessed as a virtue, the driver of national success. Everything was justified as long as it made money. Or does it reflect the call for justice which runs like a drumbeat through Old and New Testaments, summed up in Amos 5.24 'Let justice roll down like waters and true living like an every-flowing stream', a prophetic emphasis picked up by Jesus when he identified the 'weightier matters of the law': justice, compassion and good faith'. Let us take these in turn and see whether David Cameron's recognition of Jesus Christ as the Light of the World is expressed or denied in practice.

Justice Justice is the public face of love and a source of light. Of government measures adopted in 2012, Simon Barrow of 'Ekklesia', as has been noted, pointed out: 'In the recent spending review, tax changes hit those at the top by around £1 billion. But this is a drop in the ocean of wealth. By contrast, nearly four times as much money, some £3.7 billion, was cut from the incomes of the poorest'.

On 28th March 2013 over 50 social policy professors wrote an open letter to David Cameron observing that the April cuts, on top of previous ones will result in the poorest tenth of households losing the equivalent of around 38% of their income. They go on 'In the interest of fairness and to protect the poorest, as well as to avoid the risk of undermining the consensus on the British welfare state, we urge you to increase taxation progressively on the better off, those who can afford to pay (including ourselves) rather than cutting benefits for the poorest'.

In his 2009 Hugo Young lecture, David Cameron said 'We all know in our hearts that, as long as there is deep poverty living systemically side by side with great riches, we all remain the poorer for it'. Does he listen even to what he himself says?

Compassion In contrast to the way in which welfare is being smeared – Liam Fox spoke of 'welfare addiction' seemingly impervious to the extent to which his own class were beneficiaries of the system – the 50 professors called the welfare state 'one of the hallmarks of a civilized society'.

There is work to be done in identifying those who unfairly milk the system. The government is dodging that serious work in two ways. One is to relegate it to an agency which authoritatively turns out to be, 'not fit for purpose'. The other is to slander those in general who need benefits to get into their lives survival resources with any quality of living at all. The social policy professors rail at 'Misleading rhetoric concerning those who have to seek support from the welfare state, such as the contrast between 'strivers' and 'shirkers' risks undermining trust, and with it, one of the key foundations of modern Britain'. Can such rhetoric stoop any lower than that of treating the Philpott case as if it were characteristic when nothing could be less typical of those who need support to acquire any decent form of life? This distancing from reality is compounded by Iain Duncan Smith's patronising of those on benefits,

as if he knows (bereft of any evidence) that to put them on the breadline will impel them to seek work of some kind. His confidence of managing on £53 per week stems from a past 'breadline' experience which might possibly have meant having fillet steak only twice per week.

Does not 'a mood of tolerated harshness' replace compassion in who policy-makers breed distractions from the failure of the government to weed out the real fraudulent beneficiaries?

Good faith David Cameron's assurances, pre-election, were that the NHS would be safe in his hands. Its funding would be sustained. No mention is made of the funding which would end up in the pockets of speculators. What are called 'reforms' are, in England, aimed at fundamental changes in its character which have no democratic legitimacy.

Of the many acts of bad faith of the Chancellor probably none stands out more than this. While he loudly proclaimed his intention to tackle all forms of tax avoidance, the reduction of the top tax rate from 50% to 45% benefits 267,000 top taxpayers with an average withdrawal from budget resources of £10,000 per person, while the 13,000 richest collar £100,000 extra. His excuse, as told to a group of Morrisons staff, was that 'the wealthy paid less' than was their due. At the same time 200,000 children were thrown into poverty. In April 2013 Mammon had a field day! Tax avoidance pays!

Bad faith finds expression in statistics. The trumpeted number of jobs created by private enterprise proves to be wildly misleading when real, substantive employment is made the measure. The idea that those on benefits should not get more than those in employment is simply an appeal to the worst in human nature – the sport of envy. No rational comparison can be made between someone whose disability calls for aids to mobility and constant care and the employed man or woman next door – this is simply a deceitful way of piling up grudges.

Propaganda is a resource to bamboozle people so that their attention is diverted from promises made a) to get hands on the levers of power and b) to distract attention from the gap between rich and poor which is shamefully increased.

When it comes to what is happening on the ground, Mammon wins hands down and words about Jesus Christ as the Light of the World are left on a back burner.

What is to be done?

Is it not enough to deplore a bad situation. Action is called for. If the priorities of the present government do, in fact, encourage 'a mood of tolerated harshness' in which 'material individualism is blessed as a virtue, the driver of national success', where everything is 'justified as long as it made money' then we surely have to choose. We cannot serve God and Mammon. One or the other has to be turfed out. We can address the present situation. We can regulate our own life-styles.

We can draw internationally on positive alternatives which reject a market-led, privatisation-prone ideology.

- There is no rational or moral basis for allowing wealth to call the tune. Work can be highly overvalued through manipulation, pressure, power-play and, on the other hand, can be undervalued for want of these. Different contributions are not assessed to society by objective means of valuation. When Ecclesiasticus 38 seeks to find 'who sustain the fabric of the world' from day to day, it concludes that is basic workers. In terms of contribution to society a bus driver who links communities and a single mother who brings children up

to be reasonably responsible citizens may give society more than any top banker or corporation executive. The great gap between rich and poor in society is not only an injustice. It is a nonsense. It is based on no valid, assessment of worth. It must yield to a rational and just sharing of society's resources and we must see to that.

- We do not need to give in to a culture which opposes Jesus' priorities of 'justice, compassion and good faith'. Members of the Iona Community include an economic discipline in the rule which guides their conduct. It is designed to enable all members to make modest demands for their personal life-styles. Once a year we meet in family groups to keep one another up to scratch, sharing our financial incomes and outgoings for the year. Margaret and I, for nearly all our lives, lived on the minimum stipend of ordained Church of Scotland ministers when we could have had greatly increased salaries. It is possible to swim against the domination of the money-stream, and, in fairness to others, make modest demands.
- Glorious alternatives in social priorities can be observed in Latin American countries. Hugo Chavez has been the pioneer in replacing money-power with people power, rejecting the hegemony of the U.S.A. and all forms of financial neo-colonialism. Less well known is the case of Ecuador which Dr. Fandes Falconi, its national secretary for planning and development, has made public.

I quote:

'Ecuador's transformation began in 2007, after the electoral victory of President Rafael Correa's so-called citizen's revolution. After six years in office, the revolution won a new democratic majority in February, with 57% of the vote in the presidential election and two-thirds of the seats in the parliament.

By rejecting the neoliberal recipes of privatisation, structural adjustment and curtailed demand, we have grown by 4.3% over the last five years despite the global slowdown. Central to this growth, and to the reduction of unemployment to the lowest rate in the region, has been public investment, which at 14% in 2011 is the highest in Latin America..... We have also reformed and re-regulated the banking system, expanded the role of co-operatives and credit unions, and renegotiated lopsided agreements with multinationals.....

Our alternative model for society is based on the concept of "good living" "buen vivir" in Spanish, or "sumak kawsay" as it is in Quechua, our indigenous Andean language. Rooted in the ancient societies of the Andes, this is not a return to the past but looks to the future, rejecting narrow conceptions of development exclusively based on economic growth. And it rejects the false dichotomy between state and market in favour of a more complex interrelation of society with state, market and nature.

During the first term of the citizen's revolution, incomes were redistributed and poverty rapidly reduced. According to the UN, Ecuador cut inequality by more than any other Latin American country between 2007 and 2011 – this in a region with the greatest concentration of social inequality in the world.

In line with our values of sustainable development, Ecuador is the first country in the world whose constitution recognises the rights of nature. We have launched an internationally backed plan to stop the exploitation of oil in a

large Amazon area, with the aim of reducing carbon emissions and providing resources to expand renewable energy.

We are working to deepen regional integration to boost development, aiming for a collective basis to meet economic and environmental challenges. We are convinced that “free trade agreements” would, at present, damage our country and be bad business for it.

Supported by the vast majority of its people, a historical process of building the “great Latin American nation” is under way. Already it offers lessons for the rest of the world: in how to increase social equality by putting humans above capital; in innovative financial models to overcome the threat of crises; and in new ideas of good living, based on social and environmental sustainability. Ecuador is at the heart of this transformation’.

It sounds like ‘Light of the World’ material