

A Thought for Christmas

Christ brought to a world of misery the doctrine of the dignity of man.

In a social milieu which rejected the weak and the unfortunate, individuality lost all grandeur; only the wealth and the power and the position attaching to the individual gained recognition in the established order, and vouchsafed identity in the inevitable future.

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The predatory State was all-powerful. Its ally, the ecclesiastical officialdom, had fortified its position or influence—and, therefore affluence—by giving the sanction of religion to the status quo. The world was full of Samaritans and pagans and plebeians to whom not only the things of this life but even the solace of salvation was denied.

To the poor, then, to the downtrodden, even to the Magdalene, Christ brought a message of individual dignity and worth, "For the very hairs of your head are all numbered," He told His followers. And He preached to them the immediacy of the Kingdom of God—on Earth as it is in Heaven. "It is your Father's pleasure to give you the kingdom."

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What kind of kingdom? What are the ingredients of the social order envisioned in His promise? Primarily, the reign of justice shall have its turn. The first shall be last. In the new order the lowly and the disinherited will be men among men. The world is to be turned upside down; the present state being bad, to understand the future it is sufficient to conceive as near as may be the contrary of that which exists.

"On Earth as it is in Heaven." Heaven can mean only the realization of the highest aspira-

tion of the human spirit. And what does the heart of man yearn for more than Freedom? Can a concept of Heaven that involves slavery, economic or spiritual, have any validity? It is fantastic, blasphemous, if you will, to speak of Heaven-on-Earth as a place where one man must pay another for the privilege of living and earning his daily bread. Or where life is subject to the whim of predatory interests, or where such interests even exist. Such a Heaven was not in the Christ-promise.

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Over nineteen centuries ago this promise of Justice and Freedom came to a world from which Justice and Freedom had been banished by Avarice and Privilege, a world which crucified the One who brought the message. And in the light of the history of these centuries, with their multitude of wars and their harrowing poverty, one must conclude that the message itself has been crucified. For the world in which we live is as devoid of Justice and Freedom as was the world to which He brought His promise, and the dignity of the individual, long submerged by the economic struggle, is being further depressed by the subtle soporific of collectivist doctrine.

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And yet, though Privilege is powerful enough to emasculate the most beautiful thought, to twist elemental truth into apparent falsehood, to obscure light with planned ignorance, there dwells in every heart a yearning for Justice and Freedom—so loud and so constant that it cannot be stilled nor forever denied. To those to whom the ways of Justice and the means of Freedom are known the meaning of Christ's promise is clear. And each Christmas they re-dedicate themselves to the struggle for the attainable ideal—The Kingdom of God on Earth.