

## CHAPTER XVI.

### OF SOCIAL SOLIDARITY.

If you pass by the least considerable man, you pass by all the humanities and the divinities, and set your heart on what is transient and cheap. There is a wide ocean of difference between taking in the last man and leaving him out. It is not a question of one man, but of humanity.

*Charles Ferguson.*

From the time of the advent of man upon earth one question has persistently occupied his attention, and even now most insistently presses for solution. It is this: How can the problem of individual life be made to harmonize with the problem of social life?

When a man in isolation undertakes to satisfy his desires by the application of his labor-power to the land-forms about him, the problem that he must ultimately solve is how to put himself into the best possible relations with his physical environment. At this stage only questions of physical science press for solution. The economic law of gravity impels him to take advantage of all the laws and forces of nature so far as he is able to understand and control them. He seeks to satisfy his desires with the least physical disutility. This economic law of gravity is the basis of all physical progress and is responsible for all growth in the development of physical processes and physical sciences.

But in ordinary circumstances man does not satisfy his

desires in isolation. As soon, however, as production and enjoyment in company with his fellows begins, man is confronted with a social environment of which he must take note either to his advantage or disadvantage. The problem now arising is how to put himself into the best possible relations with his physical environment and his social environment at one and the same time. The simple industrial question begins to assume both an economic and an ethical aspect.

The introduction of his fellow men into his environment necessarily compels him to view the economic law of gravity in the light of the new condition. It does not readily occur to him that the new condition should place a limitation upon the law by which he seeks the highest satisfaction of desire with the least effort. Instead of applying the new condition to this law, he is prone to apply the law to the new condition, and to make of his social environment an instrument for the better satisfaction of his own desires, regardless of the desires of his fellow men. He exercises his labor-power in reducing his fellows to subjection so that he may enjoy the fruits of their labor as well as his own; and finally, so that he may enjoy the fruits of their labor without any irksome effort of his own. In doing this, he may become their ruler as well as task master, and in such case there is introduced to the world a society based upon the lowest of all social ideals, viz., the ideal of self-enjoyment at the expense of others. Out of this ideal, evolved in this way, have grown the social disutilities of chattel slavery, serfdom, the social and economic enslavement of women, monarchy, military despot-

ism, modern wage slavery, private landlordism under the present tenure, protective tariffs, monopolies and all forms of differential power and privilege created and maintained by the institutions, laws and customs of society.

But this barbaric ideal has not been permitted to exist wholly unquestioned and unchecked. Gradually there has come into the minds of men a higher ideal which has found its best expression in the golden rule. This is the ideal of self-enjoyment, not at the expense of others, but at the expense of self. "Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you." If this ideal were engrafted upon the original ideal of individual selfishness it would change the economic law of gravity into the economic law of equal freedom. The law of equal freedom is that in any state of society every man should be able to satisfy his desires with the least exertion, provided that he does not thereby interfere with the equal opportunity of every other man to do the same.

The ideal of the golden rule—of self-enjoyment at the expense of self, of loving thy neighbor as thyself—was given to the world in its highest form nearly two thousand years ago. A few souls here and there have accepted this ideal and have actually conformed their lives to its teaching. To most men of to-day, however, the golden rule is but a maxim, Christianity is but a cult. As a whole men yet seek to satisfy their desires at the expense of others. The teaching for two thousand years of the sublimest truths within the statement and comprehension of man has resulted in a refinement of the means by which one man may exploit another, but in the realm of economics, men

to-day no more conform to the teachings of the Just One than did the generation that nailed Him to the cross. Everywhere even now there exists want and the fear of want in the midst of plenty; a ceaseless unrest pervades the working classes; with every increase in wages goes an increase of the cost of living; and never in all the history of the world have there existed so many nor such gigantic fortunes based wholly upon differential privilege—upon pure and unmitigated greed—as exist to-day.

But the laws of economic life can not be violated with impunity, even by those who seek to profit by such violation. There is no gain to the beneficiaries of privilege except that which may be measured in dollars and cents, and in the ability to live upon the unrequited labor of others. Riches acquired under the established order do not bring happiness, but power; not pleasure, but leisure; not the leisure of that restfulness which the soul craves, but of restlessness and *ennui*. The man who wears his life away in piling up a fortune for his family is constantly tortured by the thought that his children will lose their inheritance either through their own dissipation or through the knavery and cunning of others. Hard as is the lot of the child born to poverty, his chance of ultimate success in all that makes life worth living is better, on the whole, than that of the child born to wealth and reared in the lap of luxury. Nature has its punishments and its compensations. It were infinitely better for a man to die leaving a son without a dollar in a world of equality of opportunity, than with a million dollars in a world where all natural opportunities have been appropriated, and

where all sorts of differential privileges are created and maintained by the institutions, laws and customs of society; where the whole people, instead of working together for the purpose of overcoming the disutilities of the natural world, are gathered into hostile camps, placing artificial disutilities in one another's way; where in a world in which all might have enough and to spare, the whole tendency of the times is toward the creation and perpetuation of the bitter struggle between those who thrive above and those who exist below the normal economic margin.

As long as the institutions, laws and customs of the established order are maintained in their present form this condition of inequality and differential privilege will continue and its exploitations will increase. The established order offers everywhere a premium upon selfishness; a pecuniary reward to the despoiler of the labors and to the destroyer of the opportunities of others. Not only private individuals, but separate communities look upon one another as legitimate prey in the great struggle for supremacy. Nations eye one another with jealousy mingled with hatred and fear, and enact into their laws so far as they dare the sentiment of Voltaire: "He who wishes the good of his own country must inevitably wish evil to other countries." This is the underlying principle of all so-called protective tariffs. By these tariffs the people of one country seek to satisfy their desires at the expense of the citizens of foreign countries. This is but a social exemplification of the lowest of all economic ideals, viz., self-enjoyment at the expense of others. A nation calling

itself Christian should at least conform, in its national and international polity, to the ideal enunciated in the golden rule—self-enjoyment at the expense of self.

For, mark you, the golden rule is not the basic conception of Christianity. The doctrine of the golden rule was stated, in negative form it is true, but none the less clearly, by Confucius four centuries before the Christian era, and again by Seneca at Rome about the time that Jesus taught in Palestine. The ideal which Jesus distinctively gave to the world is far more sublime than the ideal of the golden rule. It is not satisfied with simple self-enjoyment at the expense of self. It is not based upon self enjoyment at all. It is this: Self-denial for the enjoyment of others; self-sacrifice in order that others may be saved.

This is the highest conception of life that it is possible for man to attain. We have already stated the lowest conception—self-enjoyment at the expense of others. Between these lies the ethical (not religious) conception of the golden rule—self-enjoyment at the expense of self; do as you would be done by. One or the other of these conceptions must distinctively govern every individual life. One or the other of these conceptions must distinctively govern the social and economic life of every people. The State must so create and maintain its institutions, laws and customs that individual life may harmonize with social life. How may this be done?

It will at once be said by some that the State has nothing to do with the religious ideals and practices of its citizens—that in the United States, especially, any action

by state or nation in this behalf is forbidden by the constitution. But in guaranteeing religious freedom the constitution itself has something to do with religion. Any action of the State which tends toward religious freedom is within both the spirit and the letter of the constitution.

The constitution of the United States, and the government under its sanction, now gives to every citizen full liberty to believe and to teach to others the sublime conception of Jesus of self-denial for the good of others; but the institutions, laws and customs of the established order prevent any man from living this ideal. No man can adopt Christianity—real Christianity as Jesus exemplified it—as a life, in present conditions, and socially survive. He will become an outcast, if he follows in the real footsteps of the Master. He will be propertyless and will be cast into prison as a vagrant under the law. He will converse with the fallen woman at the public drinking place, and will say of the woman taken in adultery, Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her. He will inveigh against the mad struggle for property and power, and advise the rich young man to sell all that he hath and give to the poor. Without hope or expectation of reward he will go about doing good. His words will give offense to those in power, and his mode of life will not conform to the accepted standards. He will lay bare the true inwardness of the hypocrite and drive the modern money changers from the temple. Society will crucify him; he can not live a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice and socially survive.

The reason of all this is that our social life is based not upon the highest of our economic ideals, but upon the

lowest. The conception that it shows more business ability, more practical acumen, to acquire enjoyment at the expense of others than at the expense of self dominates our whole economic system. Out of this conception and the institutions, laws and customs of society based upon it, have grown numerous and flagrant institutional wrongs. Before there can be any permanent relief from existing conditions these social wrongs must be righted. It is not enough to convert the individual and to save him from his own sin as our churches now attempt to do. Laudable as is this attempt in itself, it is inadequate in its scope, and must largely prove unavailing and abortive as long as social wrongs are left untouched. The pulpit can not adequately reach the pew, if the occupant of the latter is either the beneficiary or the victim of an institutional wrong. In vain is preached on Sunday the uplifting doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man to men who, on week days, are engaged in a desperate struggle, either to take advantage of a social wrong or to escape its terrible injustice. And this is as it should be. Men must learn—not only out of the pulpit, but in it—that from social sin there is no individual salvation.

Men must realize that on the voyage of life we are all in the same boat. In case of shipwreck upon the high seas we honor as a hero the man who does not attempt to save himself until all his shipmates have been provided with the best available means of safety; and, on the other hand, we brand as a coward a man who attempts to save himself regardless of others, and as a fiend one who attempts to take advantage of the weaknesses and misfortunes of



others in order to enhance his own chances of escape. So it must become in the great voyage of life. In a community where injustice prevails and institutional wrongs constantly oppress the weak and unfortunate in this life, the man who selfishly seeks to save his individual soul for a life to come has a soul scarcely worth saving. Let him first seek social salvation at the altar of Justice; he may then with propriety present his individual soul for redemption at the throne of Grace. Let him do what he can to harmonize social life with his highest conceptions of individual life.

In the establishment of this harmony, however, the individual is not all in all. Social wrongs are institutional; the institution, not the individual, is primarily at fault. Social salvation must come through social endeavor. The State—the active agent of the social organism—must do its part. Its part is most important, but it is as simple as it is momentous. It must do three things, and do them completely and well:

The State must prevent its citizens from acquiring self-enjoyment at the expense of others.

The State must compel its citizens to acquire self-enjoyment only at the expense of self.

The State must make it possible (not mandatory) for its citizens to practice self-denial for the good of others—to practice Christianity as a life, not simply to accept it as a cult—and economically and socially survive.

The adoption of the principles and program of bisocialism will enable the State to do all these things. The principles of bisocialism condemn without qualifica-

tion or extenuation the conception that men should seek to satisfy their desires at the expense of others. It incorporates into its economic law of equal freedom the conception that among persons of normal ability and of mature years self-enjoyment should be based only upon self-endeavor. And its ideal is to bring about such a state of society as will enable people to practice the highest virtues without punishment; to attune their lives to the aspiration of the Lord's Prayer: Thy kingdom come \* \* \* on earth as it is in heaven.

The program of bisocialism is in harmony with all these principles. It proposes to put all men upon a basis of equality of opportunity by the socialization of all the differential advantages of nature as fully reflected and measured in ground values. All men thus having equal access to natural opportunities, each must prosper according to his own endeavor. In industry all men will produce upon the level of the man who must occupy the margin. The differential gains of those above the margin, resulting from the use of superior natural advantages, will be appropriated by the State in taxation and expended for the common good. Tenants of superior land-forms under the established order are compelled to pay the value of the advantages of location and fertility to their respective landlords, and thus to put themselves upon the economic plane of the marginal producer. Bisocialism will extend the law of the margin to land owner as well as land user, and in this way all land differentials, as among individuals, will disappear.

Under bisocialism not only will the man who has the

exclusive use or control of a natural opportunity pay for the privilege, but all those who suffer the disutility of standing aside while he uses and enjoys will be recompensed through the socialization of ground values. The expenditure of these ground values in improved and cheapened—ultimately free—public utilities, particularly in the matter of transportation, will progressively raise the economic margin. This will improve the condition of the marginal producer, and through him all others will be benefited. Those who are above the marginal producer will not prosper at his expense as now, but only as he prospers and because of his prosperity. Throughout the entire field of industry there will be manifested the feeling of all-in-the-same-boativeness—the elevating influence of social solidarity.

Under bisocialism no man can acquire any artificial advantage over another under the sanction of the law. The State will destroy all existing artificial differentials except such as will expire by limitation within a reasonable time, and will refuse to renew or further to create such differentials. It will profit no man anything under bisocialism to attempt to acquire a differential advantage in the use of land-forms, because the full market value of such advantage will be taken from him annually in taxation.

Nor under bisocialism will it specially profit any community to secure differential advantages in the way of public works or the erection of public buildings. The present day scandals of river and harbor bills and like laws by congress or legislature for the expenditure of public moneys will cease. The financial benefits to be

derived from such expenditure will at once be reflected in the ground values of the favored community, and its people, in the course of years, will pay into the public treasury the full equivalent of all the financial or measurable benefits received. If one city prospers more than its neighbors, its prosperity will be exactly registered in its ground values, and in their socialization through national and State taxation all less fortunate cities will share.

Under bisocialism the selfishness which now impels men to violate the economic law of equal freedom, and to satisfy their desires at the expense of others will have no sanction in the institutions, laws and customs of society. That which a man may gain through inequality of opportunity will either be forbidden or it will be socialized through the public appropriation of ground value. In the same way the selfishness which now impels communities to secure differential advantages by means of national and state appropriations of public funds will be thwarted, and persons and communities alike will come to realize that, advantage or no advantage, appropriation or no appropriation, all must give an exact equivalent for what they get. When this is once perceived and thoroughly understood, people individually and collectively for selfish reasons will drop their selfishness, and will set themselves to inquire how they can best do something for the benefit of those who occupy the margin.

In the play and interplay of the forces governing the established order the sordid selfishness of man is dominant and generates untold individual suffering and social wrong. But when the laws of industry and exchange are

understood aright, the selfishness of man will save him—individually and socially. He can then become free without placing his fellows in bondage; he can put away care without becoming a vagabond and with increase of self-respect; he can coöperate with his fellows, live without strife, and laugh at want and the fear of want—and still be a human being. He can make the selfsame selfishness which curses him to-day bless him to-morrow.

In order to attain the economic redemption of man it is not necessary to eliminate from his life the element of selfishness, nor to change human nature in the slightest degree. It is necessary only to realize the essential element in the law of economic life. The economic forces of this world are so ordered, and their benefits so bestowed, that true egoism and the highest altruism are extremes that meet. Constantly to increase the opportunities of the man who is at the bottom of the economic scale is at once the most selfish and the most unselfish of all economic politics. Even as Jesus said to His disciples, "He that is least among you all, the same shall become great," so Economic Science says to its votaries: *Behold the MAN AT THE MARGIN! LET HIM REIGN!*