

Christ's Brotherhood

Its Social Value

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1. SHAM FRATERNITY.

Since the days of the French Revolution, the world has heard much of Fraternity. Those who use the term so glibly forget the source from which it springs; they do not appreciate the fact that the name of brotherhood was borrowed from Christianity. Nay, rather, they often vilify that source. It is an ungracious return to that august institution from which their most vivid ideas are derived. But a curse, the curse of unfruitfulness, followed the unwarranted taking of that sacred name of brotherhood. They took the name; the reality they could not take. The French revolutionaries spoke of universal brotherhood, but it was a catch-cry, a make-believe, a sham. The spirit of that cry they did not show to all men; least of all did they show it to Christians. Instead of comradeship, they gave a bloodbath; instead of Fraternity, they gave the guillotine. At Lyons even the guillotine was regarded as too tardy an engine of destruction; batteries of cannon were reared, and parties of two hundred men and women, tied by a rope to a row of trees, were slaughtered at the same time with grape shot. When it was found that sometimes, through the intermingling of spectators, there were more shot than had been condemned, Jean-Marie Collot d'Herbois, a member of the military tribunal, cynically observed: "What signifies it that there are too many? If they die today, they cannot die tomorrow." (Buzot's *Memoire et recherches*, page 89: Quoted by Redhead, *French Revolutions* (1848), page 311.)

Another judge of this tribunal wrote to a friend: "What enjoyment you would have felt if you had yesterday witnessed justice executed upon 209 wretches! What majesty! How imposing a sight! The whole was edifying.... Truly, it was a spectacle worthy of liberty!" (Buzot's *Memoire et recherches*, page 89: Quoted by Redhead, *French Revolutions* (1848), page 311.)

In more recent times, the experiment of comradeship was repeated in a country of vast potentialities – Soviet Russia. We are familiar with the result. Many changes were effected; an old tyranny was broken; the gospel of a full meal attracted starving men; but of universal brotherhood, there was none. Rather, there were wholesale imprisonments, death for numerous fellow-countrymen, amongst them Catholic priests who dared to call their souls their own and who faced tyranny with the assertion of the old Gospel of spiritual values. The truth is that the secret of brotherhood is not in the hands of these revolutionaries, or of any man. Brotherhood could never have blossomed into such glory as it did in early Christianity were it not for a Divine Force.

Before Christ, there was not even the idea of universal brotherhood; He introduced it to a wondering world. Neither Jew nor Gentile had possessed it. The Gentile world, Greek and Roman, made a religion of valour, not of love. So far were they from recognizing universal brotherhood that

the majority in their nations were slaves, to be bought and sold, property without any of the sacredness even of property.

(Footnote: Varro defines a slave as “a vocal kind of tool.” Tacitus describes in operation the law that prescribed the death of every slave in the house if the master were murdered (Annals 14, chapter 44). Pollio fed his lampreys on slaves (Seneca, *De Clementia* 1, 18). Cicero looked down on all tradesmen as “barbarians” engaged in “sordid occupations” (*De Officiis*, 42: *Tusculan Disputations*, 5, 46). And as to the poor, a rhetorician of the imperial days addressed a rich man: “Could you possibly let yourself down so low as not to repel a poor man from you with scorn?” (Quintilian, *Declamations* 301, 3, 17. See Doellinger, Gentile and Jew, Volume 2, page 278.)

There was no heart in the relationships between the various classes of men. Saint Paul mentions as the blackest sin of many of these pagans that they were without affection. So they remained, cold as their marble statues that are preserved in our Art Museums from the salvage of time and that still look out upon us, like beings from another world, with a gaze which, though beautiful and immortal, is haughty and impassive.

The Jews, in many respects superior to the Gentiles, were like them in the want of universal brotherhood. Although they were bidden to love their neighbours as themselves (*Leviticus* 19:18), and to leave the gleanings to the poor, and to show compassion and relief to the slave at stated periods, their vision reached only to Jews and the stranger within the land. They might not take interest from one another, but they were allowed to take it from the aliens living outside Jewish territory. The eyes of Moses, Divine legislator though he was, were held so that even he could not see the vision in all its fulness. Not a man but a God gave universal brotherhood to men.

2. CHRIST’S BROTHERHOOD: WHAT IT MEANS.

Christ exemplified in Himself His doctrine of service and of comradeship. He came not to be ministered to, but to minister; and it is in accordance with His counsel, that the man who takes His place and possesses the highest dignity on earth calls himself the servant of servants. Can the world show a host like Him, Who, girding Himself with a towel, washes the feet of His guests? Nothing can be imagined that even approaches this in human service. We shrink, as did Peter, from the very thought of it. Christ washes the feet of a democracy surely, if ever there was such – of fishermen like Andrew and John.

His brotherhood was bounded by no geographical, no moral frontier. Neighbouring nations, then as now, were a source of irritation, if not an object of hatred. People might believe that they should love the neighbour if an individual, but no nation either then or now was prone to recognize the necessity of loving a neighbour nation. Yet Christ, Jew as He was, paid a tribute in His parable to the Samaritan philanthropist and showed kindness to the Samaritan sinner.

Christ’s brotherhood knew no caste distinctions. Each true Christian is of incalculable value, heir to a heavenly kingdom, a sharer in Divinity (2 Peter 1:4). Doubting Pilates might ask in surprise of Christ — “You are a King, then?” They might also wonder at the dignity given to the least of His followers: “I dispose to you,” He says, “as My Father disposed to Me, a Kingdom” (*Luke* 22:28). Christ identifies His followers with His own royal personality. He pleads with their fiercest persecutor — “Saul, Saul, why persecute you Me?” And Paul never forgot this lesson so vividly and wistfully impressed that Christians are identified with Christ in one body; He makes it the master-thought of all his practical teaching. Christ, then, is persecuted even after Golgotha. He is

occasionally scourged at the stone pillar of Business. He is still sometimes crowned with the thorns of riches.

Saint Paul is the most luminous interpreter of this enduring brotherhood. "With Christ there is neither Jew nor Barbarian nor Scythian; neither bondsman nor free" (Colossians 3:11). How mad such idealism must have appeared to the practical men of Paul's day! As if he were to say in our day: "With Christ there is neither Englishman nor Irishman nor African; with Christ there is neither capitalist nor workman." The idea of doing away with caste distinctions by the stroke of a pen! Yet the mad dream of the idealist, Paul, was translated into reality. It was not the cold white light of intellect but the atmosphere of heart, introduced into the world by Christ and announced by Paul, that gradually softened the condition of the slave; from slave to serf, from serf to servant. And that process is not yet complete. If the past foretells the future, if Christianity is still a Divine force, we can predict an indefinitely greater amelioration of the condition of the workman. For over all this process there broods the Spirit of One who once lived on this earth, and did not call His helpers servants, but brothers and friends.

The difference between the brotherhood of Christ and the fraternity of revolutionaries is that Christ is able to make His brotherhood a reality, and not an empty profession. He made the love of brotherhood the central portion of His teaching; He made it the one great law of the New Code He promulgated; He threatened damnation to those who have not a working love of others. He prayed, we may be sure, effectively, for the unity of brotherhood during His last night on earth. He hedged it around with every imaginable fence. He safeguarded it through a Church unified by its faith, its sacraments, its worship, and its marvellously organized government culminating in one visible Head. To secure brotherhood, He instituted a special visible means of inner grace. For He does not merely command like others, but He helps to fulfil His own command. We have a standing proof of this fact in the Eucharistic rite, which is significantly called Communion, Fellowship. The Eucharist is the sacrament instituted by Christ to make His brotherhood a visible reality; the Eucharistic altar was the table on which were placed the gifts of the early Christians in communion with one another, and from which was distributed by the deacons the fourth part of these offerings as the patrimony of the poor.

The Eucharist, then, is the chief source of Christian fellowship, of communion, but another wonderful source is the Communion of Saints; its esprit de corps being none other than the unifying Spirit of God. All genuine Christians are held united by the golden chain of prayer. Saint Paul speaks of the true equality between rich and poor (2 Corinth 8:13 to 9:11).

If the rich give to the poor, equality is preserved by the poor also giving an alms to the rich, the alms of prayer. Christian charity does not then imply any patronising, any lowering of the condition of the poor: whereas the State — and it is a disturbing thought for those who seek in official control the cure of all our economic ills — when it took over from the Church this form of social work, undid the work of the monasteries, and soured the sweetest name found on earth, the name of charity: the poor whom Christ blessed, the State branded as paupers.

3. CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD WOULD EFFECT A WORLD REVOLUTION.

Some will object that Christianity also, Brotherhood in Christ, has been tried and found wanting as a social force. Who are they who make this assertion? They are those who have never tried Christianity to the full. Had they given Christianity a full and fair trial, as did Saint Vincent de Paul, between whom all and any philanthropic worker of the world there is no comparison, they would

not make the statement; they would know that the social forces of Christianity will never be exhausted, for they are the resources of Divinity capable of being ever adapted to the changing circumstances of men. Had they experimented, they would discover that Christianity holds the keys of social life and death.

The trouble is that much of the force of Christianity is still tied up through the ignorance or lack of co-operation of many Christians. Few realize even in a faint way the dynamic quality of Christianity, that is to say, the forcefulness of God in this final age. People realized it better in the first ages when they saw it operating for the first time, when the old values were being shattered by the new force. Christianity laid its axe to the root of a decadent society with a vigour, which is not found even in the dreams of Socialism.

Much of the force of Christianity needs only ignition of the fuse to send forth the fire that Christ came to cast upon the earth. But for this end, the co-operation of man is needed. All must do their part.

If any man doubts that much of the force of Christianity is bound up, or that its escape would effect a revolution, let him think what a change would be effected if the capitalist were to use socially his surplus wealth, if in time of need he were in truth his brother's keeper.

4. WHAT BROTHERHOOD WOULD EFFECT IN THE SOCIAL USE OF CAPITAL.

The impulse of a brother is to share a loaf with a brother. Christianity encourages this impulse; it promotes spontaneity; it blesses the cheerful giver; not for it, the enforced service of the slave. But after leaving a wide margin to the impulses of love and humanity, after extending the field of counsel regarding what is laudable in kindly relations between brother and brother, Christianity definitely maps out certain obligations of the possessors of wealth. If these counsels and precepts were observed, the world would not now be suffering from the extremes of industrial piracy and penury, of gigantic fortunes and grinding destitution. (Footnote: The estimate has been made in the country of the famous economist, Adam Smith, that 90 per cent of the wealth is possessed by 4 per cent of the population, the so-called upper class, and 10 per cent by the remaining 96 per cent of the people. See L. C. Chiozza, *Money, Riches and Poverty* (1911), pages 44-50.)

Christ's teaching was regarded as anti-social and uneconomic because He encouraged the distribution of wealth, struck at the materializing of life-values, and denounced by anticipation the modern godless usury and worship of money. He told men not to be solicitous for the morrow, and not to hoard their treasures on earth.

As against this unsocial hoarding of wealth, the Doctors of the Church clearly laid down that the wealthy have ties of humanity as well as of property, and must look upon themselves as bound by a stern duty if their brother is in necessity. Since any attempt to interfere with private property, or to assert its communal obligation, is apt to be resented as something nigh to Bolshevism, I shall give the measured words of the most representative Catholic theologian, Saint Thomas of Aquin. After asserting and establishing the right to acquire private ownership he proceeds: "Another thing that concerns man in regard to the possession of external things is their use; and in this regard a man should not look upon external goods as private but as common ; in this sense, namely, that he should easily share them in others' necessity." (*Summa Theologicae*, Second part of the Second Volume: Question 66, article 2.)

Later on, Saint Thomas maintains that this is not a mere counsel but a duty: “Human laws must yield to the natural law; by the natural law proceeding from Divine Providence the purpose of earthly goods is to meet human needs; the division of property arising from human law must be subordinated to these needs; and so the superabundant wealth of some is by natural law due to the sustenance of the poor.” (Summa Theologicae, Second part of the Second Volume: Question 66, article 7.)

Yet Saint Thomas does not draw the line too strictly for human nature. First, one is bound to give only out of superfluous goods, that is, out of what is left over after what is necessary for providing for the needs of oneself or one’s dependents, and what is necessary for one’s status in life. Secondly, Saint Thomas implies ownership and not a mere stewardship of these goods by teaching that the duty is one of charity, not justice. Thirdly, a strict obligation exists only if our intervention is required by an individual in extreme need (that is, want of the necessities of life) or by the commonwealth in grave need. (Summa Theologicae, Second part of the Second Volume: Question 32, articles 5 and 6.)

The Angelic Doctor does but repeat the teachings of the early Fathers of the Church, of those who were nearest Christ and best interpreted His Spirit. It is especially appropriate in our day to listen to their thunderings against the misuse of wealth. Saint Basil the Great preached in his day: “If you confess that these things come to you from God, namely, your temporal goods, is God unjust distributing them among us in unequal fashion? Why do you abound and why is that other man a beggar unless that you may have the merit of good dispensing and that he may be glorified with the prize of patience? It is the bread of the famished that you hoard up; it is the coat of the naked that you lock up in your wardrobe; it is the shoe of the disinherited that rots in your possession; it is the money of the needy that you keep buried.” (Homily on Luke 12.)

Saint Ambrose uses almost those very words, (in his Sermon 64 on Temporal things) and on another occasion, he says: “Feed him that is famishing; if you have not done so, you have killed him.” (Book 1 De Officiis chapter 30.)

These words of the greatest Doctor and of the greatest Fathers show how wrong is the supposition of Communists that Christianity merely encourages resignation when people are oppressed by economic conditions. They disclose how groundless is the saying of Marx that religion is the opium of the masses. They also indicate how futile is the fatalist theory of some Christians that poverty is to be taken for granted. These comfortable people shrug their shoulders; falsely represent Christ’s saying: “The poor you shall always have with you”; and dismiss the whole problem of poverty from their thoughts, adopting an attitude of spiritual laissez-faire. No greater injustice could be done to Christ than by supposing with Communists that He encouraged a passive fatalist attitude in regard to destitution, or by supposing with some Christians that poverty in the sense of destitution is a consecrated state that it were impious to disturb.

Christianity is not static, but dynamic; it is the most explosive force the world has known; even the mother of Christ — she who is pictured as all meekness by those who identify charity with sentimentality rather than with a flame of the soul — even the clement, loving Mary breaks forth at the birth of Christianity into vigorous words that announce the Divine revolution, God’s constant rebelling against the unjust things that are: “He has showed might in his arm; He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He has put down the mighty from their seat and has exalted the lowly.” (Luke 1:51-52).

If one examines the context of those much abused words of Christ about the poor, one finds that they suggest not that the poor are poor to be left poor, but that the poor are to be relieved. He had just accepted at Bethany the rich gift of spikenard ointment poured on His head and feet by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, because the chance of doing Him this kindness was unique; He was to pass from among men. But concerning the poor He said: "The poor you have always with you; and when so ever you will, you may do them good" (Mark 14:7); the clear implication being that there was always an opportunity for His listeners of relieving destitution. And if there should remain any doubt about the matter, it would be removed by the fact that Christ counselled His close followers to sell all their goods for the benefit of the poor, and that He will make the question of the relief of the needy the subject of the last Great Audit.

It is often said that He counselled poverty. But no small confusion arises in the mind of some because they do not distinguish between detachment from earthly goods, and destitution, between poverty and pauperism. It is not proved that Christ anywhere counselled men to be destitute. History shows that there are moral dangers in destitution as well as in wealth. Those dangers may be avoided, but it still remains true that in the grinding struggle for physical subsistence there is not so much time for the spiritual values; there is a temptation to lying and to servility of soul.

That the Church of Christ does not understand by the poverty she counsels and fosters mere destitution, the lack of some necessities of life, which owing to a degradingly low public opinion the world tolerates, is made abundantly clear from those religious institutes which administer a vow of poverty.

In these communities, which were intended as models of Christian living, which were set up as the embodiment of the Christian ideal at its purest, the dwellers were not supposed to be without the necessities of life, of physical efficiency; in countries where the custom prevailed they could have a glass of wine; they had a reasonable amount of time for recreation and relaxation; they sometimes got a brief vacation; they were provided with the means of comfortable travelling, when this was necessary. Any curtailment of the rights of physical subsistence and efficiency was jealously guarded against.

Furthermore, these communities, which cultivated poverty in the sense of using only what was sufficient, proved one thing for all time against the opponents of Christianity. They showed by the eloquent logic of facts that Christianity does not fail as a social force. The generous souls that faced the supreme adventure, that threw themselves entirely on Christ and took Him at His word, supplied a living commentary on the truth of Christ's saving: "Seek you therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice: and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33). Subordinating the visible to the invisible, and using the leverage of the great spiritual force of personal industry, these men showed that Christ's teaching is not uneconomic. They ploughed the rock until it bore; they converted, as at the Abbies of Melleray, waste lands into model farms; they trained, as at the Christian Brothers Schools at Artaine, thousands for productive trades; they cultivated vineyards that were the envy of secular governments.

Is it not a fact that the great danger these men who worked with their own hands, as did Saint Paul in his day, who tried Christianity, unlike those who speak of its failure before trying it, had to guard against, was not destitution, not that they might be abandoned by a loving Providence, but rather lest they might suffer from a supply of God's earthly gifts, packed down, pressed together, and overflowing, so that in the medieval days, before work-houses and pauperism, it was a custom with

the monasteries to distribute their goods to the indigent and to regard their surplus wealth as the patrimony of the poor.

5. WHAT CHRIST'S BROTHERHOOD WOULD EFFECT IN LABOUR.

The monasteries show the value of personal industry as a social force if used in a Christian and brotherly way. For it is not the capitalist alone who is bound to treat his neighbour as a brother; the workman, too, should treat the employer as a brother in Christ, as a representative, no matter how unworthy, of our elder Brother, Christ. Saint Paul addresses workmen: "Not with eye-service as men-pleasers but in singleness of heart; whatsoever ye do, work heartily as unto the Lord and not unto man." (Colossians 3:22). Christian brotherhood thus not only strikes at the modern evil of a godless, selfish, rapacious profiteering, but at an equally great economic sickness of our day, 'ca'canny'; the seeking of a maximum of pay for a minimum of work, as if taking money for absence of service were not as much stealing as picking a man's pockets. James Adam Bede was surely right when he said that "scamped work of any kind is a moral abomination."

"Good carpentry," he says, "is God's will."... "The Bible says that God put His spirit into the workman as he built the tabernacle, to make him do all the carved work and things that wanted a nice hand. And this is my way of looking at it; there's the spirit of God in all things and all times — week days as well as Sundays — and in the great works and inventions, and in the figuring and the mechanics." There is much practical theology in (James) Adam Bede's further saying that if a man builds an oven for his wife to save her from going to the bake-house, or works at his bit of a garden and makes two potatoes grow instead of one, he is near to God. For in all this, it may be added, the worker is imitating the Maker of the world, the Divine Carpenter of Nazareth.

If the Christ-ideal were introduced in greater measure, it would transform and elevate industry. The worker for Christ does excellent, often beautiful work. Working for eternity, he achieves immortality. Would Michelangelo have wrought so brilliantly if his labour had not been inspired by the Christian ideal? Is it not because they were men living by the Christian vision that the guild-masters and apprentices made with their hands, doors and gates that are still things of beauty? Is it not because these were the Ages of Faith that they transmitted to us cathedrals that are still objects of pilgrimage to the unbeliever as well as the believer? Whereas most of the modern work calls forth the denunciations of John Ruskin; it is such a far cry from the beautiful buildings of the so-called Dark Ages to the cement structures and corrugated iron roofs of our proud Industrial Age.

Ireland is another witness of the fact that the Christ-ideal is the ally of workmanship of supreme excellence. When she was most renowned for Christianity, she was, also, most famed for her handwork. In paper, in stone, in bronze, in gold, she wrought for immortality. In other countries, copies, if so they may be called, of her varied metal work and her subtle manuscript illumination, are carefully preserved in Art Museums.

And what was the inmost secret of this splendid and luxuriant craft? A clue is found in the fact that these Irish workers, the Brothers of the old monasteries, were as careful with the inside and the concealed under portions of their metal work as with the outside. They did not make clean merely the outside of the cup. Truly, they worked not for man but for Christ; and when they thought that obscurity had come upon them in their remote retreats, it was really immortality.

6. CO-OPERATION IN BROTHERHOOD.

The best results can be obtained only when Christ's brotherhood has united the various classes, employers and workmen. The Christian spirit favours co-operation more than competition. Its very essence is altruism. In paradoxes that whipped flagging attention, Christ expressed this spirit: "If a man will contend with you in judgment and take away your coat, let go your cloak also unto him. And whosoever will force you one mile, go with him other two." (Matthew 5: 39-41). As against that Christian ideal, the pagan one is war, although curiously enough Christianity has been blamed for the hatred amongst men. In our own day, this co-operative spirit of Christ rather than the competitive, conflicting pagan spirit is much needed. For war, open or disguised, is the impulse of the natural man. Not only war among nations, but war between classes, war between Capital and Labour; the symbolism of war in play, in cards with fighting kings and queens and knaves, and in chess with fighting knights and even bishops; war even in innocent children's fairy tales, with combative dragons and killed giants; war in scientific theories, one of the scientific leaders explaining in quite pagan fashion life as a war for existence; war in economic theory between supply and demand and so-called ruthless economic forces; war waged under the heartless war-cry, "Business is Business"; everywhere and in all things the nightmare of war clings to this earth.

And the only antidote for it all was brought by a Gentle Visitant from the Skies who told men not to resist evil, but to conquer evil with good. The ordeal by fire is antiquated; the ordeal by the gun should also be obsolete in Christian countries. Duelling between individuals has been stamped out by Christianity; duelling between nations and classes, the irrational and barbaric settling of an intellectual dispute by brute force, is with us still. We have courts to settle petty disputes between individuals, but there are (in 1926 Ireland) no Conciliation Boards functioning to compose the more important conflicts between classes, which with great human suffering dislocate the trade of a nation.

(Footnote: In Germany a priest, Rev. Dr. Heinrich Brauns, Minister of Labour [from 1920 to 1928 in the Weimar Republic], has developed a system of compulsory settlements of industrial disputes in their first stages, thus averting thousands of lock-outs and strikes during recent years. — Irish Independent, March 16, 1926.)

But if there is to be co-operation rather than conflict, let it be genuine, not the sham co-operation sometimes found where the so-called co-operators shirk the work and hand over their business entirely to a manager who often mismanages. It is desirable that, as far as circumstances permit, there should be a growth in the true spirit of co-operation, from profit-sharing to full partnership. Men will advance through responsibility rather than through a mere wage, which latter implies an imperfect status. They will rise to the full stature of human dignity; and then, as in the case of the liberation of the Irish tenants in the past, workers will feel that they are not working for others like a mitigated caste of serfs; they will not be tempted to ca'canny, but will produce a better quality and a greater quantity of work.

The spirit of Christ's brotherhood and co-operation will also stimulate men to found associations for the relief of social ills. The need is different from that of the past. Today men are going to the roots of social distress; they are inquiring into causes; they are trying to remove these causes rather than mere symptoms; and it is all the better that this should be so. In the past, the Church, as a rule, merely relieved distress; in our day, what is most needed is preventive work. Social hygiene is even more promising than social medicine. To meet this special need of our time, associations have been formed with much success in many European countries; the Volksbund or People's Union in Weimar Germany, the Volks-verein or People's Club in Austria, Action Populaire or Popular Action

in France, the Catholic Social Guild in England. These did not begin in any pretentious way; the Action Populaire in France began in a little room in a street in Rheims, imitating the social organization (of the Sisters of Charity) started by Saint Vincent de Paul which he playfully compared to a snowball. These really Christian agencies came not in pomp, but rather made use of small initial outfits; the same as was done by the Founder of Christianity.

Of course, those to whom everything new is rash, and those who pride themselves on their practical sense, will regard all this talk about brotherhood and Christian co-operation and associations for social help as beautiful in theory, a fine flowering of idealism, but powerless to change society or to alter the money-market and the ruthless laws of supply and demand.

Let these hard-headed men, who do not realize that without vision a nation perishes, consider what the Church has done in the past. Let them consider how hospitals and orphanages, unknown in paganism, were the gift of Christianity as early as the days of Constantine; how Brotherhoods, efficient cells within the general body of the Brotherhood of Christ, took charge of them and made them a success, such as the Brotherhood of the Holy Ghost in the twelfth century, the Knights of Saint John and the Knights Hospitallers. Let them recall the erection of Leper Houses by the military order of Saint Lazarus in the twelfth century to treat that form of leprosy brought back from the East by the Crusaders. Let them remember the Alexian Brotherhood founded for the charitable work of burial of the dead. Let them call to mind the Congregation of Saint Raymond of Pennafort bound by vow for the ransoming of captives.

And passing from pure relief work, let them think of the eminently social work of the Bridge-building Brotherhood, founded for the making of bridges and roads, the erection of inns for travellers, and the doing of police work in the protecting of wayfarers and merchants against the old pest of highwaymen. Let those who are sceptical of the Church's creative work also recall a successful experiment in social-minded Banking; nay, even, if the terms are compatible, charitable banking; let them consider the Banks, or Montes Pietatis, established by the Franciscans and others for the protection of the poor against usurers (many of them Jewish) and for the giving of loans for a small sum to defray risk and the cost of maintenance. And when the practical men who are sceptical of the value of associations for Christian brotherhood have considered all these flowerings of the activity of love, let them not deny that the Church has the creative power to meet every social need, that her charity creates its own channels of beneficence; let these men of little faith be at least silent in the presence of facts which place Christianity on a pedestal far exalted above any other philanthropic agency, a pedestal which is unique because it is Divine.

An association acting in the spirit of Christ's brotherhood has not to beat the air in the social world, or grope around for something on which to upend its enthusiasm. It can have a definite social platform; there is no need to lay itself open to the charge made against some Christian reform programmes that they are abstract, vague, and innocuous. Its aim would be to replace the purely economic pagan standards of competition and class strife. Economic science is, indeed, needed; a science which would help to thoroughly systematize, co-ordinate, and adjust social agencies. Greater and better organized production is needed. But production can be wasted, and science misdirected. A head is, indeed, needed in the industrial world, but a heart is also required. What is wanted in business is not stock-taking alone, but a searching of conscience also — a greater infusion of Christianity.

All things have to be Christianized. Not only should there be a wage worthy of Christian life, but there should be proper housing. The worker should, after labouring in a factory containing plenty of God's free light and air, return, not to a hovel, but to a home worthy of one made to the Divine image. Above all, sufficient time has to be given to the working classes for education not merely in material, but in the higher things.

(Footnote: Much has been done in this direction in other countries by the giving of inexpensive concerts, really artistic and more elevating than cinemas as usually conducted. Art is the ally of religion, developing man's higher self.)

For material goods are not in them-selves wealth, or well-being, but the means thereto; matter is for the spirit. Christian education will help to avoid the futile extreme of over-confidence in material wealth, for, if we could give tomorrow a specific that would at once heal economic ills, the world would still be unsatisfied at heart; it would still suffer from the indestructible inequalities of brains and character, of heredity and environment; it would still have sickness and sin, accidents and death.

A fuller Christian light will, also, show up the other extreme of inhuman conditions of destitution. It will help towards just life-values by reminding us that Christ gives His active sympathy to those who are failures from the worldly stand-point; He gives His beatitudes to those brothers of ours and His whom the world in its own crude but vivid language brands as "down and out" — the poor, the meek, the persecuted, and those who mourn.
