

Churches for Truth and Justice.

A man said to me the other day, in speaking of the relation of Churches to social problems,—"If they claim supernatural powers and supernatural origin, hold them to supernatural results." That seems to me to strike at the heart of much of the criticism that has been directed against the church and its shortcomings. The failures and the limitations of the churches in their work are tremendous when compared with the pretensions of the church. A ~~ix~~ just sense of modesty might save the hearts as well as the ~~dignity of the churches~~. In much of the discussion concerning the various and sundry "crises" that "The Church" is facing, one ~~XXXXXX~~ is reminded unconsciously of a street scene on a September evening when some vender of "Choice wares", by the light of a flaming torch, expounds the virtues of his particular ~~brand of collar buttons~~. *is a cure-all.* *The following passage is of this character.* ~~I came across a passage of such suggestive qualities the other day. In reading the passage one is not certain whether it was written in dead solemn earnestness by one lacking a sense of humor, or in a humorous bantering strain by some wag.~~ "The average Protestant layman, though he may be a nominal church member, does not realize the importance of the Church. He does not clearly see or fully appreciate the fact that it provides the ~~chief~~ motives, ideals, restraints, and discipline of life ; that it stands guard over the sanctities of the home ; that it safeguards property with protection that no police force provides ; that it contributes to the market-place the moral influences most needed there ; that it equips the court with principles of justice without which human society would dissolve ; and that it ~~XXXX~~ constantly replenishes the enthusiasms that support education."

While hardly intended as such, this is the most cruel criticism of the Church that I have ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ heard from

either friend or foe. To make the Church positively and aggressively responsible for the "chief motives, ideals, restraints and discipline" of modern life is really too much. Up to this point the most brutal criticisms have condemned the Church more for neglect of duty, or cringing subserviency, than for deliberate and constructive effort in producing the conditions of our social order to-day. This passage asserts that the ~~the~~ church should be supported because it does do these ^{very} things;

but that is the very point at issue. ~~The contention is made by her critics that the church is deserted, and is open to~~ ^{has failed for not doing}

at just this point,

~~condemnation,~~ ^{On the one hand it is criticized} either because it has failed in supplying the

just protection to private property, ~~or~~ in furnishing just principles for the courts, ^{and} in replenishing the ideals of education; ^{On the other hand,} ~~or~~, if it be demonstrated that the Church has furnished these values to modern society, and society in its existing order is following the lead of the Church, then the Church is open to the criticism of have delivered false values.

all the

In either case the Church, presuming to be responsible for ~~the~~ good of the existing order, must also accept the responsibility for its glaring defects. Here is the pith of all the criticisms against the Church. It is the unwarranted pretensions of 'The Church' or churches that exasperate one, and call forth the stinging rebukes. It would be reassuring to hear the ~~church~~ churches cry out, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." If I mistake not, churches are thus crying to-day. At any rate the assumption that "The Church" or a church has some private monopoly on "the chief motives, ideals, restraints, and disciplines of life"; that it can grind them out, and furnish them ready made in standard sizes to all comers, is an unworthy survival of the Middle Ages. To use a phrase once used by John Wise, - "It smells of the Pope's kitchen."

The Church is one ^{among} of the institutions of society. It is, at once, a monument to human ideals and life values of the past and the organized channel through which men and women have ~~se~~ sought to satisfy a need of humanity. As such it shares in all the imperfections and limitations of society as a whole. It is not, never has been, and cannot ^{be} a complete entity apart from all the institutions of society, and able to produce at will the eternal values, and train the whole strength of its organized force upon the task of their realization. For the most part the same people who make up the body of the church, also make up the body of society. The ideals of the one are reflected in the other, both good and bad. The vital living force that produces our chief motives, ideals, restraints, and discipline of life ["] is not in the institution, but in the human life that supports and builds the institution as the channel ^{for} common purpose and common effort. It is gratuitous to speak of the attitude of "The Church" towards this ^{debated} problem or that. It has no attitude any more than society as a whole has an attitude. Individual churches will have an attitude towards ^{any} given problem, ^{this attitude} and it will be determined by the attitude of the people who make up the church. Their mental, moral and economic status and development will determine their attitude. ^{When} a new and decisive issue appears, some churches will take one attitude and others will take another, while still others will split. This fact is illustrated again and again in history.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ The anti-slavery issue was such. ^P In all

this growth-process of society ~~in which~~ the churches are a part, the integrity of any single church, its people or its minister, or any group of churches, is determined by the fundamental motive of its action in the face of its issue. The function of the church in the social economy is to seek for, conserve, and realize the great values of human life. Upon this fundame

To the same families of development ~~undergoes changes and decay~~ ^{subject} ^{other institutions}

In all this growth-process of society, the churches have
a part. They are subject to the same demands
of utility and efficiency of function in the social
order, as other institutions. Its function is to
seek, conserve, and realize in life, the great
life values. Just what those values are, and
just how they are to be attained is open to
question, as the various interpretations of religious
experience bear witness. But whether the
life value be concerned of as future salvation,
or, personal character, ~~and integrity~~ ^{and service}, the function
of the churches is the same. As to fundamental
motives and purpose, there are ~~less~~ hardly
in question. The moral integrity of
any church, its people or its ministers, or
of any fellowship of churches is determined
by the sincerity and fidelity, ~~with which~~
~~it follows its~~ by the motive of its activity.
If any minister or any people violate the
integrity of motive, let them answer for it.

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mental purpose and motive there can be no difference of ~~opinion~~ opinion. To seek for and to conserve the life values that are worth while is the ~~purpose of the church~~ common bond ~~and the basis~~ of church fellowship. If any minister, or any group of ~~men~~ people violate that motive, let them answer for it.

But there is room for a wide and honest difference of opinion as to the nature of these values and the way and manner in which they may be realized. Without assuming infallibility, or questioning the integrity of any who differ from me, I want to state what seems to me must be the inevitable attitude ^{towards the social question} of churches in which the spirit of modern thought is predominant ~~towards the social questions~~. The social unrest of our times in the political and industrial fields as well as in the religious aspects of life is the ^{evidence} ~~proof~~ ^{in our midst} of a profound ~~change~~ ~~xxxx~~ revolution that is going on. The modern world is working towards a new social ideal. The ideal of the ancient world was ~~classically~~ ^{in classic form} expressed in Plato's ~~xx~~ conception of Justice as embodied in The Republic. A ruling class of intellectuals guided the state. A warrior class, obedient to the philosophers, guarded the state, while the ~~work~~ was done for all of society by the laboring class, whose function in society was to work and to obey. The most complete expression of this ideal appears in the social order of the Holy Roman Empire, with the Church as the intellectual class, the princes and lay nobility as the warrior class. The serfs were the laboring class, whose task was implicit obedience ~~to~~ and the support of the upper classes.

Since the beginning of the Reformation society has been engaged in the task of replacing the social order of the ~~Middle~~ Middle Ages by a social order in which the principles of democracy shall find expression. The alleged authority of the Church has been transferred from the Papal monarch to the people at large.

Truth has ~~thus~~ come to be regarded as the gleanings of human experience in the world-life instead of an unnatural revelation ^{from outside}. The old ideal of the divine right of monarchs has been replaced by the principle ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ that the right to rule ^{rests} ~~arises~~ in the people, and ^{largely} The ruler is not a lord and master, but a servant carrying out the will of the people. The political right has been socialized. In the same way we have universalized the idea of sacred writings. To-day the problem in theology is one of socializing the ideal of manhood. Is Jesus the revealing type of human perfection, or is he ^{simply} one of those who ^{have} been reaching out after ~~the ideal~~ and, ^{have been working} ~~along with others, has made this~~ contribution? Is the source of ^{the human ideal} in Jesus as the Monarch, or is it in the common life? Is he the lord and master of humanity in this aspect of life, or is he a servant who has done a ^{noble} ~~helpful~~ work for humanity?

The same forces and principles are at work in the political and industrial life. ^{Are} ~~Is~~ property and property interests the lords and masters of humanity, in whose service humanity is to sacrifice every value that conflicts with their greedy demands? The question is ethical. Are we to have a social order in which material wealth shall be the monarch, and rule over us either with an iron hand in all its nakedness, or with an iron hand covered by a silk glove. The same principle is at stake to-day that was at stake when the Puritans were struggling against the accepted principle of the divine right of kings to rule, and the divine obligation of subjects to obey. To-day we are contending against the idea of the "divine" right of the commercial and industrial system ^{and its profits}. It is in fact our lord and master ~~as the~~ as the disclosures ^{of} political and industrial ^{activities} demonstrate. ^{the system} It has not been particular how this position of mastership has been gained, as the revelations of corrupt practices show. ^{But} Its rule is no longer held unchallenged. All

over the country are the evidences of a great uprising against the overlordship of the "System". It is a struggle between the rights of personality and the rights of concentrated wealth and power. Shall ~~these~~ great industrial system be the servant of human life, contributing to the growth, developement, and ~~to the~~ emancipation of personality? Or, shall it be the lord and master to whose word of command we shall submit, and upon whose altar we shall lay our sacrifices of degradation, poverty, debauchery, corruption, and even life itself? Shall the many become the ~~servile~~ servile subjects of the industrial and commercial system, or shall the system become the servant of the many? Has this structure of modern life into whose ~~the~~ building has gone the labor, the brains, and the interminable hours of toil and ~~suffering~~ ^{the} suffering of millions of people the right of way? ~~Has~~ the creature become master of the creator? Is society to remain plutocratic, or shall it become democratic?

In the one case
~~On the one hand~~ we will have the subjection of the rights of humanity to the interests of wealth and things. ~~On the other~~
In the other case
hand we will ~~assert~~ ^{the} supremacy of human life, assisted and ~~and~~ supported in its pursuit of the great human values by the institution which it has created for that very purpose. Shall the institution be the master or the servant of man? That is the essence of the social question to-day, just as at an earlier day the question was as to whether the government should be the master or the servant of human life.

Now towards all this problem "The Church" ^{had} has and can have no common attitude in the very nature of things. Churches which are identified with "what is" by all their life values must of necessity identify themselves with the values that they believe in. Tradition, authority, institutionalism, ^{and} formalism, in religion, go hand in hand with the ^{supremacy of industrialism} ~~same point of view and the~~

~~same forces~~ in the social order at large. ~~In all this the in~~
In either case the interests of human life and progress

whether in the case of the individual or humanity.
~~individual and humanity as a whole is sacrificed for the institu-~~
~~tion. One can see the forces of society at present lining up~~
~~according to these principles. On the other hand those~~
~~churches and those people who believe in the principle that~~
~~institutions of whatever nature are the natural product of~~
~~human values, and are of use only so far as they serve the~~
~~larger interests of human life,~~ *and must adapt to human needs*
~~must take a position quite the~~
~~opposite from the former. They must by the very nature of their~~
~~mental and moral makeup, in conformity to their life values,~~
~~hold that institutions must serve human life, and conduct~~
~~themselves according to this principle.~~

Now The immediate problem before us *therefore* is the relation of
the Churches of the latter type to this central question upon
which all forces of society are directed *their attention* to-day. The ~~xxxxxxxx~~
~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ objection is often made ~~xxxxxxxx~~ when this
question of the relation of churches to social problems is
raised that the churches have to do only with individuals; that
its function is simply to influence and stimulate the life val-
ues of individual men and women. If any man comes in contact
directly with the business and commercial atmosphere to-day he
will soon find that pious teachings in the Churches are contra-
dicted by the facts of life *every single day* in the industrial
order. In church he may learn that human life is sacred, but
in business life he learns that it is not. He may learn in the
churches that the home is sacred, but in business life he soon
finds that homes are being ruined, and all the most holy rela-
tions of life are trampled upon. While we are producing enough
to more than satisfy the needs of the nation, children are go-
ing hungry, mothers are working in the mills and factories,
children and youngpeople are compelled ~~to~~ by bread and butter
necessity to work when they ought to be at school or at play.
In the church one may learn that we should love honor and jus-

How it is evident that in most of our churches the principle of life is level of the first vice path of modern

tice, but once in the grip of the world, he knows that money is the thing loved, that a premium is placed upon ~~dishonesty~~ dishonesty, and every consideration is sacrificed to the dollar. This is not an exaggerated statement. *I have heard that from* ~~I have had most~~ ~~careful~~ careful and intelligent business men, ~~tell me that very thing.~~ *the experience of most*

One man in particular said,—"It is not difficult to make money but it is difficult to make it honestly." He is not a fanatic. Once start in the task of developing ideals and goodness in the individual, and follow that ten steps outside the walls of the Church building, and you come up against the whole steam roller of modern industrialism crushing and grinding those very principles, and those very individuals into the dirt and gravel ^{along} of its high-way of "prosperity and profits". I am by no means blind to the constructive values of modern industrialism, but the records of corruption, of death by wanton neglect, by unhuman surroundings, ^{and} by disease, of the alliance of the System with vice and crime as disclosed by Judge Lindsey, Steffens and by personal experience, — Great God, is there a man ~~who~~ ^{with} with a particle of ~~human~~ ^{red} blood in his veins who would not protest, and fight against the ~~cruel~~ ^{and} wanton sacrifice of human life, and ~~noble~~ life values by this over-lordship of the industrial system to-day. Once get near enough to hear the hissing steam of its hideous inhuman machine, and certainly no live man would be content to say that ~~his~~ ^{its} exalted aim and purpose is to prepare people to die without complaint beneath its ~~wheels~~ ^{wheels}. ~~The thing is a monster, more~~ *terrible, more blood-thirsty and inhuman*

Men and women together in a church fellowship are deciding what seeds are worth while to plant and grow in the world-garden of ours. Fools would we be to plant them, and then stand by and see them choked and destroyed by a vicious growth of weeds. As people banded together in a church fellowship our

task is not merely to sit together quietly before a cheerful open fire, and talk about and describe the beautiful flowers and the delicious fruit that we might produce if it were not for those ~~noxious~~ vicious weeds. Our task is quite as much out in the world garden preparing the soil, pulling out the weeds root and branch, nurturing and caring for the values that we wish to produce. In doing this work we may break up into ~~groups~~ groups or we may go forth as a body, that is not so important so long as we do the work.

Now these free churches came to their birth in their struggles against the overlordship of an institution. ~~They to did a noble work in throwing aside the institution of slavery for the same reason.~~ They have always held to the supremacy of personality over the interests of the conflicting institution. The very breath that gave them birth was the breath of freedom and the fostering mother that developed them was the ideal of the ethical expression of ~~the religious impulse~~ ^{feelings} ~~impulse~~ ^{that} Now we come face to face to day with problems that involve the life or ~~the~~ death of the freedom that gave us birth, and the foster-mother that nourished us, what ~~are~~ we to do? There is but one thing for us to do. Out into the world-garden we must go to fight for justice, for truth, for righteousness, for human life, and the great life values, to fight with the God Spirit, and to be brave soldiers in the army for humanity. I displease that appeal that makes capital out of the unrest of our times, and hopes to build therefrom a great ecclesiastical institution. God forbid that any church should ever thus prey upon the discontent and the suffering of human life to ~~thus~~ increase its size or fill its coffers, that it may say to the world, "Behold how large and powerful, we are." If our work is not inspired by a single-eyed love for truth, and humanity, then let us cease where we are. A thousand times more valuable to society

is the hide-bound institution that out of all sincerity of purpose clings with the tenacity of despair to that which is ~~decaying~~ decaying, when compared with the institution that, with a disingenuous duplicity, capitalizes the unrest of our times for its ~~own~~ ^{own} advancement. Any work that may be done in the ~~new~~ world-garden, must be done in all integrity. So there is our task. ~~XX~~ The spirit of the fathers sends us to ^{it}. The love of humanity leads us to it. We must follow as the guiding light of our ideal shall point the way.

Once out in the world-garden, what do we find? Some-people seem to think that outside of the churches there are ~~x~~ vast hoardes of men and women who are languishing to enlist under the standards of the ideal. Not so. The vast hoardes are as society as a whole. They accpet its standards, and follow in its conventional pathways. No one need delude himself with the hope that so soon as he shall hoist his banner, the multitudes will flock to it. The task is not ^{so} ~~that~~ easy. The world-ground may lie fallow, as Prof. Doan says, but before the flowers bloom there is a long, tedious process before us. But with such a small group to do the work, how hopeless the task? "Not so!" again I say. The world forces work even ~~now~~ till now for human life and human freedom. Here and there you will come across some individual, in whom the ^{seed} ~~breakth~~ of the modern world ideal has found lodgement. He will know you, and you will know him. Henceforth you will work together. As time goes on the number will increase, and by and by the small group becomes the great body, and before it knows what has happened, it has stirred the whole social order from its apathy, it has set people to work for truth and humanity. It has become a live full-grown man at work for humanity.