Vedette Series.

SOCIAL CREDIT
and
CHRISTIAN IDEALS

By THE REVEREND
JOHN KNOWLES,
B.A.

"If there is a cultural inheritance capable, if properly used, of giving to every British citizen comfort, if not affluence, is there any ground in equity whereby the vast majority of the population should be deprived of their inheritance lest a few of their number should misuse it?"

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By

THE REVEREND JOHN KNOWLES, B.A.

(Vedette Series)

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PART I.

INTRODUCTORY.

" Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." (Philippians II. 5.)

Every Christian acknowledges one comprehensive rule of conduct, that is, loyalty to what he believes to be the mind of Christ. Being fallible, he may misunderstand; being human, he may fall short of what he recognises as the ideal. These are defects incident to our imperfect nature, and may exist along with sincere loyalty. It is conscious and wilful disloyalty that betrays the cause. We, who have pledged ourselves to one Master, must challenge every new idea and discover whether it is friend or foe to the Captain we follow. We cannot welcome into our minds anything which we believe would not be welcome to the mind of Christ. Social Credit is a newcomer, and must be challenged. The fact that it promises to transform the world by banishing poverty is not a sufficient reason why it should be exempt from scrutiny. The fairest promises have sometimes proved to be " Greeks bearing gifts." Neither trust nor suspicion, but only wise precaution is implied in asking this newcomer to stand and be interrogated. As Christians we must examine it,

both to find out whether it can make good its promises (for Christianity does not set aside reason and prudence), and also to discover whether it will fit in with the vision of the new earth " wherein dwelleth righteousness ".

Among Christians, as among other men, the reaction to Social Credit varies. With some, and we are of this number, the immediate response is to see in it a great step forward in the realisation of our hopes for mankind. We may be too sanguine, for it is so often true that " to travel hopefully is better than to arrive." Even so, we would rather dream of palaces and awake to find them " the baseless fabric of a vision," than dream of slums and awake to find them true. To others the idea comes encumbered with all the fears usually associated with change from the old and accustomed to the new and untried. They fear that if poverty, and the hardships accompanying poverty, are removed, then the main factor in the moulding of character will be removed also. Somehow the belief that poverty is an ideal school of virtue has laid firm hold of the minds of many kindly people. If these people could have first hand knowledge of the real misery and degradation of poverty, their belief might undergo a change. In much the same way many good people used to talk of the virtues that war provokes, because they had never seen a battlefield. Let our reactions be what they may, we have no right to be guided, solely or mainly, by our personal predilections. We must seek honestly to answer the question, Would Jesus have welcomed the abolition of poverty? We must be guided by what we believe to be the true answer.

The need for such an enquiry becomes even more necessary because the objections to Social Credit rest mainly on moral grounds. To act carelessly, when we have been warned, would increase our fault. That the objections rest on moral grounds, though this is not openly canvassed, can be shown by a short process of elimination. There are three main reasons for objecting to any such social change. First : That it is not for the general good. Second : Though it would be for the general good it is not workable. Third : Though it would be for the general material good, and is workable, yet, it is morally wrong. Objections to Social Credit based on the first cannot stand. The objective of the scheme is " more for all, not less for any." It seeks the common good of all. It is not in any sense class legislation. If opposition to Social Credit were based on the second objection, that is, on doubts or fears as to the soundness of the scheme, then objectors would be willing, indeed anxious, to have the scheme submitted to the most thorough examination. Instead, the most remarkable feature of the whole situation is, that while advocates of Social Credit have been urging for years the need for a thorough and entirely impartial examination, the opponents have strained every nerve to prevent inquiry. Opposition of this kind is not consistent with the belief that the scheme is not workable. It follows that the opposition must be based on the belief that " more for all," whether possible or not, would not be for the highest good of all. This conclusion can be verified by reference to the words of almost any statesman, on almost any social problem. To these spokesmen of the present system the great evil is unemployment, and the great aim is to make

work. Work, in this connection, is not anything a man may choose to do for his own happiness, or for the good of his fellows; no, it is something he must do in order to live. Men must do this "bread labour" because, not to do it, or to be unemployed, is "*demoralising.*" That is the revealing word. It implies that man's moral welfare is dependant on his labour for bread; and since many men would not labour unless they were poor, a state of poverty and scarcity is necessary in order to enforce this salutary thing—work. Men, at least some men, cannot be trusted with both leisure and abundance. It is better to destroy food than to destroy men's souls. It follows that wheat will be burnt while children starve. The belief that plenty for all is morally dangerous is the driving force behind the economics of scarcity.

Apart from this belief, unemployment is not a problem, but the achievement of that for which men have been striving through the ages—the transference of the burden of toil from men to machines. Statesmen do not seem to know why machines were ever invented; for, as fast as the machine throws men out of work, the statesman tries to throw them in again. To be without work, when there is nothing to do and plenty to eat, is only a problem if leisure is an evil. If leisure is an evil then scientists and inventors are the greatest enemies of our race; and, the only way of salvation is to wreck and destroy for ever all the productions of their devilish genius. Two ways are always open: Backward to the jungle, defeat and despair our companions; onward to the unknown tomorrow, hope and courage and God with us.

The root of the trouble is to be found in two conflicting ideas as to which is the better way to attain moral excellence for the average man. According to one school of thought man can only be kept from evil if he is kept in fetters. This theory holds the field to-day. It is the presupposition on which the present social order is founded and governed. It also has the approval of the majority of people. The other school of thought maintains that man is a moral being only insofar as he is free; that until he is free to " refuse the evil and choose the good," he is not morally responsible. This latter view is stated by Augustine in the words " No man doth well what he doth unwillingly even though what he doth be well." It is quite possible to hold the second view in theory, and be guided by the first in practice; and this is what commonly happens. To hold the second point of view does not imply the immediate removal of all restraints. " To say that all peoples, or even all individuals, should be suddenly freed from the restraints imposed upon them by past generations is as absurd as to say that such restraints should be uniform and permanent." (Monopoly of Credit. p. 8.)

'Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.'

It is important that we should notice that the first, which we might call the coercive theory of morals, can operate effectively only through the continuance of a state of scarcity, and compulsory labour. Therefore, the moral guardianship of society must be entrusted to those powers which control the creation and distribution of money. It is only through the control of money that scarcity and compulsory labour can be enforced. That moral sovereignty has already passed into these hands was

evidently the opinion of Mr. (now Viscount) Snowden when he remarked in the " Banker," May 1927, that the Bank of England is " perhaps the greatest moral authority in the world." From a different point of view Mr. Reginald McKenna attests the same fact, " they who control the credit of a nation . . . hold in the hollow of their hands the destiny of the people."

There is no need to point out, that if this transference were completed, the Church, as the instructor in morals and exponent of the way of life, would be superseded, and that the actions of Russia and Germany are only a little premature. Those who value the Church should awake in time. It will be too late to save her when her foundations have been undermined by her rival. The really important point is that the morality of persuasion, which the Church at her best always stood for, is to be replaced by the morality of coercion; for, whatever may be the moral authority of the Bank, no-one will imagine that it is exercised by persuasion. Here again we must beware of prejudice. Many of us have a sentimental attachment to the Church, which might give us an unconscious bias. We must remember that our supreme loyalty is not to the Church, which conceivably might depart from the way of Christ, but to Christ Himself. In this conflict of opinions we must decide, as best we can, whether the way of coercion, or the way of freedom, is the way of Christ.

Since our examination is confined to the moral and religious effects of Social Credit, we cannot turn aside to examine the soundness of the Douglas

scheme. This can best be done by a careful study of the writings of Major Douglas and others. Here we must assume that Social Credit can implement its promises. This assumption is not so gratuitous as it may appear. The Douglas proposals have been before the public for some sixteen years. A great deal is made of the fact that during that period no economist of repute has given the scheme his approval. It is far more significant that during that period, and while Social Credit has been rapidly gaining adherents among all classes, and in many countries, no economist of repute has come forward and, in a reasoned treatise, challenged its essential soundness. If the responsible economists, who are set as watchmen over our material well-being, know of any dangerous defects in the scheme, and are too superior to take any notice, then they incur a very grave responsibility. The words of Ezekiel express common equity : " His blood will I require at the watchman's hand." Personally we do not believe that our economists are affecting any such attitude. Facts have made fools of them so often of late, that they must be, of all men, most humble. The reasonable deduction is that they cannot refute, and, considering who are their paymasters, they dare not approve. They too are victims of the system they are supposed to guide; not real leaders, but " breathless little boys in front of the banner."

Seeing that we have good reason, even indirectly, for assuming that Social Credit can make good its promises, we shall proceed to consider how the new order would fit in with the way of life which Jesus taught; and we sincerely hope that we may be able to escape the trammels of those conventional and

traditional ideas which are so often mistaken, by friend and critic alike, for the essence of Christianity; and may draw our guidance from the mind of Christ.

PART II.

LIFE ABUNDANT.

" I came that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." (John X. 10.)

" Therefore take no thought, saying, what shall we eat ? or, what shall we drink ? or, wherewithal shall we be clothed ? . . . . . for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." (Matt. VI. 31. 32.)

Social Credit does not profess to be medicine for the soul. It prescribes for the body only. That part of life which bread cannot sustain it leaves to the care of those who are called to minister in things divine. But does it minister to the body in such a way as to imperil the soul ? Man's life is one, and indivisible. The life the body lives reacts upon the soul. Economic actions may have spiritual reactions.

Briefly stated, Social Credit proposes to readjust our money system in such a way that the goods already available, and the additional goods which can be produced, if required, will be distributed to the people; and so to usher in the age of material abundance for all.

From the economic standpoint this is the only reasonable course to pursue. Economics is concerned *solely* with the husbanding, increasing, and most effective distributing of our material resources. Douglas says that " the only sane objective of an industrial and productive system is to deliver goods as, when, and where required, with the minimum of trouble to anyone "* Ethics, therefore, is no part of Economics. Yet, if it could be shown that material abundance would inevitably result in moral degradation, then the Economic objective would come into conflict with the Ethical ideal. There are many people who would prefer England, poor and decent, to England, wealthy and depraved. We must not hastily equate the material abundance which Social Credit promises, with the abundant life which Christ purposes for men. It is one thing, and very important, to be aware that these two aims do not coincide; another, and quite different thing, to assume, without evidence, that they are inconsistent, or conflicting. Our object is, by examining the evidence, to discover if Social Credit is antagonistic to the Christian Ideal.

In this inquiry we must confine ourselves, mainly, to the New Testament; for, there only we find the authentic record of that life and teaching on which Christianity is based. Still, because many christians are greatly influenced by Old Testament teaching, it may be allowable to refer to one Old Testament source, from which, it is possible, the idea of an evil quality inherent in wealth may have come. That source is the Prophets.

* Warning Democracy. p. 2.

Most of the Prophets uttered scathing denunciations of the rich. They declared that the sins of the rich were amongst the causes of the impending doom of their country. From this, many have too hastily inferred that, in the eyes of the Prophets, wealth in itself was an evil. Closer study will reveal that what they denounced was not wealth, but the unfair division of wealth. We might say they were the first to call attention to the God-dishonouring evil of " poverty in the midst of plenty." The Old Testament did not regard poverty as a school of virtue. Its " good land " was " a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness."

What of the New Testament ? Jesus said, " Blessed are ye poor ! Woe unto you that are rich ! " Surely these sayings are decisive ? Far from it. We find in Matthew that the first quotation is there given " Blessed are the poor in spirit." The explanation of this difference is, that in the vocabulary of Jesus, and in the vocabulary of His time, the word " poor " had more of a religious than a material significance. Matthew's phrase brings out what is implicit in Luke's. The blessing was not bestowed on material poverty.

The other quotation, " Woe unto you that are rich ! " conveys a wrong meaning unless the quotation is completed. The completion is, " for ye have received your consolation." That description could not apply to all rich men. Jesus had, among His devoted followers, a surprising proportion of rich people. It was not true of these people, who had turned from the consolations of this world to follow the carpenter of Nazareth, that in riches they

had received their consolation. They followed Him because they had a hunger of soul which the world could not satisfy. The plain meaning of the phrase is that it is a description of the type of rich men on whom the woe is pronounced : men to whom riches are the consolation of life, the one goal of heart's desire. Woe indeed to such, if there is a life beyond " our bourne of time and space " for all they love is here.

Jesus spoke much of tribulation and suffering. In many pages of the Gospel the atmosphere is tense. It is the atmosphere of the eve of a battle and it must be read as such. He foresaw that adversity would attend the disciples of a new faith wrestling for victory against a hostile world. This palpable fact coloured much of what He said. He would not send forth His men buoyed up with vain hopes of an easy and bloodless victory. He told them the worst, and prepared them for it. To read this realism of Jesus as if it meant that Christians must always be sufferers, whether there is any cause for it or not, is to forget the hope which sustained His heart, and the heart of every disciple, in the days when suffering was inevitable. They suffered, not to make a miserable, but to make a happy, carefree, world.

When all allowance shall have been made, and mistaken interpretations corrected, there will still remain, in the teachings of Jesus, a clear note of warning against the grave peril of riches. " How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God ! " utters this warning most distinctly; and it does not stand alone. Is it possible

to reconcile this apparent contradiction in Jesus ? Can we find a reason why He, who never condemned riches, trembled for the soul of every rich man ? We believe we can. Let us remember the compassion that throbs through the whole New Testament story; remember the compassion that was made flesh, and dwelt among us, that we might become like Him. Let us face this undeniable fact that in the world, as it is, and has been, a man can gather riches, keep, and enjoy them, only by hardening his heart, and forgetting the sufferings of the poor. To be, even comparatively, rich in such a world means, for all of us, the sacrifice of that love and compassion which is the very life-blood of the people of God. To be rich in the midst of poverty will always mean refusing the best God has to give. In giving us love, God gives the best, because he gives Himself; for God is love. The idea that wealth is valuable only because it is scarce, is a great delusion. Wealth will never be an unmixed blessing until it is within reach of all.

CAREFREE MEN.

One of the sayings which declare Christ's purpose for men is, " I came that they may have life, and may have abundance." (R.V. margin). " This may mean abundance of life, but more probably, abundance of all that sustains life." (Expositor's Gk. Test.). Doubtless, Jesus meant more by that word ' life ' than is usually meant by the same word. How much more, we cannot say. The possibilities of life, as he saw them, no man on earth has yet explored. If ' abundance ' means " abundance of all that sustains life," we are sure that

means more than bread. We know that it includes bread. To Him the true sphere of life was in the spirit; but, He accepted the obvious fact that life in the spirit is not possible for a man on earth, without life in the body. When He made His own, the saying, " Man shall not live by bread alone," He implied both that man needs more than bread, and that man cannot do without bread. The same view of life is found in the Lord's prayer. One petition is, " Thy will be done on earth." In order that we may do this will, our next petition must be, " Give us our daily bread." It is universally agreed that this word ' bread ' comprehends all the necessaries of bodily life. Jesus knew that if His people died of starvation, or were enfeebled through want, they could not build the Kingdom of God. A fact so obvious could not escape a mind so penetrating. Some of His professed followers, blind to the facts, would build the kingdom of moral goodness by perpetuating an entirely unnecessary state of poverty and want. They would doom millions made in God's image to a bare existence, and would deprive them of all hope of a healthy, vigorous, and useful life.

Jesus went farther. He said, in effect, " you cannot begin to live the abundant life until you are free from worry about the things necessary for the body." The words, " Take no thought," from the passage quoted above, are in the Revised Version, " Be not anxious," and mean the same as our common expression " Don't worry." Continual worry about food and shelter unnerves the mind, even for ordinary duties. Much more does it unfit us for, if not quite shut out, all higher things. As

worry increases true religion decays. Let us look at the world, and think.

Christ's own cure for worry was trust in the providence of God. "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." God's providence supplements, but never supplants, man's efforts. The method of Providence is "That thou givest them they gather." God has given. There is abundance. Abundance so great that purblind men call it an evil. Social Credit calls it a good and invites men to enter into full possession of the good things God has placed at their disposal. Now, as often before, sin and stupidity are defeating the Divine purposes of good to men. However entrenched in power the sinner and the fool may be, it would be sin in us to sit still and acquiesce in such thwarting of the will of God. It is not our vocation for the right against any odds, to wrestle against "the world-rulers of this darkness". Since no "vested interests in darkness" can hide from us the fact that the supply exists, we will not accept the excuse that man cannot devise a means of sharing it. Faith does not prompt us to sit still and wait for a miracle to happen. It convinces us that miracles will happen when men set out to do the will of God. In this conviction we attack the mountain of stupidity and inertia persuaded that it can be moved.

If anyone says that Christ means us to escape from worry by becoming indifferent to bodily needs, then we refute him from Scripture. Jesus was never indifferent to human pain or hunger. Even if a follower of Jesus can be indifferent to his own,

he cannot be indifferent to the needs of others. The Christian attitude is forcibly expressed in the words, " If any provide not for his own . . . . he hath denied the faith." So long as any of ' our own ' are not provided for the incentive to worry remains, prompted by the very motives which Christianity encourages.

There is, therefore, no effective way to allay worry, except the obvious, and practical way of making the will of God, as expressed in His bounty, operative by distributing to all the products of nature and human toil. This is what Social Credit proposes. If this is the only way of ending worry, and if worry must be allayed before man's true life can be begun, then He who said, " Do not worry," would surely approve of giving to all men the " things which are needful for the body," when those things exist in abundance. " Before human ideals can be brought into effective relationship with and control by the great mass of the population, that population must be released from the undue pressure of economic forces."(1) These words of Major Douglas are, we believe, in complete harmony with the teaching of Jesus.

OBJECTIONS.

Objections are raised to the Douglas proposals on religious and moral grounds. We must now examine these. Incidentally this will test our theory by submitting it to the full force of hostile criticism. Before proceeding to the definite objections we wish to refer to the feelings of disgust with

(1) " Social Credit " p. 7.

which many people visualize an orgy of abundance. Douglas himself seems to share this feeling. He says, " If, as is quite probable, the result of an initial extravagance is a reversion to a very much simpler type of life than we have at the present time, so much the better."(1) The simpler life would then be a matter of free choice, not " the result of an imposed ideal." Few would choose to starve. It is important that we should realize that Social Credit declares abundance is possible; it does not declare that abundance is inevitable. We can always at will reduce the supply of material things, and devote more of our time and energy to the things of the mind. Social Credit does not object to government and control. It objects to murderous control. Government should be for the good of the governed. Social Credit is primarily concerned to put an end to starvation; to remove the causes of fear and insecurity, ever present spectres, to escape which men will get money anyhow. The desire to escape this fear is the motive of all the ugliest crimes in the world to-day—war included. Followers of Douglas ask no more than that all should be fed with food sufficient for them. Followers of Douglas interpret " sufficient " to mean, not the least a man can support life on, but enough to enable him, in body, mind and spirit, to become that which God meant him to be.

The first definite objection is a text of Scripture, " The poor ye have always with you." Many of those who rely on this text, betray their sense of its weakness by converting it into a prophecy:

(1) (Warning Democracy. p. 28.)

" The poor ye shall have always with you." It is not a prophecy, but a simple statement in the present indicative. This statement was made at a particular time, and to a particular audience. There is not sufficient reason for extending its application to all people, at all times.

The fullest report of the statement is found in Mark. There it reads, " Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good : but me ye have not always." Those who rely on " always " should note carefully the last clause. The second clause, " when ye will ye may do them good," raises the question whether the upward limit of good is to be the bare minimum for subsistence. Are we bound to stop short of making them comfortable, and free from care ? Can we think of Jesus as asking us to do good in moderation ? " To the uttermost " was His own limit of saving help : and, " as I am so are ye in this world."

The mental outlook which can interpret this saying of Jesus as approving of enforced poverty is only possible to those who can disassociate the teaching from the living personality of Jesus Christ. Those who have looked upon the New Testament portrait of Jesus, and have felt His profound sympathy for all human sorrows, could not easily think of Him alive to-day beholding the fruits of our industrial and economic system, walking in the streets of Jarrow, and saying, " Let be, poverty, and all its consequences, are my will, for a part of humanity. I would not have my church make Jarrow fit for men, but make men fit for Jarrow." To believe that He

is like that would kill in us all desire for a better world, all sympathy with our brother's suffering. What is, would become for us, the will of God.

If the first objection fails the objector falls back on Paul's words, " If any will not work, neither let him eat " (II. Theso. IV. 10.) That is, they surrender the plea for perpetual poverty, but maintain that enforced work is scriptural and right. We have seen that work can only be enforced if poverty is perpetuated. " He who wills the end wills the means." To enforce work is to will poverty. Apart from this, do Paul's words mean that all must work whether work is necessary or not ? To strengthen the argument the words are often misquoted, " If any man *does* not work." There are several allowable translations. This is not one of them. The only class Paul legislates for are those who are able to work, and who have work to do, but will not do it. To make it a universal rule, applicable to all men, would make Paul a savage monster. There are always men so crippled by disease or infirmity that they cannot work. Did Paul say, " Let such starve ? " " Doth God exact day-labour, light denied ? " To-day there is something which was hardly known in Paul's time. There are many men able and eager to work, but they cannot work because no man will hire them. Does Paul say, " These shall not eat ? " If so, then even the Financial System is less cruel than Paul; for it ordains that those who have work shall feed those who have none. Those who pervert the New Testament to justify their own theories, stand condemned by the New Testament; for it gives no quarter to liars. This perversion degrades the

authority they profess to respect and makes it a guide, not to the Divine way of life, but to the Devil's way.

As an example of a sane application of Paul's principle to modern conditions, we quote the regulation, to penalise unwilling workers, laid down by Douglas in his Draft Scheme for Scotland. It reads, " For a period of five years after the initiation of this scheme, failure on the part of any individual to accept employment in whatever trade, business, or vocation he was classified in the last census, under conditions recognised as suitable to that employment (unless exempted on a medical certificate), will render such individual liable to suspension of benefit in respect of the National Dividend."

The next objection might be put in the form of a syllogism, supposed to be deducible from Scripture. It might be stated thus : Fulness of bread leads to Indolence, Indolence is a vice; Therefore, fulness of bread leads to vice.

Framers of this type of argument would not go so far as to say that fulness of bread *always* leads to indolence. No-one can ignore the plain fact of history, that many of the greatest contributions to human welfare have come through the toil and thought of men who had no need to worry about bread. The happiest and most efficient workers are always those who are not suffering either the pangs or the fear of hunger. Insofar as the first premise expresses a truth and reveals a possible source of danger, Social Credit provides a corrective, which will apply automatically. For, if indolence becomes

general output will fall, the National Dividend will fall with it, thus a real shortage and no purchasing power will send men back to work. There would be this difference, however, from the present position of a man seeking work—under Social Credit, if a shortage of supplies did arise, it would be a real shortage; supplies would be in demand and there would be no difficulty in finding work. At the same time, we believe that men as a whole are not lazy. What makes so many averse from work is that so much of the work they have to do it uncongenial, irksome, monotonous, and often apparently aimless.

What of the second premise ? Is indolence a vice ? Until quite recently we would all have answered in the affirmative. Now, we believe, medical science takes a different view. It regards indolence as a form of disease due to the defective secretion of a certain gland. Over such secretion the individual affected has no control, except that he may seek help from medical science. Such an idea may still be regarded as a novelty. But it is not so long since the similar idea that a dull child cannot be made intelligent by the cane was equally novel; it is now a commonplace. It would be thought a monstrous cruelty, indeed a criminal offence, to flog on a wind-broken horse that stops on a hill to recover its breath. Christians cannot be less considerate to a fellow man who suffers from a different but equally troublesome disease. Fortunately, the number so afflicted is not very great. Apart from any help medical science may give, we have more than enough willing and active workers to do all the work that is needed for the supply of reasonable demands.

If the cause of indolence of disposition is an organic defect the objector's syllogism breaks down, for neither of its premises is what Logicians call, " a universal." At any rate it does not apply as an objection to Social Credit, for the scheme provides a corrective to the danger indicated.

On humanitarian, and, therefore, Christian grounds, it may be objected that, given abundance, some people will destroy themselves. This is true. There is always this risk. In taking this risk Social Credit pleads justification; for it is a risk God takes. It is also a risk that society takes with some of its members. For example, if a man inherits a fortune the result may be disastrous to himself; yet, society takes no steps to save him from this risk unless he is " certifiable." Indeed, the more we look at society, the more we see what Disraeli called, " The Two Nations," and two sets of rules, one set for each nation. This favouritism is repugnant to the Christian conscience.

If there is a cultural inheritance, capable, if properly used, of giving to every British citizen comfort, if not affluence, is there any ground in equity, whereby the vast majority of the population should be deprived of their inheritance lest a few of their number should misuse it ? It is the province of religion, and education, to instruct all citizens in the right and wise use of the means of life. If we have failed in our duty we have no right to screen our failure by conspiring with others to deprive men of the means of life.

To deprive men of the means of life does not in any way compensate for failure to teach them the

right use of life. While some may be ruined by abundance, many are actually being ruined by want. There is ample evidence to show that want, insecurity, and the desire to escape from these by getting money anyhow, are the originating causes of nearly all present day crime. The choice, therefore, is between an actual and present evil, and one that is only feared. There is another consideration to guide us in our choice. The evils which men are tempted to commit, by social in-equity, lie at the door of every member of society; the evils a man does of his own free will lie at his own door. In the one instance the guilt is ours, and we must expiate, in the other it is not ours, and only by redeeming influence can we make amends.

Again it is pleaded that we should retain poverty because it is a school of virtue; that the struggle to overcome poverty calls forth noble qualities which would not otherwise be brought into existence; and that the loss of these qualities would be a great impoverishment. This plea is generally accepted as true without examination. The words of Gray :

" Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,

And froze the genial current of the soul,"

or, the words of the Preacher :

" The destruction of the poor is their poverty," would be nearer the truth. A few overcome the handicap of poverty, but far more succumb. Those who overcome are proud of such a rare achievement, and make considerable noise in the world. Because this is an achievement which all wish to emulate, much attention is paid to the victorious few. Those

who fail are silent and unnoticed. It is another instance of " Where are the memorials of those who called on the gods and were not delivered ? " Throw a mill-stone on the grass, a few blades will find the hole in the centre and push through to the light. They will do so not by sheer merit but by fortuitous circumstance. Far the greater number will soon be bleached and dead. This, too, through no fault of their own. So with those who are crushed by poverty. A few overcome. Those who do so owe more to fortune than they think. Even those who make good would probably have rendered far more service to mankind if the energies spent in surmounting their obstacles could have been directed, all along, to more useful ends. We can hardly believe that the grit and genius which were David Livingstone would have been spoiled, or wasted, if he had been sent to school in boyhood instead of fourteen hours a day to a cotton mill. Great as he was, maybe God meant him to be greater.

If any man really believes that poverty is good for the children of men, let him act on that belief with his own children. No Christian should lay upon others a discipline he will not lay upon his own. Much nonsense would be silenced if a man would look into his own heart, and ask for others what he asks for his own.

Granted that the struggle to overcome difficulties is ennobling, that struggle, be it noted, does not begin and end with the " sordid struggle for mere existences." Noble qualities are called forth in wrestling with difficulties. But, what is the nature

of the virtue which the struggle against poverty provokes ? We can study its nature best, not in Livingstone, who was a genius, and as near being a christian as most men ever get, but in that object of common admiration—the self-made man. Insofar as being self-made means getting on in the world, and gathering money, then every success of this kind implies a corresponding loss to others. It is assumed, by those who praise the push and ability of the men who escape from the bondage of poverty to wealth and power, that if all the poor were equally forceful and shrewd they might all become rich and powerful. This is a complete misapprehension. In the world which Finance has made, the gain of one is always the loss of another. As things are, it is certain that if a man has nothing to-day, and £1,000 a year hence, then the rest of community, collectively, must have £1,000 less than they had. The ordinary man may " gather money," he cannot " make money," He can only gather it from others and leave them, financially, so much the poorer. We do not usually praise the man who makes room for himself by pushing a weaker man into the ditch. Yet this is the " virtue " in which the self-made man excels. He enriches himself by depriving others. We all do. It is inherent in the system. If this is a virtue anywhere, it has not yet been officially recognised as such.

The last objection with which we are acquainted is, that unless there is a considerable number of people who are impelled by poverty to seek any kind of employment there will be none to do the menial work. Here we touch a real objection, and approach

a real difficulty. It is a difficulty which should not be urged by the followers of Him who taught the brotherhood of men. The difficulty will be lessened by new inventions. For example, the all-electric house will help to solve the problem of domestic service. The difficulty would largely disappear if it were realised that many tasks are counted menial, not because the work is disagreeable, but because those who do such work are ill paid and despised. Doctors and nurses, in the way of duty, do many things which most people would consider disagreeable, but their work is neither menial nor devoid of interest.

If any difficulty still remains it should not be a problem but an opportunity for christians. Ruskin pointed to the solution when he said that the christians should volunteer for the menial work. This solution is not so absurd as may at first appear; for, when no-one would do the very menial task of feet-washing, Jesus did it, and said, " I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." When christians concentrate more on service and less on safety, Christianity will be more honoured and more infectious.

Old prejudices die hard. Predilections and privileges are not readily surrendered, even for the good of all. We know how to profess a noble creed, yet live by an ignoble one. Even if a particular way could be shown to be the only Christian way, it would not follow that we, who profess to be christians, would take it in scorn of consequence.

Our creed must conform to procrustean facts. Well, let us face the relevant facts and find out where they will lead us.

It is a fact that labour-saving machines save labour; that is, they do the work of men and leave men less to do. It is a fact that, more and more, labour-saving machinery is being installed in all industrial countries, and that industrialism is spreading over the whole world. There must, therefore, be everywhere, increasingly, less work for men as a whole to do. It is a fact that machinery, by displacing human labour, creates unemployment. But, that unemployment is an evil, a demoralising influence, is an axiom of the present system. The labour-saving machine was designed to create what is called unemployment. It has succeeded. Therefore, the machine is, in intention and in effect, the cause of this demoralisation, the destroyer of mankind. The only possible conclusion is, that if humanity shall be saved, the machine must be ruthlessly destroyed. There is evidence that some are already looking in this direction, and even moving this way; for example, Bury. This conclusion, if acted upon, would bring changes infinitely greater and have results more unforeseeable, than anything Social Credit would effect. Yet it is to be acted on for fear of change. It is true that retreat, following advance, takes us back over country we know; but though the country is the same, the conditions may be different. One novel element was introduced into human affairs in the days of the goldsmiths, and developed into a fine art by the Bank of England: that was the Credit

System. Whatever else has to go this is to be saved, and carried with us through all the vicissitudes of fortune; for, it is to save and perpetuate this system that the retreat is to be undertaken. Now if it should prove true, as Social Credit contends, and the unsaleable surplus demonstrates, that under this system industry, whether power industry or hand industry, can never distribute enough purchasing power to buy its own products, then, in maintaining this system, we shall still be prevented from consuming all we produce, no matter how little we produce. Indeed, the less we produce the smaller will be the fraction of production we are allowed to consume, and the sooner we shall perish. These are facts, and, if we deal with them in this way, this is the end at which we shall arrive. If there was no more than the shadow of a suspicion that these things might be true, then, if we were wise, we would determine to find out whether, that in our system which claims to be a benevolent mystery, and which demands from all unquestioning trust, may not hold the secret of all our sorrows, and be the cause of that impending doom, the near approach of which so many modern prophets are foretelling to unheeding ears. McDougal thinks that unless there is an immediate change of direction, then

" The Bird of Time has but a little way
To fly—and Lo ! the Bird is on the Wing."

The problem which the Christian Church, and all men of good will, must solve, is how to make the Money Power our servant, not our master. That it is our master now the next chapter will show. A way to solve this problem has been made

known in the writings and speeches of Major Douglas. We have only to demand, through our representatives in Parliament, that our rulers apply this solution, or provide a better, and the thing is done. We need not hold back lest, having won this victory, there be no more worlds to conquer. New problems will arise tomorrow to succeed the problems we solve to-day. The adventure of life beckons us on, and awaits us with new surprises, boundless as eternity. The abolition of poverty will not be the last of man's triumphs. Instead, we believe, that because man is, in the essence of his being, a spirit, deliverance from anxiety about bodily needs will set him free to pursue the end for which he was created.

PART III.

THE LAW OF LOVE.

"God is love." (I John IV. 8.)
"Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."
(Mark XII. 31.)
"Love is the fulfilling of the law."
(Romans XIII. 10.)
"Though he was divine by nature, he . . . emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant." (Philippians II. 6. 7.) (Moffat)

The ultimate goal of human life is something which man can only dimly discern at present. Man, therefore, is poorly qualified to plan the way thither. Christians believe that the way has been planned and revealed, and that it is the way of love. It follows that, from the Christian point of view, the acid test of every human system is, does it help forward or hinder the reign of the law of love. We propose now to apply this test.

We are all acquainted with the main features of the human system under which we live to-day. It is a system which artificially restricts the supply of the necessaries of life to a point which is below the actual needs of the people. From this policy there

follows, and must follow : first, the existence of unavoidable poverty and want; second, a life and death struggle to secure a share of the insufficient supply; third, a serious curtailment of human liberty, for many people have little or no freedom to choose how they will earn a livelihood. Does this system help forward the triumph of the Christian Ideal? Would not the system which Social Credit proposes to inaugurate hold out a fairer prospect ? The new system is still only a vision, not translated into actual facts. But all human achievements begin as vision and later become facts. Those who sneer at visions of a better world never contribute to world betterment. The one essential and unalterable thing about Social Credit is its aim. That aim is to put into operation a method whereby all of the necessaries of life that can be produced, shall be used for the supply of human needs. If this aim were realized there would inevitably follow for all men either a competence without work or else work to provide that competence. Competition would no longer be a life and death struggle. The man, to whom is guaranteed either a livelihood or honest work to provide a livelihood, that man is free to refuse the evil and to choose the good. Food instead of hunger, service instead of competition, freedom instead of veiled slavery, can a system which aims at these things be hostile to Christianity ? It is always more satisfactory to deal with actual facts than with plans, we shall, therefore, confine our enquiries to the question : Can a man obey the law of love and live under the present system ? If a man cannot do so, there is an urgent call to every christian to demand a change in the system.

Some may be shocked at the very suggestion that the Divine law of love might prove unworkable in any state of society. In order to reassure such let us say at once that because we believe this is God's world we believe that man's business can be so arranged that the law of love will become a practical working rule for life on earth. At the same time we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that, in some quarters, the Christian way of life is declared to be impossible, and the inference is drawn that Christianity is an outworn creed unsuited to modern conditions. Christians should face the facts. If they are forced to the conclusion that true Christianity is impossible under present conditions it is open to them to advocate an alternative remedy, namely, change of the conditions. Anyhow, it is always disastrous to shirk facts, and if only one way out of a difficulty is suggested that way may be accepted because no choice is offered.

It is a matter of common knowledge that many well-disposed and sensible men are driven to the conclusion that they cannot be true to their christian profession and keep in business. This honest conviction probably accounts for more lapses from church membership than any other cause, and explains the admitted fact that many of the most conscientious people stand apart from organized religion.

Many are either less squeamish, or unaware of the difficulty, or more resourceful in finding ways round it. Some imagine they are applying, and fulfilling, the law of love when they entertain sentimental feelings of good will. This is never

impossible. One can be sentimental in a great variety of circumstances. Indeed, the more pathetic man's lot the easier it is to be sentimental. But sentimental feelings which never express themselves in acts are a counterfeit of Christianity, and its curse. Such sentimentality justifies those who call religion an opiate.

Some seem to think that the exercise of charity, in the corrupted meaning of that word, fulfils the Christian law. " Charity " is not impossible. It was never more in evidence. Never more needed. But, charity in the sense of almsgiving is not Christian love. We may give all our goods to feed the poor and not have love.

Some like the " Oxford Group " seem to be unaware of the difficulty and proclaim " absolute love " as a practical ideal for ordinary men engaged in competitive trade. We imagine that those who take seriously and intelligently their rule of " absolute honesty " will fight shy of professing to have attained " absolute love."

Even an authoritative Christian moralist like Dean Inge, who is under no misapprehension as to the true meaning and application of Christian principles, can only suggest applications which, when examined, are found to lead nowhere. Here is his application of Christian principles to the problem of poverty. He says, " The amount of money wasted on champagne, women's dresses, cosmetics, sweetmeats, betting, and other barbarous indulgencies, would suffice to put an end to poverty and to restore the financial credit of war-stricken nations." We are grateful to the Dean

for announcing the abolition of poverty as a Christian objective and thereby endorsing the Social Credit objective. But we are amazed that he should think the method he suggests could achieve the object he has in view. How could abstinence from champagne end poverty among the wine growers of Champagne ? or help the financial credit of war-stricken France ? Would moderation in the use of sweetmeats add to the income of the inhabitants of Bournville ? or less extravagance in dress, increase employment and wages amongst drapers' assistants? If it is pointed out that the money thus saved would probably go to increase employment and prosperity among those engaged in providing the necessaries of life, we are willing to agree, though we believe the trouble is not the shortage of the necessaries of life but the shortage of money in the pockets of those who need them. We are prepared to admit that more necessaries and fewer luxuries would be a desirable change. Still the change would not do anything to end poverty. It would only transfer the ills of unemployment and poverty from one class to another. We see no reason why we should be concerned for the farm servant, and not for the draper's assistant. Both are human. Both want to live. We can only be satisfied with a method that will benefit both alike. Any method which leaves the present financial system untouched cannot benefit both, for it is a rule of that system that the gain of one is the loss of another. Robbing Peter to pay Paul is hard to square with Christian Ethics.

That we might give a convincing answer to our question, Is Christian morality possible today ?

we would need to observe Christianity in action and set forth the ascertained results. Here we meet a serious difficulty. We are afraid it is largely true that Christianity has never been tried. "There was only one Christian and he died on a Cross." Since it is not possible to study Christianity in action, the next best thing is to imagine it is being tried. Such a method is not illegitimate, for faith is the evidence of things not seen. Let us imagine what a man, wholly loyal to the memory of Christ, and living by His inspiration, would do and find in the world we know.

Imagine an industrialist, prompted by Christian love who decides to raise wages, so that his workers may enjoy the reasonable standard of living which he knows to be possible. This increase in wages must, by the present accounting system, go into costs. The article he has to sell is proportionately dearer. He cannot compete in the market. He is driven out of business. His workers have lost a friend, and their employment. The ranks of the poor are augmented by a new recruit. You say "Serve him right ! None but a fool would think of raising wages until wages are raised all round !" So we must wait for the day when all employers agree to raise wages ? We shall wait until the crack of doom.

Imagine a worker seeking employment : he decides to regard every other candidate for the post as a brother. He will not use any methods on his own behalf which he would not use against a beloved brother. How often will such a man be successful ? "But," you say, "a true Christian

is a man of good character. Character will always tell." Good character tells because there are some whose character is not quite good. Honesty is profitable only if it is scarce. That is the rule of the market. So the Christian's best chance of employment rests in the hope that there will not be many good characters competing. If such an idea enters his mind—which God forbid !—the very instinct of prayer will cry, " Let the bad be many and the good be few." Not, " Thy Kingdom come " but, " Thy Kingdom tarry." This will not do. The suggested solution makes the problem more heart-breaking. In all the circumstances, the least ghastly result is, that which is probably the actual result, namely, that if there are still left any true followers of the Man of Love, an undue proportion of them are being " demoralised " by unemployment.

Imagine a merchant who decides to trade according to Christian principles: he will sell the necessaries of life at a price people can afford to pay; he will leave no one of his neighbours to starve, or be under-nourished, so long as he has goods in his store, and plenty more on call. The only result is that he goes bankrupt. The needy lose another friend, and this fool for Christ's sake goes to swell the ranks of the poor and needy himself. You say, " This is Utopian. No man is expected, even by Christianity, to sell goods at less than they cost." Quite so. We believe that Christianity does not expect any man to give his services for less than nothing. Christ recognised that a man must live. But think ! Is it more Christian to sell below cost, or to let goods go to waste while men are in need ?

One would get more money, when selling at any price than when leaving goods to rot. If we are to be Christians at all, we must be Christians in the world as it is. Further, it is obvious that every year, for some reason, many people have to sell below cost. Bankruptcies and forced sales are the evidence. Is the Christian attitude to these unfortunates to be "Devil take the hindmost." Again, think of the prevalent under-nourishment. If these starving people are to be properly fed more goods must be sold below cost, somehow. Who should show the way if not the Christians ?

You say "It is impossible. It is not sense." We know it is not sense, that is why we say there must be something wrong. Moreover, we see, what some do not seem to see, that unless we can reconcile these contradictions we will need to re-write the Parable of the Good Samaritan after this manner. "A certain Samaritan, when he saw him, had compassion on him, and would have bound up his wounds, but, remembering that he could not give oil and wine below cost, he too passed by, though sore at heart. So there was no man to help him who fell among the thieves." We are far nearer to this than is commonly thought. Look at our charities ! The stridency of the appeals is not without significance. The persistency of the demand from a growing number that these institutions should be financed out of the rates, or with money from sweep-stakes, may be an omen that the last relic of Christian charity is about to vanish from the earth.

"But," you say, "all this is due to the low wages paid to their workers by our foreign rivals.

If only the world were converted to Christianity all these troubles would be at an end ! " Or, as this seems rather far off, " if only the League of Nations could do something ! " The League, poor child, is sadly overworked, and sorely discouraged with fears and failures. Let us not trouble the League. Let us imagine a miracle. Results are as likely one way as the other. Imagine the whole world, and every person in it to be converted to Christianity. All unchristian competition has ceased. Workers, in every land, engaged in similar occupation, are paid alike. All workers are paid a living wage. Still, within the frame of reference and by the accounting system sacred to Finance, this world-wide rise of wages must go into costs. The price of the goods produced must be increased by at least the amount of the increase in wages. The purchasing power of the increased wages falls in that proportion if, as the orthodox assert, the wages, salaries, and dividends paid out are always sufficient to buy the goods their recipients produce. That is, the more the wages are increased, the less the money will buy. It looks like stale-mate, but not quite. Those whose wages were lowest before the miracle happened, will naturally receive the largest increase of pay. Increase of pay is not the same as increase of output, else there is no favour in raising the wages. Now, if the supply remains constant, those who have received the largest increase in income will take an increased portion of the supply, and there will be the less remaining for the " Old Christians." If two people, who to-day divide a loaf between them in the proportion of three quarters and one quarter, decide tomorrow to divide their loaf half and half, it is evident that the one

will have as much less as the other has more. We do not say that this would be an unfair or unchristian result. It is not the result statesmen forecast when they fulminate against sweated foreign labour, and promise the Millenium if only this could be remedied. Can we, as Christians, feel satisfied that we have done the best possible for backward nations when we lie down in the ditch beside them ?

Instances might be multiplied indefinitely. Always, it will be found, that similar results will follow when Christian principles are applied to the existing economic relationships of man to man. The trouble invades the Church itself, as may be seen in the tithes dispute. It would probably be allowable, for one who has not intimate knowledge, to assume that, in this unfortunate conflict, both protaganists—the clergy and the farmers—are loyal sons of the Church of England; that they have no wish to mar her peace, nor hinder her prosperity. But, most of the clergy cannot live without their income from tithes, which most of the farmers cannot afford to pay. If the clergy are self-sacrificing and say, " we will ask nothing beyond what you can afford," very soon that will be nothing at all, and the clergy must starve. If the farmers say, " we will maintain your income, no matter what happens to us," then they and their children will suffer. The problem is insoluble within the conditions of the system. The land is embarrassed with the abundance of real wealth. Nothing is scarce but money. Yet, because this costless thing money is scarce, someone must suffer. As soon as you look round for the victim tempers rise, and ugly things

are done. The peace of the Church is broken, and good men's hearts are broken; for the inescapable sacrifice availeth nothing.

These things are so, not because the Christian Ideal is, by its nature, impossible; and not because there must be, in the nature of things, competition, oppression, robbery, and every vice we see in competitive business. These things exist because a private firm of moneylenders has been given control of the production of money. Men's economic troubles arise because, though man can make all the goods he needs, only bankers can make the money which gives a right to use the goods. The bankers keep money scarce, and prevent man's use of the goods he makes, because their philosophy of life is that only scarcity gives value. They may mean well, but their philosophy, in practice, is making a hell on earth. The banquet of life could be spread to give abundance to all. Instead, those in control so restrict the feast, and stint the guests, that many can only press hungry faces against the outside of the window panes; and the guests themselves eat, not like sons of God, but like famished wolves, each snatching from the other. For, it is a rule of the feast that whoever has an empty platter is thrown to join the hungry waifs outside.

Men will not starve for long when they know that the things they need are being destroyed just to keep men starving. By and by, they will take what they need, money-tickets or none. If that day comes the end of this civilisation, most likely, comes with it. Then God, and whatever posterity there

may be, judge between the tyrants who enforced the hunger, and the hungry men who hurled the temple into ruins.

"But," you may object, "modern methods of finance are a comparatively recent invention, want and the greed, selfishness, and oppression, which arise from the desire to escape want, have always been in the world. This child of yesterday cannot be the progenitor of an evil hoary as time!"

Even to this apparently unanswerable objection, the answer is not far to seek. Want has been in the world for ages, because, in the past, there was real scarcity. Where there is scarcity, human nature being what it is, there men will try to escape from want by grasping more than their share. Greed, and its concomitants, will arise. But, there is a new thing in the world to-day. There is abundance, even to embarrassment, and the wilful destruction of goods. Side by side with this there is poverty, even to undernourishment, and death by starvation. There is fierce fighting over insufficient supplies, not because the supplies are really insufficient, but because access to them is controlled and limited by those who control the supply of tickets; tickets which have been accepted by men as the only legitimate claim to goods. It is not surprising, it was a result to be anticipated, that the material want and moral chaos, arising from the difficulty of getting access to supplies, should be traced to the Money Power.

FICTITIOUS EXPLANATIONS OF THE IMPASSE.

We have chosen the first three instances, outlined above, for examination, because we believe they

represent the most general activities of man. We have also taken one ideal instance, but an ideal which is a hope to a large part of mankind. We have selected last an actual instance from the Christian Society itself. We believe we have shown that *positing* the permanence of the present accounting system, the Christian way of life is not feasible, either in the actual, or in the ideal. We could easily have shown that this impasse is not due to exorbitant profits or large dividends. Profits, on the whole, are insufficient, as the number of bankruptcies show. Dividends, taken at the level, are too small. The disappearance of dividends is an actual cause of suffering to many of the rentier class. It is not due to the accumulation of money in the hands of a few millionaires. If the fortunes of the rich were confiscated, and divided, the situtation would not be appreciably better. It might be decidedly worse. Therefore, the key to the solution is not to be found in the panaceas of the Socialists, the Communists, or the Facists. New Deals, whether originating in the White House or Churt, so long as they are the kind approved by " sound finance," will lead only down the slippery path of accumulating debt, from which, by and by, there is no returning. We would have liked to show that the present appearance of returning prosperity, which seems to justify the methods of the National Government, is a bubble, deliberately blown; that the elements out of which it is blown are mainly two—borrowing and preparation for war. These are not elements calculated to inspire confidence or hope. Yet Mr. Baldwin provides proof of the latter when he said, " He hoped the extension of the Air Force would find employment for suitable men from

1935.

these (the distressed) areas.''* The former is too obvious to need proof. These, and much more, we would have liked to examine, but we must set bounds to our survey somewhere.

Most of the instances, given above, go to show that in a world divided between the disciples of love and the adherents of self-interest, christian love is not only useless, it is worse than useless, it is self destructive. It victimises the best, and pushes them into the gutter. The system has turned good into evil. Under its sway love can accomplish nothing except self-immolation. It is banished from the world to leave a free field for the men of '' enlightened self-interest.'' These, when they are no disciples of love to destroy, will destroy one another; for the System, like Moloch, must have human victims. To die for an ideal, not as a martyr, but as a castaway, is folly. It means the defeat of the ideal. Men will die for victory. They will not die for defeat. So it comes about that the christian vision is discredited. Its morals, if accepted, lead where no man wants to go. Unless men find a moral code which they can live by, there will be moral chaos. We need not wonder that men are seeking a rule of life, adaptable to the reigning circumstance, in the apotheosis of the State.

The anti-Christian forces are accomplishing today what was attempted at Calvary, and failed. They are making martyrs whose blood will never be the seed of any church, whose faith will have no resurrection in the minds of other men. This

* Press report 10 July, '35.

struggle, which is to many a struggle to end poverty, is to some a struggle for the survival of the Christian Faith. But it is not Christianity alone which is struggling for survival. It is every form of idealism. The question at issue is, shall we be set free to seek the things we love ? Or, must we remain for ever, " eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves ? "

CHRIST'S INCOMPATIBLES.

We are persuaded that these conclusions, startling as they are, not only follow from the evidence, but are confirmed by the teaching of Jesus. Given the same conditions, namely, the Sovereignty of Finance, Jesus led us to expect these very results when He said, " ye cannot serve God and Mammon." It is neither satisfactory, nor convincing as an argument, to equate in a loose rhetorical way, Mammon and Finance. We shall not attempt to prove their identity. We shall take modern Finance, or, that concrete embodiment of it, the Bank of England, and if we can prove that the essential rule of sound finance, as proclaimed and practised by the Bank, is selfishness, then we think, it will be admitted that the rule of Christ or love, and the rule of the Bank or selfishness, are two incompatibles. Unless Mr. McKenna, one of the greatest financial authorities in England, is mistaken, the Bank rules England, for he says that it directs the policy of Governments and holds in the hollow of its hands the destiny of the people.

Now, the fundamental law of banking is that every bank loan shall be repaid with interest. Or, if not, then a portion of the property of the defaulter, equivalent to the loan, shall be forfeit to the bank.

If this law is set aside the whole edifice of " sound finance " collapses. Therefore, the borrower, in order to be able to repay, must so use the loan as to recover from his customers, not only the amount borrowed but also the accrued interest.* We can leave out profits, which are a payment for the borrowers' services, and if reasonable, are just and right. In other words, the borrower must take from others more than what he gives. The only lawful source, apart from the Mint, from which new money can be obtained, is the bank. Since practically all the money we have originated in loans from the bank, and as all bank loans must pay interest, it follows that someone is endeavouring to wheedle out of his brothers, somehow, the wherewithal to pay the interest to the bank, on nearly all the money in existence. Therefore the bank compels every borrower to exploit his fellows.

We are not accusing the Bank of making an exorbitant profit. We cannot do that. Dr. Walter Leaf, late Chairman of the Westminster Bank, has told us that, " What the real profits of the Bank (of England) are is a secret which is never revealed." Besides, as the Bank can create money at will, and destroy it at will—as it sometimes does with disastrous results to all of us—it is evident that its motive cannot be the mere amassing of money, but the increase of the power which the control of money gives.

We do not suggest that the gentlemen who direct the Bank of England are the only people who belie

* For the sake of brevity, only those results which follow from charging interest on created money are here considered.

our faith in the decency of human nature. We have no doubt they are amiable men who wish well to their fellows, relieve the poor according to their ability, and grieve at the moral chaos and material misery that abound. They, too, are in the grip of the System. In its grip because they believe in it, and because they have a vested interest in believing in it. Vested interests blind the eyes.

You may say, " the bank can do no other than lend to men who can make a success in competitive business, because, if loans are issued and not repaid and cancelled, we shall have inflation." That proves our contention. The bank, for reasons inherent in the system, can only help those, who, at any price, will help themselves. What that price sometimes is the report of the Arms Inquiry reveals. The System rests on the belief that selfishness is the only practicable law of life and conduct. Therefore, it is fundamentally opposed to Christianity, which proclaims love as the only effectual way. Neither Christ nor Finance can " brook a rival near the throne." There can be no concord between love and selfishness. You can serve God and the King, though that King be Nero. You cannot serve God and Mammon. Where Finance reigns Christ will soon be expelled.

MISLEADING MORALISTS.

If this be true, how have we lost our way so completely ? We are going to suggest that we have missed our way because, in taking our bearings, the facts we have relied on were not the whole facts, not perhaps the most important facts. We have

read our compass faithfully, but the compass we carry has never been adjusted.

Our moralists have told us that the evils we suffer from are due to " the wickedness of human nature." It might be too sweeping an assertion to say that this is the teaching of all Christian moralists. We are only justified in saying that it is the unquestioned axiom of the morality we have heard from the pulpit, were taught at school, and imbibed on our mother's knee. Besides, we notice, that for this very phrase, Inge goes back to Aristotle, as if all in between concurred or did not count. Yet if Inge, and others, had pondered this one sentence from Augustine, " not even Catiline himself loved his own villanies, but rather, that, for the sake of which he did them," and had looked at the brief chapter, in which it occurs;(1) yes, if the Church had done this, she might have learned better from Augustine the Christian, than from Aristotle the non-Christian. We shall not be surprised if someone points out that Augustine has, in other places, contradicted his teaching here. Our knowledge of his writings is neither wide nor deep. Indeed, our knowledge of most things is the bee's knowledge of the flower, to sip and on again. Of our own selves we judge this sentence true. Truth is either self-evident, or it is not truth for us. The thought would have been equally true had it come from Pelagius, though then we would have mentioned the source with reticence.

That men have wicked hearts, men know. We instinctively blame ourselves for many things we

(1) Confessions. Book II. Chapt. V.

do. We also know that very often we sin, not because we want to, but because we cannot help it. We cannot, in sane moments, believe that wilful badness, our own or other men's, has caused all the woe we see. Ignorance has caused much of it. There are many people beginning to suspect that a pious fraud, who professes to serve God by maintaining poverty, has done no small mischief behind backs. This pious fraud has imposed on us a creed and a system by which it is not only impossible to do good, but it is impossible to keep from sin, and from sinking ever deeper in sin. Because of this system, it is not possible for industrialists whose competitors are the whole world and who must compete for orders at " cut-throat " prices, and to whom failure to secure orders means ruin to themselves and to their workers, it is not possible for such men to apply the principles of Christianity to the rules of competition. It is not possible for men whose " transition benefit " has expired, and to whom the alternatives are work or pauperism, to treat their rivals with complete unselfishness. It is not innate malice, nor greed, nor insensibility, that makes employers cut wages, and cashier old workers as soon as they are past their prime. Employers have to do these things to survive. It is perfectly absurd, and out of touch with reality, to suggest, or imply, that employers like to see their workers poor, and ill-fed, and overworked; or, that workers rejoice when their comrades lose their jobs, or their masters fail in business. It is libellous to suggest that traders practice graft, and manufacturers take to making munitions, because their hearts are set on fire of hell. Yet, we are to believe that all these evils are due to the wickedness of the human heart !

There may be men who delight in wickedness, but we do not meet them often. Such men are abnormal. Abnormalities do not count in making general rules. Such men are more a subject for the Psychologist than the Economist. The vast majority of men are ashamed of their wicked actions, even while they do them. Here is an extract from the most appalling revelation yet given to the world, of the position to which modern business has been driven. We refer to the U.S. Arms Inquiry. Yet, even in this " hell of business," as Mr. Jonas, long before the Inquiry, called it, we see that men are not motivated by mere greed, or hatred of their kind, but by the sheer necessity to live and help others to live.

The extract is from the evidence when Mr. Young and Mr. Jonas, the gas bomb executives, were being examined.

The Chairman. " Frankly, gentlemen, is it not a fact that you yourselves look with disfavour upon the methods you do resort to in selling your wares around all the world ? "

Mr. Jonas. " As I stated before, I have always been in the commercial business and I do not like this business."

The Chairman. " Mr. Young, you cannot say you like this kind of business, can you ? "

Mr. Young. " We got into this business at the beginning of the depression, when we felt the slump, like everybody else did . . . . . We were asked if

we would make bombs. It offered an opportunity to keep our men employed. That was the beginning of our military business."

At the same Inquiry, Mr. Eugene R. Grace, president of Bethlehem Steel, said, " When you talk of profits and the necessities to prosecute a war you must not narrow it down to just the words ' guns ' and ' battleships '; it is everything produced . . . . It is the whole social structure that is involved." Paul Hutchinson, from whose summary we have taken this extract, adds, " to an extent far greater and deeper than Mr. Grace may have had in his mind when he used the words, it *is* ' the whole structure that is involved.' "

Men are in the grip of a system. The individual cannot deliver himself. Deliverance must be wrought by society as a whole, for there only, in the Sovereignty of the people, can be found a human power stronger than the System. Until freedom to do right is given we cannot blame men for doing wrong. Throw one bone to two hungry dogs, and the best natured dogs in the world will fight. It is not dog-nature that is at fault, it is the inadequate supply of bone. The trouble to-day is not shortage of bone but shortage of the tickets (money) which are the only claim to bone.

The instinct of self-preservation is the primal instinct of every living creature. It is old as the jungle and the amœba. Unselfishness is a late, and still a delicate, flower. Place men in such a situation that these instincts must fight to the death, it is not hard to foretell, in the great majority of cases,

which will perish, and which survive. God, whom we believe to be the author of both these instincts, must have intended that they should live and work together. When human affairs are moulded nearer to the mind of God, it will be found that this is possible. The desire for self-preservation is not a vice, it is the primal instinct, because without it no other instinct can exist. Maudlin talk about the evil of the law of self-preservation is blasphemy against the Creator.

The important and deeply significant fact which most of our moralists have overlooked is that the main pressure to commit sin is not from the welling up evil of the heart, but from the screw the System applies. The plain man knows this in a half articulate way when he says " A man has to live." The early Hebrew thinkers recognised this external compulsion, and said God did it. " The Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh." This inference is not acceptable to us to-day. Is it nearer the truth to say that Pharaoh, of malice, hardened his own heart ? The most probable explanation is, that under the established system, Pharaoh and the Egyptians needed slaves. The system, which no man thought of questioning, compelled him to harden his heart. Moralists have recognised, as in Pilate, that sin, once committed, does become a pressure from without, a hound of hell to harry us to destruction. But, since it is assumed that the fount and origin of all sin is man's evil heart, the only conclusion of value to be drawn from this fact is, watch your heart ever so carefully lest even one sin slip out. Now, if a man with hungry children at home makes a false declaration in order to get a

post, is the cause of his sin his own wicked heart, or is it poverty without, and pity within ? The moralist seems to get out by the wrong door when he replies to this by saying all falsehood is not culpable. Suppose the man gets the post ? It is almost certain he will have to resort to other subterfuges in order to conceal the first. A lie, that leads almost to a habit of lying, must be culpable, if truth has any value. This constant pressure of business temptation, and this steadily accumulating force of past transgressions, weighs many men down until the breaking point of moral despair is reached; then, the man, who once wanted to be honest, throws moral considerations to the winds.

We have tried to show, though briefly, how the Financial System controls the screw, and keeps up a steady and ever increasing pressure on men to commit sin. This, too, when scarcity—the cause in the nature of things for such pressure—has no longer any justification in fact. We have tried to show that not only does the system make selfishness and profit the motive of all its own transactions (that might be tolerable), but, by the hold it has on us, through its absolute control of money, it compels every human being engaged in business in civilised lands to make selfishness and profit the main motive of their lives. *This is intolerable.* We do not notice this because we do not look. We do not look because we do not want to see a sight so awful. If sometimes we get a glimpse of the urge of selfishness, we, true to our training, fall into an agony of remorse over the wickedness of our unregenerate heart. It never enters our mind to blame the real culprit.

This line of argument is again confirmed by the New Testament. Paul says, " The Love of Money is the root of all evil.' What " love " means here is explained in the next breath, " Which while some covet after." The system makes sure that most people *must* covet money first of all, for money is the key to life, alike of body and of mind. When we read the account of some appalling revelation of human depravity in pursuit of profit we say, " What is human nature coming to ? " It would be a far juster exclamation to cry, " How long, oh Lord, must the conditions be endured which drive men to this ? " Man, as God made him, with the instinct of self-preservation the spear-head of all his instincts, will do anything rather than starve. Not man's dread of starvation, but the power that makes for starvation, is the power that makes for sin. *Therefore, either this reasoning must be shown to be false; or, the Christian Church must lift up a standard against the power that makes for evil, or enemies of Christ.*

Our moralists have kept " nagging " us about the innate wickedness of our heart, an evil for which even they do not hold us personally responsible, until men, finding merely nagging and no real help, break into rebellion against their moral leaders, so that, as the moralists themselves declare, morale is already broken, and chaos is begun; and where it will end no man can tell. In the same way our preachers, basing themselves on the moralists, have told us that the one thing we need is a change of heart. We do need this. But to say that this is all we need is to confuse the issue by laying the

emphasis on what is impossible to us, and slurring over what is possible and essential.

Let preachers remember that Jesus never said to any man, " Change your heart." Only God can change the heart. Preachers may say they recognise this. Well then, 'tis waste of breath to lecture men on what they cannot do. Betake yourselves to prayer. Jesus did say " Change your thoughts, change your ways—repent." That is something man can do, and sorely needs to do. To change our mind, and consequently our direction, is our part, and is within our power. The heralding of this, and the glorious results of doing this aright, is preaching a gospel. To tell men that there can be no betterment until something is done which man has not the power to do, is not a gospel but a cry of despair.

It is of no use to say to a sick man " change your health." He cannot do it. Your advice profits him nothing. But, if a Doctor says to a man, worn, jaded, and without appetite, " take a change, go to the sea or the hills and rest," he has advised something which the man can do, if finance permits. It is not the change which restores him. The change brings him into touch with those healing influences that can restore. So neither can a man change his heart, nor restore his soul. He can change his ways, and the ways of that society of which he is a part, and a responsible member. He can set himself to remodel this dark and cruel system into harmony with the light and love of God. So shall he, and his fellows, be brought into touch with the healing influences whereby the heart is

renewed. Man shall never have a mind, or leisure, to commune with these healing influences, until, somehow, he is freed from care and worry about tomorrow's bread.

DEPART, THOU CHRIST.

Even if these assumptions of the moralists and the preachers had been wholly true, even if we could have changed our own heart, and done the same for other men, yet, the System will have none of it. This is not a libel invented by us. It is the compressed teaching of the succinct phrase, " Business is business " : a formula so potent that, if any man transgress, he shall die the death. The plain and accepted interpretation of the formula is, that into one sphere of life, namely, business, Christian principles must not intrude. When you realise how wide the scope of business is, you realise how little of this world is left for Christ. All that is left is—nothing. For, to enter the sphere of business, in some shape or form, is a fate " no man can escape when once he hath been born."

Finance will have none of your " change of heart." True, talking about it is allowable. Indeed, it is quite a useful diversion. Any diversion will do—religion, bridge, or betting on horses—so long as you have not time for the idle curiosity of asking how the wheels go round. But a changed heart, a heart of true charity, will immediately begin an " intelligent examination " of how things do work. Therefore, there is no room in the System for real " life changers," or " changed lives." It's subsidized Press will advertise your life changing campaigns because it knows full well how

much they are worth to the System, how little they are worth to Christ.

Finance will have none of your unselfish service. It never asks—it cannot, and be true to its own nature, ask " How much is your service worth to humanity ? " It can only ask, " How much is your service worth in the market ? Can you sell it at a profit, and repay the bank its loan, with interest ? " Sir Thomas D. Barlow said recently, " Anyone who proclaims that his life is organised on the basis of service is talking clap-trap. I would like to see that word ' service ' expunged from our vocabulary." There speaks the Financial System, naked, and apparently unashamed. We do not suppose that, in saying this, Sir Thomas realised that he was pouring scorn and condemnation on one of the greatest sayings ever uttered, " I am among you as he that serveth." So, we feel sure, the Directors of the Bank of England do not realise that while the Gadarene System besought Christ to depart, the Banking System compels Christ to go, not only from " dark satanic mills," but also from " England's pleasant pastures." Finance, by its very nature, is at war with the idea of unselfish service. The Bank has " the power of creating cash by a stroke of the pen and to any extent it pleases, subject only to its own views of what is prudent and sound business." So says Mr. Hartley Withers. Yet its staunchest supporters and defenders will admit that the Bank could not, within the rules of ' sound business,' find cash to equip those missionaries who brought about an amicable settlement of a serious outbreak among the aboriginals of Australia; it could, without difficulty,

have found the cash for a punitive expedition " to make a wilderness and call it peace." It could not create the money to save Sir Ronald Ross from dying in poverty; it could, and did, create plenty to exploit the lands he opened to the white man, and bestowed on the world as a gift. It cannot to-day create £4,000,000 to improve the physique of the young generation; it can, and will, create the money to treble our Air-Force, which may yet be used to destroy the children of other lands. Those are strange rules, however ' sound,' which can create money for fiendish things; none for things divine.

Of course, Finance can create money for good and useful things like housing. But then, only on condition that the purchaser or tenant shall pay more for his house than the house cost in material and services, for the builder must include interest on a costless commodity. The builder, who fails to dispose of his products on these terms, will have to pay for his softness of head or heart by forfeiting a part of his own possessions. This is the rule, fleece or be fleeced. You must get back more than you gave, even when you are engaged in the most honourable and useful business. The System is so devised that he who fails to do this is automatically broken on the wheel. Since, in the nature of things, it is not possible that everyone can get more than he gave, millions are slowly being broken.

View it how we will, we cannot see any way in which the Christian law of love can be made to fit the existing rules of Finance. Christianity has no essential disagreement with Industry or Labour as such, nor with any social class, rich or poor. It

must fight to the death with the Money Power. If the present financial conventions cannot be changed, Christianity is doomed—though the Church may adapt herself, and survive. Because we believe in God, we believe our present money system will be changed.

We would have liked to turn from this Frankenstein of Finance to consider the sane and natural use of what is perhaps man's greatest invention, money. Space forbids. To condense would only be to obscure. We must refer interested readers to the Social Credit literature, and ask them to think out the implications.

UNORTHODOX TELEOLOGY.

One question has often engaged our own thoughts, and may trouble the mind of the reader: is all this suffering a meaningless travail, an uncreative cross in a Universe of love? At once we answer—no. This System served a purpose, a purpose now fulfilled, and therefore requiring that the System be changed to meet the new conditions.

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be."

Those who think about the knowledge, and opportunity, which came to the people of England in the beginning of the Industrial era, and who believe that it was a gift of God, can surely realise that there was a danger lest we, like another favoured nation, might seek to keep this gift to ourselves. If we had then had a natural money system, that could have been accomplished almost completely. To

save us from such a fatal course we were given also an illusion, expressed in the economic maxim " we live by our exports," and known also by the name of " the favourable balance of trade." Both of these simply mean that we live by giving. We say " illusion," not " delusion "; for, that we live by giving is eternally true, though not in the sense our fathers, or we, have understood these economic maxims. In the long roll of history there has been, perhaps, only one who could face this truth with open eyes, and not turn back. The rest of us have to be led that way through mists that obscure, and soften, its starkest features. Then, when the work is done, and the pain is past, we are permitted to see, and are content.

It was this maxim, " we live by our exports," which made our financial system tolerably workable in the days when almost the whole world wanted our machines and manufactured goods. It is this same maxim which makes the system unworkable to-day, when almost every country has its own machines, and a surplus of manufactured goods. On the other hand, but for the strange convention of Finance, that is " sound business," to create and distribute money to enable foreigners to consume our goods, but most ' unsound ' to create and distribute money to enable our own people to consume the goods they themselves, or their comrades, have produced, but for this convention, the maxim, that " we live by exports," would not have stood the examination of selfish interests, not for a day. But it was these two maxims in combination which induced us to give the world the benefit of our knowledge and our skill, while all the time we

imagined we were materially enriching ourselves. Now, when the world is full of our gifts, we are invited to enter into our inheritance of material well-being, and, freed from worry about bodily needs, to set out on the long quest of the spirit, each man free to follow the best he knows.

If men have discovered, and not died of the shock, " that substance is one of the greatest of our illusions " (Eddington), will the universe dissolve if Professors of Economics should discover that " the favourable balance of trade " is an illusion ?

The light whereby we see the new way seldom comes through the guardians and upholders of the old system. It is always hard for new discoveries to find an entrance into minds which have a vested interest in things as they are. New doctrine is always heresy at first. Truth makes its conquests not by the authority of its human advocates but by its own credentials. Thus, if we have read history aright, the Divine purposes work themselves out " in the fulness of time."

CONCLUSION.

Our study, far from being complete, is scarcely well begun, but we have already transgressed the prescribed limits. May we say, what we hope is already evident, that in challenging the premises and conclusions of authoritative moralists, we are not actuated by any wantonness of attack; that our onslaught, on the most trusted institution of modern times, is no mere atavistic outbreak of iconoclasm; and especially, that no charge is levelled against the

servants of that Institution. We, who use the Bank, have as much responsibility for its doings as its servants have, even as the congregation with the clergy is responsible for the church. Not for vain glory, nor to smite with the fist of wickedness, have we written, but because we believe we have something to say " which is death to hide." Had it been possible, we had much preferred silence and peace.

" If an offence come out of the truth, better it is that the offence come than that the truth be concealed."* Therefore, we must repeat, and emphasise our challenge that the Church must refute, or it must act. If our reasoning is even approximately correct, if it is anything more than the incoherent wanderings of a delirious brain, then the Church must take nctice, unless she deliberately intends to " crucify the Son of God afresh."

* (St. Jerome)

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