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LIBERTY, EQUALITY AND FRATERNITY

— BY —

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EQUALITY
AND
FRATERNITY



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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

This lecture originally formed part of a course on French Art, Thought, and Literature, arranged by the Sydney University Extension Board. It was afterwards repeated before the Art Society of the same University on the occasion of the writer's retirement after thirty-three years of service.

"The dreams which nations dream come true,
And shape the world anew."

—Lowell's Ode to France.

"And so I am strong to love this noble France,
This poet of the nations, who dreams on . . .
For ever, after some ideal good . . .
May God save France!"

—E. B. Browning.

I.

THERE is a theory, known as Historical Materialism (or the Economic Interpretation of History) according to which ideas and ideals are only the shadows of the real moving forces of history. Our English poet has said, "We live by admiration, hope, and love;" and an older teacher has warned us that man liveth not by bread alone,—but this is poetry not science. Man is held fast in the grip of economic forces, and the mode of production in a given community determines the political moral, religious super-structure. Ideas are not forces, but products. To think otherwise is to confuse the active with the passive, substance with shadow. So runs the theory.

Yet by a curious inconsistency, Karl Marx, the founder of the school, appears as the herald of a new gospel, in which ideas and ideals are preached with the fervour of a Hebrew prophet. He has the vision of a promised land, a humanitarian Millennium. "Workers the whole world o'er, unite!" is his battle cry. His ideals, too, are Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood—of a kind. And like every great teacher, he comes to bring, not peace, but a sword. D

It is our English habit to distrust rhetoric, and to be suspicious of phrases, unless they embody what we call common-sense and hard fact. Business is business. An ounce of fact is worth a pound of theory. These pass as current coin, stamped with the approval of that common-sense which fondly supposes that it has no dealings with the imagination. Yet if we take any movement which has influenced the course of our national life, from the dream of the Lollards, to Chartism and the Labour Movement, the dream of John Wesley or John Henry Newman, we shall find that while the impulse to action may have come from some immediate felt need in the circumstances of the situation, the deeper source lay in an aspiration of the imagination,—and without aspiration, no inspiration. It was not an English poet, but a

sober English economist, who said,—“If you would vanquish earth, you must invent heaven.” And men have always been inventing heaven.

The dream of liberty, equality, fraternity, has taken many forms. Long before this rhetorical formula was adopted as the motto of political revolution in France, the unchanging East was convulsed by a spiritual revolution, known as Buddhism, the first of the four greatest movements of human history. Since all great movements are revolutionary in character, we may, for convenience, speak of those movements as the four great revolutions,—the moral revolution known as Buddhism, the religious revolution, known as Christianity, the political revolution of which France was the standard bearer, and the economic revolution, in the midst of which we are struggling, and the end of which is not yet. All these great revolutionary movements have begun and continued in a dream of the possible, a vision of the imagination; and in all of them, behind the differences of time, place, and circumstances, the ideal has been one of liberty, equality, and fraternity,—but not the same ideal.

II.

Buddhism was a moral revolution. It inverted the accepted values, and transferred the centre of interest from the world without to the world within. It knew no personal God. It ignored caste. The Eastern world of humanity, split into castes, like so many different species, felt itself born again. Buddhism was a great liberating movement. Creed and ritual and caste were among the things that did not matter. The individual human soul thrown inward upon itself, found itself alone, with the moral law. Before this moral law, all souls were equal. My law, said Buddha, is a law of grace for all. To liberty and equality, there was added fraternity. Liberty and equality by themselves alone may be merely negative and disintegrating forces. Liberty may be the renunciation of obligations, and nothing more. Equality may be the denial of differences, and nothing more. But a gospel cannot be constructed of negatives. Buddha, thought, not of revolution, but of redemption, and like a greater than Buddha, he spoke of the love which was the fulfilling of the law. “By love alone, can we conquer wrath.” “By good alone can we conquer evil.” “Do to others what you would have them do to you.”

According to some, Buddhism was the first universal religion. According to others, it is not a religion at all. It had no creed, or only such a credo as might be summed up

in the three humanitarian aspirations, liberty, equality, fraternity. An aspiration without a driving force behind it, remains only a sentiment. We need not discuss the defects of Buddhism from the point of view of philosophy and religion. Our concern is with its threefold ideal of liberty, equality, fraternity, and the failure of that ideal to renew the world. Buddhism had its heroes, saints, and martyrs, but these are not the monopoly of any faith. It has given, or helped to give to the East, its dominant spiritual characteristic.. The East, it is said, is the land of love; and the secret of love is devotion, self-sacrifice. Buddhism did not fail, if it remained, and still remains the source of fair and lovely lives, the moral and spiritual solace of many thousands of our fellow men. But from the standpoint of sociology, Buddhism has failed. A gospel of liberty, equality, fraternity, which does not establish an actual liberty, equality, fraternity, which does not translate the inward into terms of the outward, the spiritual into the material, is socially an ineffective gospel. To be effective, it must not merely preach a new spirit within, but provide a set of principles to act on in the world. The East, in its absence of actual liberty, legal and political equality, social fraternity, remains the unchanging East. Buddhism, although it was strong enough to redeem the individual, was not strong enough to renew the world.

Buddha's great discovery was the discovery of man, the man himself behind the difference of creed and circumstance, of social and political status. Every man had the same moral task, which he had to fulfil without help from others. "By oneself the evil is done; by oneself one suffers. By oneself evil is undone; by oneself one is purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself; no one can purify another." This is moral individualism, at its highest and finest. Each man shall bear his own burden. But moral individualism is not the last word of morality. Bear ye one another's burdens. We are co-operators in wrongdoing as in righteousness. Corporate sin and corporate responsibility! The Buddhist could not in the noble word of the Christian apostle, co-operate with God, for he had no God. He was a spiritual unit, alone with the moral law. The moral law itself was but a chain of causes and effects, which held him as with the fatalism of a physical causality. Such a morality, such a religion could not overcome the world. The sentiment of love remains an abstract sentiment, a barren sentimentalism, unless it develops into a system of positive social duties. A gospel which is only a moral gospel is not a gospel which is too good for this world, it is not good enough for any world.

The East is the land of love. If the secret of the East is love, is will the secret of the West? Love and Will! Perfection and progress! "East is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet." The spirit of the East turns from a will it does not understand. It abhors the fret and tumult of the Western soul. The ways of the West are not its ways. The ideals of the East are not its ideals. It regards them with indifference, or with "silent, deep disdain." What shall it profit a man if he gain a whole world of material prosperity, and lose his own soul? The spirit of the West turns from a one-sided spirituality, which seeks not freedom in action, but freedom from action, whose supreme ideal is not the transformation of the natural and human, but their abandonment or negation. "What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" So spoke the English statesman, in a passing moment of depression, amid the clash of armies, and the fall of empires. Buddhism makes this passing moment into a permanent mood. It seeks to overcome the world by renouncing it. Shadows we are and shadows we pursue. The last word of Buddha is, "I have attained to peace. I have won Nirvana."

III.

Love, the secret of the East. Will, the secret of the West. Shall the supreme secret be found in the union of love and will, in a love that wills and a will that loves? And is this supreme secret, the peculiar revelation of Christianity?

The centre of Buddhist teaching was an impersonal moral law. The centre of Christian teaching was, and is, a personal life. "Christ exercised not a juridical but a spiritual authority—the authority that truth exercises over the mind, and goodness over the conscience, and love over the heart and the affections, the authority that true manhood exercises over men, true personality over persons. . . . The Gospels are the light of the world, not the light of a new theology, but that of a new revelation, a new life, a new ideal of human personality." (Tyrrell : Medievalism). To Buddha, individuality was a snare and an illusion, and the death of self, the greatest gain. To Jesus, the death of self, meant not selflessness, but unselfishness, and the Kingdom of God was a community of persons, each of whom was a radiating centre, not a vanquishing point in a world of unreality. "My Kingdom is not of this world." "Be of good cheer. I have overcome the world." Behind the verbal similarity of text and precept, there is a mighty difference in spirit and principle. Hear how the victorious words of the fighting apostle to the Gentiles ring out,—“All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,”—all things are yours.

Has Christianity, the religious revolution failed, as Buddhism, the moral revolution, failed? Buddhism failed, because it was a moral revolution, and nothing more, a moral renovation of the individual, and not a social reconstruction. Has Christianity failed, because it was a religious revolution, and nothing more? Has its gospel of liberty, equality, fraternity, been as ineffective to renew the Western world, as Buddhism was to renew the Eastern world? The great human interests of literature, art, science, were left untouched in any recorded teaching of Jesus. The saying, "Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free," did not explicitly refer to anything else than a spiritual freedom, which counted all things as dross, save having the mind of Christ. The doctrine of the equality of all men, entered into no conflict with the powers that be, and accepted even slavery as one of the institutions apparently ordained by God. The doctrine of the brotherhood of men was a corollary of the doctrine of the Divine Fatherhood, yet even in the Christian community, it failed to bring forth the fruits of the Christian spirit, and in the centuries that followed, men were accustomed to say,—Behold, how these Christians hate one another! The early Christians and their successors for many centuries, looked for the new Kingdom to be brought into being by a cataclysmic change, a supernatural irruption. They could not foresee the long and laborious development to be achieved by the efforts of men, before a fitting habitation could be formed for the new principle of personality. They took up an attitude of uncompromising hostility to the world, or else they made a pact with Caesar, and compromised with the powers that be, until men came to look on the church itself as a worldly institution, an instrument, too often a subservient instrument, for the maintenance of the existing law and order, and the protection of privileged minorities.

Yet the pale Galilean conquered. The new principle of personality in its development helped to put a new soul into the dying Roman Empire. It gradually absorbed many of the finest elements of Greek culture and Latin civilisation. It broke the rude spirits of the barbarians who had themselves broken the power of Rome. It ameliorated the position of the slave, if it did not abolish slavery. Thunder for thunder, force for force, the Pope was often no better than any other earthly monarch, yet in an age of violence, the church was the only power which intervened between the oppressor and the oppressed, and stood for the moral law against the force which knows no law.

Yet when the full tale is made up of all that the world owes to the spiritual revolution accomplished by Christianity,

the fact remains, that the possibilities contained in the principle of personality, its promises of a new liberty, equality, fraternity, are still promises and possibilities, rather than performances. Three main reasons may be offered in explanation of this failure of historical Christianity to fulfil the promise of its social gospel.

In the first place, the passive elements of the Christian ideal, the passive or altruistic virtues of obedience and resignation, charity and self-sacrifice, have been emphasised at the expense of the active virtues, those virile qualities without which human society and civilisation would become impossible. A society of saints is not the highest human ideal.

In the second place, the individualistic aspect of Christian teaching, the appeal to the individual conscience, the doctrine of personal salvation, has been emphasised at the expense of the socialistic aspect, so as to obscure the fact that the Christian principle of personality is not merely a **saving** principle but a **civilising** principle, the only principle on which not merely a Christian society, but a democratic commonwealth can be established.

In the third place, churches as institutions, and especially the official representatives of the churches, have been subject to the common law of all established institutions, the law of custom and habit, which favours inertia and acquiescence to the detriment of initiative and progress. And worse than that, the natural conservatism which dislikes innovation, has too often been allied with the political conservatism which regards interference with the established order of things as an attack on the sacred rights of property, privilege, and monopoly.

For these and allied reasons, a single and no doubt essential aspect of Christianity has often been presented both by friends and enemies, as if it were its sole and exhaustive expression. Writers like Nietzsche have described Christian morality as a morality for slaves, not for free men, and have set up as a counter-ideal, the conception of a will devoid of all weakness, and divorced from all charity. Writers like Karl Marx have represented religion, and especially Christianity, as the willing servant of the organisation in possession of power, the spiritual support of every autocracy, aristocracy, or oligarchy, the parasite of capitalism. It was thus, also, that the leaders of the French revolution, finding the old order embattled behind the twin authorities of church and state, resolved to sweep them both away in one common ruin.

Are we to conclude then that the saving principle of Christianity has ceased to be also a civilising principle? You

cannot have a civilisation without a principle of civilisation. The question is, what is to be the nature of that principle. It is a fact not without significance, that between the two words "culture," and "civilisation," the Germans chose culture and not civilisation, to express the nature of their social and political ideal. We cannot speak of civilisation without connecting it with the idea of society, citizenship, and therefore of reciprocal relations among men, that is, with a moral idea. The only word which we have to express that idea, is personality, the root idea of the Christian principle. If we try to trace the origin of the term civilisation, we are led back to the old conception of the *Civitas Romana*; and it is again a significant fact that both Roman law and Christian teaching are grounded on the same profound idea, the idea of personality, which is not individual merely, or social merely, but the union and harmony of both. Without society, there are no persons,—ye are members one of another. Without persons, there is no society, no rights and no duties, for all rights and all duties have their source and centre in the human person as a moral and spiritual being. Even the rights of nations are a deduction from the rights of man. What is Humanity, if it is not the human person, transfigured and symbolically conceived? If the saving principle is not also a civilising principle, that is due not to any defect in the principle itself, but to the ignorance and folly, the weakness and intolerance of men in interpreting the principle. The saving principle of Christianity is not merely one among many civilising principles. It is the only civilising principle, the only principle which gives any moral right to revolution, which supplies a goal to progress and unites justice and mercy. It is the right and duty which is the ground of all rights and duties. The true opposites, the irreconcilable contradictories, are not individualism, and socialism, not liberty and authority by whatever names they may be called, but Christ and Anti-Christ, the Christian principle and its negation, by whatever name it may be known, the spirit of egoism, the spirit of mammon, the necessity that knows no law, the force that knows no right but the right of the mailed fist, or the "dictatorship of the Proletariat."

IV.

The progress of civilisation is not a uniform and orderly advance, like that of an army with banners. The rhythm of human history is broken and fragmentary. The drama of human history is not the development of a single idea, moving onwards to the inevitable finale. It is a tragedy to make the high gods weep, a comedy to make them laugh. Its harmony

is made up of deepest discords. The French Revolution, as we read of it, is a tragi-comedy, a mingling of the grotesque and the sublime, a hideous nightmare, and a flaming vision of a new heaven and a new earth. Lowell, in his fine Ode to France, wrote—

“The brute despair of trampled centuries
 leaped with one hoarse yell, and snapped its bonds;
 Groped for its right with horny, callous hands,
 And stared around for God with bloodshot eyes.
 What wonder if those palms were all too hard
 For nice distinctions—if that maenad throng . . .
 Set wrong to balance wrong,
 And physicked woe with woe.”

The French revolution was a **political** revolution. The violent transference of the centre of political gravity brought about an almost immediate inversion of the existing political values. The whole machinery of social and political organisation was thrown into the melting pot, and not machinery only, but man himself was tried, as if by fire. It seemed as if nothing could withstand the fierceness of that fire, except then as now, the faith of France in itself and its cause, undying unconquerable France. But every faith has a creed, a formula, a symbol, in which, sooner or later, it finds expression. To seek the symbol of the French Revolution in the redcap, or the guillotine would be as foolish as to sum up the trade union movement as a policy of death to blacklegs. Men then as now, set wrong to balance wrong, and physicked woe with woe. Of such things, we can say,—they are unjust, and cannot last. But we cannot say so, unless we have faith in the things which endure, in righteousness, justice, humanity. France linked herself to humanity, when she took as the formula of her faith, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity.

“The France which lies
 Between the Pyrenees and Rhine
 Is the least part of France.”

France has been the inheritor and the transmitter of Latin civilisation to the modern world. In the revolution, she became the herald of a new spirit, the standard-bearer of the rights of man.

More than a hundred years have passed since France engraved the formula of her faith on her walls and temples to be a memorial and a warning to future generations, and once again, in 1914, France became the standard-bearer in a conflict which covered a still vaster field. Although many things had changed, the central issue had not changed. The nations were fighting, in a life and death struggle, not merely for the rights of nations, but for the rights of man. It is true that the main issue was obscured in the minds of many, by

minor issues and by false issues. It is true that each nation was fighting for itself as well as for humanity. It is true that each of the allied nations suffered, and is still suffering, for its own crimes in the past, its own neglect of the laws of righteousness, its own grievous sins against humanity, its callous disregard of the claims of liberty, equality, fraternity. But it is none the less true that in the ordeal of battle, the supreme issue was a moral issue, and that the appeal to the sword was the appeal to the right of armed justice. 'God defend the right!'

Not for the first time was France the great protagonist in a struggle on which the fate of civilisation depended. It was combined Gallic valour and Roman genius which in the great battle of Chalons, flung back the horde of Huns under Attila, on the bloodstained plains of Champagne, a conflict, says a contemporary writer, "fierce, vicious, obstinate and bloody; such as could not be paralleled in the present or past ages." The Huns, according to Gibbon, "practised their customary maxims of war. They massacred their hostages as well as their captives, the priests at the altar, and the babes in their homes, and two hundred young maidens were tortured with exquisite and unrelenting rage." Less than two centuries later, another alien horde, the Saracen invaders from Africa, were hurled back at Tours, by Charles Martel, and Western Europe was saved a second time from the destruction of the conditions of an orderly and civilised life for man. The triumph of the Hun and the Saracen would have meant the death of Latin civilisation, the loss of the glorious heritage of Roman law with its ideal of civic equality and impartial impersonal justice, and possibly also the decadence of those spiritual values which Christianity has kept alive in the human heart and conscience. From such dread disasters, France saved herself, and in saving herself, saved Europe and the world.

We are not concerned here with the history of the efforts made, so often tragic and sanguinary, to reconstitute Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire; or with the dream, the noble but impotent dream, of the Middle Ages, the theocratic ideal of a united Europe under one law, one God, one emperor; or with Feudalism, as the framework of the new society, out of whose ruins modern nations have arisen, with their separate languages and literatures, their rivalries, hatreds and lusts; or with the disastrous and fratricidal wars, which sprang from dynastic ambition, economic jealousy and greed, or religious bigotry and intolerance. Nor are we concerned with the record of the efforts made by Christianity, when it

was occasionally in earnest, to transform actual human relations, and social institutions, to make the Christian principle a principle of civilisation, the wellspring of human justice and love. It is enough here to say that the result of all the efforts of church and state, so far as France was concerned, was the production of a condition of society which had become intolerable. The moral and spiritual forces which alone can save a nation from degeneration and death were for the time, at any rate, spent forces. "If the salt hath lost its savour; wherewith shall it be salted?" Here is the description given by a sympathetic critic of to-day,— "The end of the eighteenth century provides us with the spectacle of a world in dissolution, a generation where the best impulses are sterile, ending only in an impotent sentimentality, where even the emancipators, Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, are poisoned with the prevailing corruption. It provides us with the spectacle of an aristocracy having no longer the discipline either of war, religion or honour, having moreover ceased to believe in itself." (Sarolea: *The French Renaissance*). If the salt hath lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

• The revolutionists of 1789 were not fully aware of all the clenched antagonisms which were concealed in their simple programme of liberty, equality, fraternity. The revolutionists of 1792 were so impressed by the thought that all old things had passed away, that they named that year, the year I., the beginning of a new era in the history of mankind. The sober German philosopher, Kant, when he heard the news, shed tears of joy, and exclaimed,— "I can now say with Simeon, 'Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'" It was not till the following year, the year of the Terror, that Fraternity was made part of the device of the Revolution. Previous to that, it had been Liberty and Equality, to which was sometimes added, "or death."

The modern historian, in his task of social analysis, has taught us to distinguish between the avowed aims of the leaders of any great political movement, and the direct or proximate causes which act on masses of men. The French Revolution was in truth a political revolution. Liberty and Equality were preached as political ideals. But to the great majority of Frenchmen, the immediate aim was relief from the overwhelming burden of the fiscal system, which made actual liberty and equality impossible. In 1789, according to Henri Taine, the great analyst of the Revolution, the French peasant, of every 100 francs of net income, paid 14 francs to his seigneur, 14 to the church, 53 to the King, and kept only

19 francs to himself. After 1800, he paid nothing to the Seigneur or to the church, paid 21 in all to the state, department, and commune, and kept 79 for himself. When we ask what the revolution did for France, let us not forget what it did for the Frenchman, the peasant and producer. To France it brought among other things, the anarchy of mob rule, the "despotism of disorder," the tyranny of military autocracy. To the peasant it turned 19 francs into 79 francs. It set him on his feet, and made him a man. It secured to him the results of his labour, a measure of that economic freedom, without which, political equality and liberty are empty names.

Yet this visible and measurable economic result of the revolution does not suffice to explain the devotion of the Frenchman to the principles of '89, or why we should rank the French Revolution among the great movements which have profoundly influenced the course of human history. The principles of '89 are not the heritage of Frenchmen alone. England and Australia, America North and South, Italy and Russia have in turn felt the inspiration of a faith which has removed mountains of oppression, and brought down principalities and powers. To each nation its own task, and its own peculiar genius. We need not undervalue the solid contribution which England has made to the sum of political wisdom achieved through the long labours of the nineteenth century. Nor need we too nicely balance the pedestrian political virtues against the heroic virtues, the virtues of those who occupy themselves with the next step, the practical expedient, the working compromise, against the virtues of the political enthusiast, the moral idealist, of those who would take the Kingdom by violence. But we cannot understand the French Revolution and what it accomplished, unless we conceive it as a great outburst of religious fervour. The ideas of liberty and equality, in themselves abstract and formal ideas, acquired a living spiritual significance through the contagion of a great emotion, which made France a new nation, exulting in its strength, and ready to take up the gage of battle against a coalition of tyrants. Liberty and Equality,—the logic of sentiment led to the addition of the third and complementary idea, Fraternity, the solidarity of a band of brothers, held together by a common spirit, a common faith, a common obligation, a community of duties and rights, a fellowship in suffering and sacrifice. It is true that this idea of fraternity has often been confused, through rhetorical caricature, with a vague cosmopolitanism, a sickly sentimentalism. But this was merely the shadow of the substantial living reality, faith in man and in new possibilities open to man, in a world set free. To us with another century of bitter experience behind

us, in which illusion and disillusion have followed each other with bewildering rapidity, the boundless optimism of the men of the revolution seems like the credulous faith of inexperienced youth. Yet our own Burns caught the echo of the French appeal to humanity above and beyond the limitations of creed and country, when he wrote:—

"Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it will, for a' that . . .
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that."

Many writers have noted the "double strain" in French character, the combination of what often seems hard realism with a "relentless idealism," a deep underlying idealism which may break forth in a passion of religious enthusiasm. President Poincaré tells us that "the French people have faith in principles. They have an innate taste and traditional need for general ideas, but they do not confuse general ideas with vague ideas, ideals with empty phrases. They want solid living realities." Is the formula in which the ideas of '89 are summarised, only a vague formula, an empty phrase, or does it stand for solid living realities? Men need some kind of creed to hold them together, in a church, a party, a nation, but the measure of their fighting capacity is the intensity of their belief in their creed. The slackness and flabbiness of modern liberalism, or let us say of modern liberals, seems to show that liberalism is a spent force, that its work is done, its warfare is accomplished, and that all that it requires is decent burial. Let the dead bury their dead! "Things won are done; life's joy lies in the doing." In our orations over the tomb of nineteenth century liberalism, let us not forget the things won, or the deeds of the mighty men of old who fought and died to secure for us those solid living realities, which because they seem assured possessions, are accepted without enthusiasm, and enjoyed without gratitude. We forget the price that has been paid, that we might be freeborn. Other men have laboured, and we have entered into their labours.

V.

A Liberty is, of course in itself, a negative conception. It demands that there shall be no unnecessary restrictions on the right which each man has, of asserting his own personality, developing his own activities, and enjoying the fruit of his labour. But it gives no guidance in determining the line to be drawn between necessary and unnecessary restrictions. It contains no positive principle of instruction or construction, either for the building up of that inward liberty of the soul to which personality aspires, or for the building up of that out-

ward liberty expressed in civic and political institutions, on which the life of a free community depends. Real liberty, freedom as a fact and not a mere pious aspiration, is something to be earned and won. It is not a battle cry, nor even the result of the battle. The French Revolution, and Liberalism too failed, so far as they did fail, because, the first battles for freedom having been won, the campaign for the rights of man was understood in too narrow a sense, as a merely political campaign for the removal of hindrances to the liberty of the individual. When the old hindrances had been removed, the old creed gave no help or guidance in the new campaign on which society was to enter. When the individual is freed from the bondage of authority and tradition, he is still face to face with the problem of life, of how to use his freedom. When society is liberated from the incubus of antiquated institutions, from the old law and order founded on force and privilege, it has still to face the problem of the new law and order, the task of constructing new institutions, fit for a free man's habitation.

Equality is by itself a purely abstract and formal conception. It is a mathematical relation never found verified outside the sphere of abstract quantity. The cynic and the satirist have an easy task, when they set themselves to parody the claims and aspirations of the new democracy, or collectivist schemes for the reconstruction of society on the basis of equality of labour or equality of reward. Equality, like liberty, is not a fact but an ideal. There is not a single human function or faculty which is not the source of human inequalities. There is no equality in physical or moral force, in wisdom or folly. A complete equality in attainments or ideals would mean the death of progress. A German anthropologist (Otto Ammon) tells us that "it is upon inequality that social order is based, and that inequality cannot be destroyed. It is as inseparable from the human race as birth and death, invariable as the truths of mathematics, eternal like the laws of the revolutions of the planets." A French writer (Ch. Maurras) draws what he considers to be the inference,— "The cry of the Terrorists was Equality or Death! Political science places before us a new dilemma, but one more certain,—it says to us, Inequality or decadence! Inequality or anarchy! Inequality or death!" The obvious fallacy in all such futile declamation lies of course in the confusion between those natural inequalities which no efforts of ours can remove, although we may mitigate some of their results, and the artificial and arbitrary inequalities which are of human and social production. We may put aside as irrelevant, all idle talk of the natural inequality of men. The false equality of the socialist

dreamer, or the conservative denouncer, is too absurd to be dangerous. Natural inequality is a fact, but a fact is neither a right nor a duty. Political and legal equality is not a fact, but an ideal, the assertion of both a right and a duty. Equality, as part of the creed of the French Revolution meant no more and no less than that no artificial inequalities should be added to the inequalities which existed as a necessity of man's nature and heritage. The demand for equality, like the demand for liberty, was a negative protest against all privileges based on caste, position or property, which endangered the free exercise of the legal and political rights of the individual. As thus conceived, liberty and equality are correlative terms, simply defining the formal condition of citizenship in the democratic state. Where this condition is not fulfilled, the state may be autocratic or bureaucratic or aristocratic or plutocratic, but is not democratic; and in no state is this democratic ideal fully realised, not in England or France or America or Australia. Equality, like liberty, is still to be won.

The political theorists of the Revolution had no very definite conception of the state, except that it is or ought to be an organisation for guaranteeing certain rights and securing the performance of certain duties. This fundamental function of the state was afterwards, in the creed of liberalism, regarded as practically the sole function of the state, so far at least as the interrelations of the citizens were concerned. The defect of Liberalism as a political philosophy was already inherent in the principles of the French Revolution, for neither equality nor liberty contains in itself any positive principle of social construction. They are essentially negative conceptions, principles of demarcation and delimitation. They postulate a fair field and no favour. They emphasise competition rather than co-operation, the rights which divide men, rather than the duties which unite them. What is lacking is the idea of community, social solidarity, joint responsibility for social slavery, social inequality, social suffering and sin.

Does the idea of Fraternity supply what is lacking to complete the social and political gospel? All men are brethren! Yes, the cynic replies,—Cains and Abels. We know how in practice the revolutionary gospel of fraternity turned into a deliberate policy of fratricide. We know how often the democratic profession of comradeship is made to cover malice and envy and all uncharitableness. We know how the other side of "class consciousness" is the bitter passion of class hatred and revenge. Of fraternity as of liberty we may say, how many crimes have been committed in thy name!

Some would urge that for fraternity, there should be substituted the idea of justice. But the idea of justice by itself

seems just as little capable of supplying a positive principle of construction as the ideas of liberty and equality, separately or combined. Justice is a regulative or distributive principle. It metes out to individuals something or other, according to what the existing law declares or assumes to be equitable. Once justice is done in a given case, the issues are supposed to be closed. But the issues of social life are never closed, and what is wanted is a principle of life, a positive principle of construction such as the abstract idea of justice cannot supply. We must enlarge the idea of justice if it is to become the inspiration of social duty and moral and political progress. The juridical conception of justice, negative and distributive, does not suffice; it requires to be supplemented by the idea of justice as a positive and organising principle. Men demand justice. They hunger and thirst for righteousness and love. Now what is fraternity if it is not the union of justice and love? The German philosopher, Kant, great part of whose work was inspired by the revolutionary idea, when asked what the moral law prescribed, replied,—always treat humanity, whether in thine own person or that of another, as an end, never as a means. Respect and reverence for personality and its possibilities, is a fine, an ennobling idea, but respect and reverence may be cold and inactive. To be roused to action, they must be kindled into a great emotion by the fire and passion of love. It has been said that if we could give the intensity of the family affections to our social relationships, the social problem might be solved; yet love by itself may be indiscriminating in its action, and harmful in its effects. The symbolical figure of Justice is represented as blind. The scales of Justice are equal. As justice and nothing but justice, it knows only the doer and the deed, and the sword is held ready to smite the doer of the deed. Love too, as love, and nothing else than love, is blind. Its heart goes out to weakness and sorrow, to the sufferer and the sinner. But just because it is so individual and personal in its impulse, it cannot become a principle of social regeneration, unless its action is guided by the insight and foresight of reason. Justice and love, not separately or in spasmodic succession, but combined and harmonised in thought and action,—this and nothing else than this, can satisfy the desire of our hearts and the demand of our intelligence in the search for the ideal. Our supreme idea of God is a moral as well as a religious idea, the perfect union of justice and love.

It would seem then, as if the development of the revolutionary gospel leads us back to the Christian idea of personality as a civilising principle. If Christianity has failed as a religious revolution, if the French Revolution failed as a poli-

tical revolution, the failure in both cases, has not been due to any defect inherent in the principle itself, but to defects in its interpretation and application by men to men. In the case of Christianity, a spiritual principle which was interpreted only as a spiritual principle, failing to understand the world, failed to penetrate and overcome it. In return, since the church could not live out of the world, the spirit of the world invaded the church, and the empire of man was divided by a subtle policy of accommodation and compromise, between God and Caesar, God and Mammon. The French Revolution failed, so far as it did fail, because its principle as interpreted and applied, was only a political principle. The ideals of equality and liberty, as conceived and formulated, were negative definitions, delimitations of individual activity, not positive principles of social construction. The justice which fraternity implied, was an abstract and formal justice, juridical rather than social and political. The faith which inspired the French nation contained by implication, both a morality and a religion fit for humanity, but its leaders were infected by all the anti-social vices of the time, egoism, intolerance and lust for power, and so the revolution devoured its own children and produced the forces of disorder and reaction, to which it became itself the victim. The humanitarian enthusiasm which made France for a moment the hope of the nations was lost in a welter of blood; yet all the later errors and disasters of France cannot rob her of the glory of her great initiative, through which the Utopian ideas of the past have become part of the common consciousness of to-day.

VI.

Modern democracy, it would appear, prefers equality and a severely restricted equality, to liberty. It prefers to talk of the rights of labour, rather than of the rights of man. When new enemies have arisen within the gates, the old battle-cries seem thin echoes of a far distant strife. The appeal to a humanity which would include the capitalist and the blackleg, rouses no enthusiasm. An abstract ideal cannot compete with a fighting programme. It is in the name and in the strength of "class-consciousness," that the new revolution is to be accomplished, and the kingdom of man established on the basis of equality of opportunity and enjoyment in a co-operative industrial commonwealth. This is the faith of great masses of men, bound together by fear and hope into an ever increasing army.

"Hark, the rolling and the thunder!
Lo the sun! and lo thereunder
Riseth wrath and hope and wonder,
And the host comes marching on."

The best way to prevent revolutions is to forestall them. Why should we wait for our liberties to come to us on the wings of the whirlwind? In every great convulsion of the social life of humanity, men's thoughts dwell in anxiety and hope on the possibility of some reconstruction to be carried out afterwards, "after the war," after things have settled down, after the violent expedients of the present have served their purpose, and ceased to be necessary. But what if things do not settle down? "I will shake the nations, and the things desired of all nations shall come." What are the things desired of all nations? Not peace merely, a static condition of equilibrium, which might mean stagnation and death; still less a return to the old conditions, when the spirit of anti-Christ, envy, jealousy, grasping egoism, governed the relation between states, and when the same spirit poisoned the national life at its sources, and perverted social relations in a thousand subtle and diverse ways. We may be premature with our plans, even supposing we were agreed on our plans, of the structure of the new society, which is to arise fair and flawless in some visionary future; but it is never premature to discuss principles of social or political construction. Are we so satisfied with the old, or so certain of the new, that we can treat the problem as one merely of mechanical rearrangement or adjustment of things or institutions, a matter of political engineering? The constitution manufacturers and mongers of the French Revolution thought so, and left to their successors a heritage of bitter disillusionment. The Russian people and the Russian politicians of to-day, have apparently still to be taught by the stern lessons of experience that the social and political problem is first and before all, a moral problem.

The principle of reconstruction is not to be found anywhere outside man himself. Out of the heart, not out of machinery, are the issues of life. The civilising principle of the twentieth century is not different from that of the nineteenth, or the eighteenth, or any other century. The difference lies in the comprehension of the principle and of the conditions of its realisation. The centuries to come may bring with them new problems yet undreamt of in this age of imperfect development, the comprehension of the full meaning of the principle may broaden and deepen, but the principle itself will remain throughout the ages, however problems and conditions may change in the growing life of humanity. They

may perish, but it shall endure, the same civilising principle, the principle of personality, the centre and source of all true liberty, equality and fraternity.

We may try to reach our principles of reconstruction from a consideration of the nature of personality itself, but apart from their application, principles are, in Milton's phrase, "ideas that effect nothing." In a given historical epoch, consideration of the principles cannot be severed from a thoughtful and unprejudiced analysis of the conditions of time, place, and circumstance. Otherwise we may fail as our predecessors failed, when in the pursuit of a spiritual ideal, they mistook other worldliness for unworldliness, or when in the new born love of freedom, they thought that liberty itself would cure all the evils which liberty produced. The true and full nature of a spiritual principle can be shown only in its development. It reveals new possibilities in the process of its application. It awakes new powers, and creates new duties. A man becomes aware of all that lies hidden in his own personality, only as he is roused to face the new fact, to master the new situation. Nations are judged by the same law of spiritual development. Although we use the same words, our ideals of social liberty, equality and justice, are not the same as those of the revolutionists of '89, or even of '48, and the difference is to be measured not merely by the greater complexity of our social problems, but by the wider range of our sympathies, our deepened sense of solidarity, our greater emphasis on social duty, our stronger faith in social justice, the readiness of our response to the voices that come to us from

"The deep, dark underworld of woe,
That underlies life's shining surfaces,
Dim populous pain, and multitudinous toil."

We cannot therefore look on economic or political reform as outside the moral task of social regeneration. To say that the social problem is first and before all a moral problem does not imply that it is only a moral problem. The goal of humanity is no mystic city of the soul, but the coming of the kingdom of righteousness.

The men of the political revolution, and of the generations which followed, had little or no conception of the tremendous tasks which were to test the faith and energies of their successors. The liberalism of the nineteenth century had for its motto, "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance," yet silently and unseen by the political watchers, new forces were arising and gathering in their strength, the impersonal elusive forces which were the outcome of the great industrial revolution. The accumulated and concentrated power of human

production, aided by nature and guided by science, is symbolised for many minds, in the portentous figure of Capitalism, a Colossus which doth bestride the world, a monstrous combination of Mammon and Moloch. If the essential evil of things consists in the degradation of personality, in the destroyal of the conditions of liberty, equality and fraternity, then Capitalism, it is agreed, is the great evil, and the preliminary to social revolution is the destruction of capitalism. We are not concerned here with the confusions of popular thought on the subject of capital, or with the theories of economists, busy over post mortem analysis of the accomplished fact, still less with collectivist visions of the future state. But even granting the truth of all or most of what is said as to the evils of capitalism, we may still ask what is the real end or "objective" of Socialism as a politics of reconstruction. The means are social control, but social control may be attained in different ways, and it is probable that the socialised control of capital will be brought about in the future society by a combination of many methods rather than by the exclusive adoption of one. The exclusive adoption of one method would mean the setting up of the absolute state with supreme centralised control of the total energies of national production, perhaps a greater despotism than history has ever known. Yet this elaborate machinery, contrived for the attainment of a material wellbeing, would after all be only a means. The real end would remain personality and the promotion of personality, the full and free development of the activities of man as a moral and spiritual being. Let us turn to French sanity and clearness of thought for a description of the true aim of Socialism. J. Jaures, the lamented leader of the French Socialist party, declared that "Socialism is the supreme assertion of individual right. Socialists desire to universalise human culture. For us the value of every institution is relative to the individual. It is the individual, asserting his will to liberate himself, to live, to expand, who henceforth is to give virtue and life to institutions and ideas. That is the logic of the revolutionary idea. That is Socialism." If this be the true end or "objective" of socialism, it is very doubtful whether the means advocated, the establishment of the absolute collectivist state, is the one best adapted to secure it. The events of recent history have not increased our love for absolutism, political, industrial, or any other form of absolutism. The extravagance of the collectivist creed has even roused, within the ranks of socialists themselves, a protest, and more than a protest, a rebellion, under the form of syndicalism, a new army, with a new de-

vice, and a new political philosophy. The syndicalist philosophy is in its origin a product of French thought. France, the "poet of the nations," has never been enamoured of the mechanical, German built scheme of collectivism. In addition, two factors in French life, combine to offer a permanent resistance to the ruthless ambition of a universalising state socialism,—family life and private property. The tenacious vigour of these twin institutions, is in part, the result of the work of the revolution, perhaps its most valuable heritage, and it is in virtue of these that France has been enabled to recover and renew her strength again and again after the direst disasters. After having rebelled against the oppression of the political state, France is not likely to replace it by the tyranny of the economic state. Syndicalism is, in part, a return to the ideas of liberty and equality, in opposition to the ironbound doctrine of the centralised collectivist state. It foresees the dangers of a new autocracy, government by a monstrous managing bureaucracy, without liberty, without equality, without justice. It advocates self government by communal group, by local district, distribution of power according to function, among the different economic organs or sections of society. Whatever be the merits or demerits of syndicalism, whether it constitutes a healthy protest or a new peril, it is a rebellion arising in the ranks of the workers themselves, against the tyrannical claims of the centralised collectivist state.

VII.

I have not attempted, nor shall I attempt to define personality. We can define liberty or equality or fraternity, but we cannot define personality. To define is to limit, but the personality of man in its realisation tends to overcome the limitations of the finite. God reveals himself within the finite, that man may rise above his limitations, and enter into the life which is infinite and eternal. Human history is a great adventure in which man sets out to discover himself and the secret of his personality. He has to fight with beasts, in order to find out that he himself is not a beast. He has to fight with nature, in order to find out that his spirit is greater than nature. He has to fight with himself, and with his fellow men, in order to find out that obedience to law is the condition of freedom, and that love is the fulfilling of the law. History is the record of man's efforts to discover himself, but human nature is continually making new discoveries, and breaking through its self-set limits. As "Amurath to Amurath succeeds," so civilisations, and philosophies, and religions

follow each other, in the never ending attempt to define human personality and its possibilities; yet all of them provide but broken lights wherewith to guide man in his stumbling steps upwards and onwards to his far distant goal. "Unless a man above himself exalt himself, how poor a thing is man!" Personality is what it does and dares, and its task is infinite. Let us cease then the vain attempt to apply our yardsticks to the immeasurable, to define the indefinable. The highest is the measure of the man, but what the highest is, we have yet to learn. What personality is in its full completeness, we cannot say, until there are no more worlds left for it to conquer.

The civilising principle of personality has still many worlds to conquer. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty," and the darkest places are sometimes to be found within the centres of civilisation itself. The spirit of Mammon defiles the springs of life, and debases the moral currency. It ruins art, prostitutes sport, perverts religion, stains family honour, and makes patriotism a marketable commodity. Materialism can breed nothing but materialism. The task of social and political reform is to provide conditions under which not merely a human life, but the good life shall be at least a possibility for all.

"Reform,
Make trade a Christian possibility,
And individual right no general wrong."

This task of reform is a common task, in which all can share, and we need not be too careful in distinguishing the friends of society from its supposed enemies. We need many minds and many hands. We need the passive resister as well as the fiery fanatic. We need the unsparing analyst of our social vices. We need the men who are perhaps over-fond of hoisting danger signals on every possible path, as well as the pioneers who blaze the way and open up new paths for social progress. What we do **not** need is the complacent satisfaction of those who think that they are living in the best of all social worlds, the silly superstition of those who think that **things** will right themselves, the base flattery of those who hold up a distorted mirror to society, in which its vices appear as virtues, the credulous faith of those who think that victories can be gained without fighting, and that the strongholds of cruelty and oppression and sin, will crumble at the sound of the blowing of their trumpets. Our failures are not due to any excess of idealism.

"It takes the ideal to blow a hair's breadth off
the dust of the actual."

Our failures are due to inertia, selfish interest and selfish interests, lack of knowledge, lack of power, and lack of faith: lack of knowledge,—the latest and most complex of the positive sciences, Sociology, is still in its infancy: lack of power,—not brute power, but intelligent control, grounded on co-operative effort, and guided by sympathetic insight: lack of faith,—faith in ourselves and in our fellow men, faith in the possibilities of personality: and finally, lack of the divine spirit of charity, which is ready to forgive and forget, because it understands.

AB
Liberty may be won, if we are willing to surrender some of our own anti-social liberties. Equality may be won, if we think less of our own individual rights, and more of our common duties. Fraternity may be won, if we aim more at that justice which is inspired by love.





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