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Key to World Security

An Address on International Peace

by Archbishop Downey

The Laborer and His Hire

Duties of Employer and Employe

by E. J. Coyne, S.J.

Why Maternity Guilds?

Answered by Dorothy Weston of

The Catholic Worker

The Catholic Mind

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The Key to World Security

MOST REV. RICHARD DOWNEY, D.D.

ARCHBISHOP OF LIVERPOOL

*An address upon international peace delivered at the Melbourne
Eucharistic Congress as published in the New Zealand
Tablet on January 23, 1935.*

NO doubt the present insistent demand for disarmament is part of the general reaction away from strife and contention in favor of amity and harmony begotten of the Great War, but nevertheless it must be borne in mind that the longing for universal peace seems to be innate in men. From time immemorial it has found expression in poetic myths, in religious doctrines, in philosophic speculations, and in political schemes for the renovation of the world. We find it in the ancient literature of Egypt, Assyria and Babylon; in the classics, notably in the utterances of the Sybills and in the fourth Eclogue of Vergil; in the spiritual conceptions of the Orient, of China, Japan and India; and even in the mystical tendencies of warlike Islam.

There is, then, nothing new about aspirations for universal peace; they have long gone hand in hand with preparations for war. In the sixteenth century Erasmus, in his "Complaint of Peace" (a work which in these days surely ought to be reprinted in a cheap edition), set forth nearly everything that can be said against the folly of war. But wars went on. Armaments increased, until the whole civilized world groans under the weight of them. This is not mere rhetoric, but hard, cold fact. In 1930, twelve years after the war, over nine hundred and fifty million pounds were spent on armaments, and it is estimated that the world's military bill has now grown to over three million pounds a day. Out of every pound collected in taxation fifteen shillings—three quarters of it—is devoted to paying for wars, past, present, or future. Every year sees new progress in the science of annihilation as the forces of chemistry and physics are harnessed to the chariot of carnage.

The consciences of many have been stirred, and it is felt that the psychological moment has arrived for checking the reckless race in armaments if world-disaster is to be averted. For it will be quite impossible to localize any future war. Frontiers, barriers and neutral zones will be of no account when modern scientific agents of destruction are set loose. It will mean not merely the Decline of the West, but the Decline of the World, and reversion to barbarism.

This reflection ought to be a sufficient answer to the romanticists who see in war an heroic adventure, a school of chivalry which fosters the manly virtues. They fail to realize that the whole character of warfare has changed from the clash of valorous men to the conflict of blindly destructive forces. There is nothing romantic about death-dealing gas or machinery. War no longer affords even one crowded hour of glorious life.

More worthy of our attention are the realists and sceptics, who contend that there always have been and always will be wars because man is of the order of the beasts of prey, and nothing can alter his nature. It is assumed that the really decisive principle in nature is force. Notwithstanding the fact that nature is red in tooth and claw through the struggle for existence, it simply is not true that force is the dominating principle, whether of animate or inanimate nature. On investigation, law and order are everywhere seen to be the ruling factors of the world. Beasts knowing nothing of war as such, war on principle; their struggles are, for the most part, individual and spasmodic, in accordance with the instincts of self-preservation and self-reproduction. But, in any case, man has a soul above that of the brute beast, and it is impossible to deny that in the course of civilization he has attained to a more humane and equitable ordering of international relations. The fact that he has not yet succeeded in abolishing war is no more a reason for giving up the attempt than it is for abandoning the fight against epidemic diseases and such social evils as drunkenness and prostitution. The campaign in all these cases is necessarily a progressive one, and must take time.

Let me say at the outset that I consider some of the methods which have been proposed for the speedy abolition of war to be more drastic than wise. I do not believe that it is possible to attain the end in view by inducing men to sign

pledges not to engage in future wars or not to fight on foreign soil. In moments of racial conflict, when passions and prejudices are roused, such pledges count for little. Neither do I think that it is feasible to secure peace by the setting up of a Board of Arbitration, for the simple reason that the powers that be are not in the frame of mind to submit to its decisions. They are obviously suspicious of each other, and maneuvering for position. The time is not ripe for such a Board. The arbitrators themselves would still, so to speak, be carrying loaded revolvers.

EDUCATION THE KEY

Education, in one form or another, is the key to the solution of most of our world-problems, and certainly to the problem of world peace. The immediate need is for the rising generation to be educated on better and broader lines. The word education is on everybody's lips, though many people are mistaken as to its meaning. With some it is taken to consist in the imparting of information so that if a boy knows the names of the kings of England and the capitals of Europe, he is held to be educated. The word education is derived from the Latin "educo," which means to draw out, not to cram in. The function of education is to draw out the best that is in the pupil. A man may be a mine of information and remain really uneducated. Others seem to think that the aim of higher education is to turn an African Black into an Oxford Blue, or to enable an elegant young man to waste his time gracefully. Modern education has been caustically described as the casting of false pearls before real swine. However that may be, the true object of education is the development of character and personality, so that men and women shall not be mere bundles of second-hand sentiments.

PEACE MOVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

It must concern itself primarily with the spiritual element in man. It is, I think, impossible to improve upon Cardinal Manning's admirable definition of education as cited in the great Oxford Dictionary. "Education," he says, "is the formation of the whole man, will, character, mind, soul." Believing, as I do, in the practical value of sound education,

I would begin the peace-movement in the schools. The history books used in the schools of Europe at present are largely taken up with accounts of dynastic wars and stories of aggression and conquest. I would have history taught in such a way as not to glorify militarism, but to expose the horrors of war. I would have children learn that real patriotism is not represented by such slogans as "My country, right or wrong," but that it has deeper roots—namely, those of piety towards one's kith and kin, and of that charity and justice which transcend the bounds of all nationality. I would strive to eradicate from the minds of the rising generation the exaggerated nationalism which despises foreigners, and plant in its place the spirit which recognizes the universal brotherhood of man. In this way we might hope to eliminate the unintelligent jingo which makes war possible.

DUTIES OF CITIZENSHIP

Psychologists tell us that false values are best refuted by substituting true ones in their place, and hence it is necessary to educate people to surround the idea of peace with the glamor which has hitherto attached to war. This involves a new outlook on general politics, and for that reason I would have the duties of citizenship expounded in our elementary schools, so that the men and women of the future might be induced to devote a reasonable amount of time and thought to the affairs of the nation. If you object that this is to attempt the impossible, I answer that it was achieved in ancient Athens, where the citizen who did not take an interest in public affairs was lashed with the ugly epithet, "idiotes," of which our English word idiot is an exact transliteration.

DEFEAT IN VICTORY

Again, a widespread knowledge of the fundamental principles of economics would promote the cause of peace. It is beginning to dawn on the advocates of superior force that even victory is no longer a paying proposition. Owing to the solidarity of commercial interests in the world-markets of today, war must necessarily dislocate the trade of every country and bring about general economic depression. It is on this ground that some American economists have insisted

that remission or reduction of war-debts is not even to be thought of without preliminary disarmament.

To instruction in politics and economics I would add the teaching of the whole moral law in all schools, whether primary or secondary, private or public. This is the only way in which to eradicate from many minds the pragmatic conclusion that, after all, might is right. The present generation needs to revert to the doctrine of Aristotle, that the principles of politics and morals should be one and the same, and that for the best man and the best State the same valuations hold good.

PAPAL WARNING

As a World-Church, Catholicism strives for World-Peace, and the encyclicals on peace and war of recent Popes, with their world-wide appeal, are generally admitted to have great educational value. Everyone knows how these Popes have striven to mitigate the horrors of wars which they were powerless to prevent. Leo XIII uttered a warning against growing armaments, Pius X and Benedict XV pleaded the cause of peace amidst the din of battles, and our present Holy Father has appealed to all nations to seek the Peace of Christ in the Realm of Christ. Let us remember that the climax of Christ's Messianic titles, as foretold by the prophet Isaiah, is "The Prince of Peace." He was to be Counsellor, Wonderful, Everlasting God, Almighty Father, but, above all and beyond all, "The Prince of Peace." The word peace was for ever on His lips. When He took leave of His disciples before entering on His Passion, His farewell message was, "My peace I leave to you, My peace I give unto you." His salutation to them after His Resurrection was, "Peace be unto you." He enjoined that when they entered a house their greeting should be one of peace—always peace. And hence we address our prayers to Christ really and truly present in the Sacrament of the Altar, to the Eucharistic Prince of Peace, that He would set up His standard and establish His empire throughout the entire world.

He Himself foretold that that peace would be long a-coming. First there would be separation, division, contention, strife. Only with the full acceptance of the teaching of Christ will there come the Reign of Christ and the Peace of Christ. Meantime, we are faced with the problem of war.

SPIRITUAL DISARMAMENT

There is nothing hazy about the attitude of the Catholic Church towards war. She regards it as a last resource of averting an actual threat to the life and liberty of a State, permissible only while the danger lasts. Her dogmatic and moral principles admittedly make for the realization of that peace and good will which it is her mission to spread amongst men.

While stressing the importance of an educational peace movement, I do not subscribe to the shibboleth, "First disarmament of mind, then disarmament of weapons."

Material disarmament should begin at once as an evidence and earnest of the spiritual disarmament which is everywhere loudly professed. To postpone the reduction of armaments until the whole world is converted to the idea of peace by arbitration would be to sound the death knell of any movement for abolition of war.

It is quite true that a new spirit must be brought to bear in national and international relations before the final victory of peace is attained; but this does not mean that we are to allow the competition in armaments to go on till the lion lies down with the lamb.

ABOLITION OF WAR

Such formulas as "We don't want to abolish war, we want to establish peace," are misleading. Most emphatically we do want to abolish war, and abolish it as speedily as possible; and the most effective method is to inform the public conscience and organize public opinion, while at the same time insisting on the immediate reduction of armaments to a scale commensurate with the internal security of each nation. The movement must be general. A practical beginning in general disarmament has yet to be made. In spite of the existence of the League of Nations, The Hague Court of Arbitration, the Locarno Pact, the Kellogg Pact, and countless treaties of agreement, arbitration, and friendship, the world's bill for armaments is now seventy per cent higher than it was before the existence of these aids to peace. They have not stood the pragmatic test because they have not been backed up by really educated and enlightened public opinion.

Hence the need for an intensive and extensive educational campaign.

Another suggestion is that all countries should disarm on a percentage basis. But this would still leave strong and weak countries, and the weak would naturally feel that they had no real security against aggression. Furthermore, wars can be waged by small armies as well as by great ones. The only feasible method of bringing about mutual security would appear to be by taking the matter out of the hands of individual nations and entrusting it to a League of Nations. But this League would need to be differently constituted to the one already existing. To be really effective, it must, in the first place, represent all countries, and secondly, wield decisive authority.

LEAGUE OF ALL NATIONS

In view of the interwoven texture of international affairs, it is essential that the League include all countries. A League of Nations whose sanctions are ignored by several great Powers tends to become a combine against those Powers, and cannot speak even to its own members with the voice of authority. Any nation in it is free to leave it with impunity if it does not agree with its decisions. Again, a League of Nations which excludes the Pope deliberately enfeebles itself. It has been repeatedly pointed out by shrewd thinkers that the Pope, as an independent and neutral exponent of a moral and religious ordering of the world, ought to be represented in the League of Nations. As the head of the Universal Church, commanding the spiritual allegiance of members of all nations, he is better informed as to international relations than many of the secular heads of individual States. His neutrality is above suspicion, and his integrity beyond question. Furthermore, the Vatican is now an independent State. What is wanted is not a League of some Powers, but a League of all the Powers in the civilized world bound together in unity of plan and action for the ensuring of peace.

A LEAGUE WITH POWER

Furthermore, the League must be something more than an interpreter of law, something more than a sort of static and statistical department. It must be a founder and framer of law, and possess the power of dynamic efficiency. It

needs to be invested with international jurisdiction and the power of carrying its decisions into practical effect through something in the nature of an international police force. But world opinion is not yet educated up to that standard. Possibly it may be in time.

A long process of development preceded the peace and security which is now enjoyed in the highways and byways of civilized countries. Highwaymen and footpads have disappeared, and private persons do not think it necessary to go about armed. The State preserves order through its code of laws, with its police force as its executive power.

Why should it not be possible to regulate intercourse between nations on the same basis of communal justice? It is paradoxical that primitive practices long eliminated from the lives of nations should continue to govern international relations.

When citizens carried arms for self-protection they did not inspire mutual confidence. The unrestricted growth of armaments on the pretext of national security breeds suspicion, mistrust, and fear. Every Government regards it as a betrayal of its country if it does not adopt precautionary methods, and yet each regards the adoption of those methods by other Governments as evidence of hostile intention; and this vicious circle will remain until the masses are educated in the will to peace.

The Laborer and His Hire

E. J. COYNE, S.J.

Reprinted from the Bombay Examiner for June 15, 1935.

TH**E**R**E** arises at once a difficulty: "What is to happen if it is not possible to pay workers a living wage?" "After all," say the sound, practical businessmen, who have little time and less sympathy for any theoretical, idealistic nonsense—"after all, business is business, and we are not in business for our health; we have to make it pay, and we just can't pay what you say is a living wage. . . . As for a "just" wage, the term has no definite meaning for us."

The difficulty is neither original nor hidden, nor is it

denied by Catholic teaching. Quite the contrary. Pope Pius XI is the very first to admit it: neither he nor his advisers live so far removed from reality as to be unaware of what stares everyone in the face. But the conclusion the Pope draws from this difficulty is very different from that drawn by the practical business men. They heave a sigh of relief, and, knowing that no one is bound to do the impossible, go on as they have always gone on, "buying" their labor like their raw material, at the lowest price they can. The Pope, on the other hand, takes a completely different line. His own words are: "If under present circumstances this [the paying of a family living wage] is not always feasible, social justice demands that reform be introduced without delay which will guarantee such a wage to every adult working-man."

MAKE IT POSSIBLE BY REFORM OF SOCIETY

Popes weigh their words before speaking them; they realize that even their mildest expressions carry enormous weight as coming from the Vicar of Christ. It is worth while examining the language of that single sentence, which is Pope Pius XI's only answer to the oft-raised difficulty, "But it is impossible to pay a living wage." And we may note that the translation is the second officially recognized English translation, most carefully revised by English Catholic economists and sociologists, and minutely examined by an English Archbishop at the express direction of the Papal Secretary of State. The Pope, then, speaks of "social justice," not merely "prudence" or "expediency" or "wisdom" or "policy," but "justice": and a justice that weighs on all our consciences, rich and poor, priest or layman, ruler or subject. He says "demands," not "suggests"; "without delay," not "next year" nor, "the year after"; he says "guarantee," not merely "make possible"; and he says "every adult workingman," not merely "a select few." It is difficult to see how he could have used clearer or more explicit or more forcible language to express his teaching. He does not say, "We must fold our hands, wait for better times, and hope for the best"; he does say, "Introduce reforms." Even the most extreme Communist can hardly call this teaching "opium for the people."

DISTORTION OF SOCIETY AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM

The fact that under present social and economic conditions a normal adult man's labor very frequently does not supply him with all that a living wage includes, should not blind us to the fact that it should do so, nor lead us—as it so often does lead us—to the conclusion that it cannot, owing to some inexorable economic law or other. We are living in an artificial, man-made economic and juridical system—one built, too, as we have seen, for the most part on false principles and presuppositions. We must face the possibility—and the fact—that human society has become somewhat distorted, that its whole structure has become twisted, and by sheer ignorance, error, or malice of men, has been turned away from its true end and purpose. For, as we saw, human society is a moral organism, made and moulded by the ideas, decisions, desires of free beings. If men and women set before themselves a wrong end as the end of society—say, the amassing of economic power in the form of capital or credit resources, or the attaining of political dominance in the world—then it is certain that the constituent elements of society, such as private property and human labor, will be equally distorted and twisted. Neither will be able to play the part or accomplish the work it is meant by God to accomplish.

In this case, it may be true, to say that it is economically impossible to pay a living wage or to ascertain what is a just wage. But what does this mean? Nothing more than this: If we want to attain some end or purpose which God never meant society to be used to attain, then we cannot pay all the working-class a living wage, and we cannot pay many of them any wage at all. But the obvious answer is, why should we be so intent on attaining this wrong end? Is it not better to go back to the end meant by God to be achieved, even if a lot of seemingly desirable things must be lost or postponed? Certain it is, as Pope Pius XI has warned us, that Nature herself will step in and stop this crass and persistent violation of her laws and thwarting of her intentions—"let nobody persuade himself that public order and the peace and tranquillity of human society can be effectively defended against the forces of revolution" (*Quadragesimo Anno*).

After all, society is meant for man, not man for society. The human, personal values are greater than any social material values. If society does not facilitate man in the attainment of his personal end, then it has lost all meaning. If man's human labor cannot operate as it is meant by God to operate, then would it not seem better for man that he abandon society—or else reform society?

MAN'S LABOR IS HIS ONLY WEAPON

His labor is, normally, the only weapon given to man by God to meet the slings and arrows of fortune. Society is meant to enable him to use that weapon with ever greater efficiency. If, instead, this weapon breaks in his hand on account of his living in society, then something is violently awry. We know the life-story of man from the dawn of history—cast out of the Garden of Eden—and then we can read it in the flint-tools, the axes, and arrow-heads of our museums. There is a deep pathos with a sense of stern justice about it all. Unarmed against a hostile Nature, red in tooth and claw; the earth bearing thistles and thorns and briars; alone, man has to face it and conquer it, alone with his bare hands. We know how he has wrung from the earth its secrets: thousands of years of sweat and blood and tears—all that we owe to the generations of men and women who have gone before us. And today hundreds and thousands of men face a not more gentle world and a not more lenient Nature—hunger and cold and disease, and the torments of family sorrow.

Can it be that God meant this one weapon of man—his power to labor, to toil—his one means of raising himself, his one hope to make himself and his dear ones something more than beasts, beggars, or slaves—can it be that God meant this weapon to break in his hand, to leave him fighting with a broken hilt, to go down “an unpitied sacrifice in an inglorious struggle”? Our punishment as a race was, and is, great enough: men have no right to add their sentence to God's. We are all in human society, in what Catholic philosophy calls “a conspiracy” against Nature and its forces: we all have a sacred duty to see that social justice is maintained between the “conspirators”—that human labor first achieves its God-willed purpose of supporting a man and his family, and only then any other purpose.

TWO FURTHER PRINCIPLES: THE STATE OF THE BUSINESS

Having laid down as the first requisite of a just wage that it "be sufficient for the support of the workman and of his family," Pope Pius XI goes on to give two other principles to guide us in determining what a just wage should be. The first of these is "the state of the business." It is well to note that the Pope is no longer talking about a "living wage," but about a "just wage." His Holiness lays down five points concerning "the state of the business."

(a) It is unjust for workers—assuming that they are being paid a family living wage—"to demand excessive wages which a business cannot pay without ruin and without consequent distress amongst the working people themselves."

(b) It is not a just reason, on the other hand, for reducing workers' wages that the business pays only a smaller profit, if this should be caused by either want of energy or neglect of technical and economic progress. There is no doubt that this is not at all uncommon in actual practice, and well deserves the attention of those interested in labor problems.

(c) If the business is overwhelmed with unjust burdens, such as too heavy rates or taxes, or is exposed to unjust competition, then its inability to pay a just wage falls back on those "who thus injure it," who are "guilty of grievous wrong, for it is they who deprive the workers of a just wage and force them to accept terms which are unjust." Strange to say, in many countries it is often the political party supposed to represent the workers which imposes the heaviest taxes and rates on industrial and commercial undertakings, so making it impossible for these to pay a just wage. And these taxes and rates are imposed for the social services, pensions, insurance, unemployment, free medical service, free food—which in the main are meant for the poorer classes. The workers would be much better advised to consider their dignity as intelligent, free men, and insist on earning all these things for themselves and getting their cost into their hands as the just reward of their labor. At present in many countries it is the working-class who actually do pay for these services, though this is concealed from them, and the services are given to them as a form of State benevolence.

(d) There should be, the Pope says, a spirit of coöperation between workers and employers to see how best the just

income of each may be arranged for. So long as human labor is looked upon as a "commodity" or a "cost of production," this coöperation is impossible.

(e) Finally, the Pope does not hesitate to say that "in the last extreme" it may be necessary to close down a business that has clearly shown it cannot pay a just wage. It is, indeed, a most demoralizing and evil influence in any society to have even one business which can only be kept in existence by the perpetuation of injustice to the workers. The bad effects and the bad example of such a state of affairs will, normally, outweigh any advantages.

THE COMMON GOOD

The second principle which Pope Pius XI puts forward as operative in this matter of the just wage is the economic welfare of the whole people. And this has a threefold practical application.

(i) A just wage should, generally speaking, be such as to enable a worker "to attain gradually to the possession of a certain modest fortune." Once more, it is not about a living wage that the Pope is speaking: he takes that as settled and beyond question. But his doctrine is that the public welfare, the common good, or, if you wish, social justice, demands that wages be such as to enable proletarians to become property-owners, either of land, as Pope Leo XIII suggested, or of shares in the enterprise in which they work.

(ii) Wages should be fixed at such a level as to offer to as many as possible opportunities of employment. "To lower or raise wages unduly, with a view to private advantage, and with no consideration for the common good, is contrary to social justice." This is the great curse of our individualistic economic system. There is nothing wrong with capitalization, despite the ignorant and unthinking abuse that is constantly directed against it; and Popes Leo and Pius went out of their way not only not to abuse capitalism, but even to declare it ought not to be condemned. But this capitalism, this perfectly indifferent and extremely efficient economic system, is exploited by both workers and employers on individualistic principles, each class trying to grab the larger share of the products, each individual in open competition with other individuals. As Pope Pius XI points out, this is ruinous both to social peace and economic prosperity. Un-

less a coöperative—or, as it is called a solidaristic—spirit animates the various classes of society, conspiring toward a single end, desired by and common to all, there can be no lasting peace.

(iii) A proper proportion between different wages is a matter of importance. There has to be a certain inequality between wages, for the objective value of the results of human labor is unequal. But this inequality should be based on a rational human scale of objective values, not on the mere subjective whims and fashions of the rich or the avarice of money-makers.

DUTIES OF WAGE EARNERS

Such then is the reward which, according to the Popes, the normal adult man should receive for his honest labor. But note: he is bound in justice to give honest, reasonable labor. If he, acting on his own initiative or on the instructions of his trade union, does not give an honest day's labor in return for his wage, then he is just as guilty as the employer who exploits his workers. Unfortunately, it is not unknown that workers deliberately restrict output, deliberately waste time, deliberately make extra jobs, and deliberately follow, at times, an agreed policy of *ca-canny*, in the belief that so they get back something of their own from their employer, who, they believe, is underpaying or overworking them. In such a case we are outside the realm of right and morality altogether: it is a state of guerilla warfare between employers and employes. While such an attitude of mind, such an inclination of will remains, it is, of course, useless talking about a just wage or a living wage at all. It is a smothered conflict, in which "the good old rule, the simple plan" prevails. The Popes were not contemplating such a situation: they were laying down principles which presuppose good will and substantial honesty and righteousness in both employers and employes.

And more: the Popes do not promise a paradise on earth as the automatic result of the paying of a living wage. The worker will have to be careful and thrifty, industrious and temperate, if he is to discharge all his duties. He will have no justification for squandering his wage on drink, in betting, in wasteful, unnecessary expenditure. Recreation he has a right to, and recreation for his wife and children, and of the

kind that pleases him or them within the limits of Divine and human law. No one has a right to grudge them whatever lawful pleasures they prefer, or to try to dictate to them what is good for them; or to lay down how they should spend the hard-earned money which, after all, is their own. But the head of a family should remember to cultivate those qualities and virtues which God expects from one in his state of life: a sense of responsibility and balance, prudence and foresight, temperance and simplicity, and, above all, good example and devotion as husband and father.

ABANDON "CLASS-WARFARE" MENTALITY

Nor should a Catholic worker forget his duties to the State as a citizen. Circumstances have tended, in many countries, to give the workers as a whole a hostile attitude, almost a revolutionary attitude to the central authority, to the State. They have allowed themselves to be persuaded, perhaps with some reason, that the so-called ruling classes are hostile to them and to their interests. And consequently there is often found a negative, destructive spirit, suspicion, and an unwillingness to make positive, constructive contributions to the social life of the community.

Nothing could be more damaging to social peace and prosperity. If only this question of social justice with regard to wages was satisfactorily solved, the working-class could join in whole-heartedly and unitedly in full and fruitful cooperation towards the common good. Without that coöperation social peace is impossible: the peace of Christ will only be found in the reign of Christ, when the writ of Christ runs in all our lives, workers or owners. But it is on the rich, on the owners or controllers of capital, that the greater weight of responsibility rests. St. James's words are extremely blunt and severe, but they carry the authority of God: "Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl in your miseries, which shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted: and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered: and the rust of them shall be for a testimony against you, and shall eat your flesh like fire. You have stored up to yourselves wrath against the last days. Behold the hire of the laborers" (St. James, c. 5, v. 4).

Why Maternity Guilds?

DOROTHY WESTON

An address, reprinted from The Catholic Worker (New York), for June, 1935, which was delivered before the Catholic Women's Union at the organization of a Maternity Guild in New York City.

YOU may wonder why *The Catholic Worker*, a paper devoted to the restating and applying of the Church's teachings on social justice, should interest itself in Maternity Guilds. The answer may be found in the words of Our Holy Father, in his encyclical on Christian Marriage, where he deplors the economic conditions that in our day have become an occasion of sin to many in the performance of their marital duties.

"Since it is no rare thing to find that the perfect observance of God's commands and conjugal integrity encounter difficulties because the married parties are oppressed by straitened circumstances, their necessities must be relieved as far as possible.

"So in the first place an effort must be made to obtain that which our predecessor Leo XIII, of happy memory, has already required, namely, that in the state such economic and social methods should be set up as will enable every head of a family to earn as much as, according to his station in life, is necessary for himself, his wife, and for the rearing of his children, for 'the laborer is worth his hire.'

"Provision must be made also in the case of those who are not self-supporting, for joint aid by private or public guilds."

NO PLACE FOR THE POOR?

It was something of a shock to me to discover last summer that, despite the teachings of the Church on the sanctity of the family and the evil of birth-control, no Catholic hospital in New York City, with the exception of Misericordia, will accept free maternity cases . . . that, along with free public maternity care, in our city and in others, goes birth-control advice and even compulsory abortions and sterilization.

We all know the manifold burdens of our Catholic hospitals today. Most of them in New York have rates as low as \$40 or \$50 for complete maternity care—a rate that is certainly far below the actual cost to the hospital. But we have only to look at the ever-growing relief rolls to realize how many thousands of mothers there are in this city to whom \$40 is as impossible a sum as \$40,000,000. Doctors give unstintingly of their care to the poor in clinics and in private practice—they can do no more. It is up to us, then, the Catholic laity, to remedy the situation. It is a necessary part of the fight upon birth-control.

FIGHTING BIRTH-CONTROL

Father McNabb, the English preacher and writer, declared recently that the poor woman in the slums who practices birth-control may be guilty of a lesser evil before God than the well-to-do Catholic who condemns her and does nothing to remedy her situation. We have heard the solution that the Holy Father urges upon us: first, to change the social system which penalizes married couples desirous of bringing up families for the honor and glory of God; and second, as an immediate alleviation of the situation, the formation of guilds such as the maternity guild, to make it easier financially for Christian parents to bring children into the world.

The efforts of meddling and muddled social reformers toward compulsory birth-control, sterilization and the like are condemned in forthright terms by our Holy Father when he says:

“To take away from man the natural and primeval right of marriage, to circumscribe in any way the principle laid down in the beginning by God Himself in the words ‘increase and multiply’ is beyond the power of any human law.”

THE BIRTH-CONTROL SPIRIT

But even among Catholics who subscribe to the Church's teachings against contraceptives, what I may call the birth-control spirit, a product of today's materialistic sense of values, is rampant. A year or so ago, there was a heated controversy on this subject in the correspondence columns of a well-known Catholic magazine. To one writer who

pointed to instances of large families who were thoroughly Catholic and even happy, though living in extreme poverty, a man who called himself a Catholic replied that such people had no right to have children, that God had meant the truly poor either not to marry or to practice self-control, so that their families would not become a burden on the State. If I recall correctly, it was the same writer who said that he hoped and expected to see the day when the Church would require a priest, before marrying a couple, to investigate their financial circumstances, and refuse them Christian marriage if they were, in his opinion, unable to raise a family in decent comfort!

FORBIDDING THE BABIES

This, of course, is an extreme example, but we are all familiar with the attitude among Catholics which frown sternly upon good Catholic parents who have the misfortune to be poor, instead of trying to lighten their load—the attitude of “forbid the babies” instead of helping their parents to care for them. A communist friend of mine said to me not long ago: “I can’t understand why you want to have children, when you and your husband have such important work to do. In the Communist Party, a woman organizer is considered far more useful than a woman who merely breeds children for the revolution.” I tried to explain to him that the entire Catholic social ideal is based on the family; that we on *The Catholic Worker* are trying to exemplify the truth that the teachings of Christ in their literal fulness are intended for all, not merely for those living the religious life without worldly obligations, and that we consider the four family groups who are part of *The Catholic Worker* community the most important part of our work of social and religious propaganda. It didn’t take, of course.

That was to be expected, perhaps, from a Communist, with the ingrained materialism of his training. But I have met the same attitude among Catholics, who have consoled with me: “How tragic that you should be having a child! How can you, when you have no economic security?” We have only to turn to the beautiful prayers of the Nuptial Mass to find the true mind of the Church in this problem, where children are considered not as a hindrance or a

tragedy, but as the highest blessing which the Church begs for the newly-married couple.

GRUDGING THE BABIES

It is this last aspect of the problem of birth-control and its solution in the Maternity Guild which I would stress. It is a splendid ideal to remove the occasion of the sin of birth-control; but there is a still nobler motive for this work, a still higher necessity. Let us not take an attitude of vexation that the poor should have large families, that the Church should permit them to and should forbid them to prevent children; let us not say, in effect: "We can't let them use birth-control (with the implication 'more's the pity'); but in justice to us, the better off, such people should refrain from marrying, or from making use of their marriage rights. If they *will* have children, of course, we've got to take care of them, but they should be educated to realize that they have no right to."

WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

No; for the crux of the matter lies in the nature of the Sacrament of Matrimony, and it is this that we are safeguarding. We are told that in this Sacrament the priesthood of the laity reaches its fulness, that it is in fact the complement of the priesthood itself, and has a unique position in the Mystical Body of Christ.

Thus, Father Joseph Kreuter, the Benedictine, says: "Man, who is the likeness of the Triune God, enters into marriage for the purpose of producing with a special creative coöperation of God, an image and likeness of God, thus elevating human paternity to the highest degree of dignity, for the human father is admitted to participate in the divine paternity; like God, the Father of spirits, he gives origin to and has authority over a personal and immortal being, the image of God."

MARRIAGE IN CHRIST

The unique position of Christian marriage develops from the fact that it is thus at the center of the mystery of redemption and in the core of Christ's union with the Church. St. Paul tells us that Christian marriage derives its specific

moral nature from the mystical marriage of Christ and the Church.

Karl Adam, probably the greatest living Catholic philosopher and theologian, says: "By the very fact that the members of Christ are united in marriage, their union becomes a sacrament of the union between Christ and the Church. The fundamental mystery of Christianity, the nuptial relationship between Christ and His Church, the fact that Christ and His Church are one sole Body, is realized anew in every marriage. Wherever a Christian bride and bridegroom unite in wedlock, the holy union which exists between the most sacred humanity of Christ and its members receives new actuality. Christian marriage is consequently . . . spiritual in its very essence. It has existence only by the fact that in it Christ's sacred nuptials, His union with the Church in one sole Body, is actualized. It represents that sacred sphere of life on earth in which the mystery of the Body of Christ visibly reveals itself."

RENEWING THE MYSTICAL BODY

It is a breath-taking concept, showing us the true dignity of marriage and of parenthood. In this concept children are not a burden, they are not a duty demanded of us by the Church, a weight of responsibility by which we pay for the pleasures of the married state. They are the very fulness of the sacrament by which the Body of Christ is renewed through love. Christian parents, themselves part of the mystical Christ, are privileged to cooperate with God in the supreme act of creation.

It is this vital, this precious concept, that we must preserve in the minds and hearts of our laity. Shall we allow the joy of this privilege to be drowned in the flood of worldly cares that afflict families under an unjust economic system? Too few even Catholic women find cause for rejoicing in their privilege today. Selfishness, of course, is one reason. But, where financial stringency is a contributing factor, let it not be said that we, fellow-members of one another in Christ, have failed to remove this obstacle to the fulness of His Sacrament. This is the work the Maternity Guild asks you to do. Will you help Christian parents in their renewal of the Body of Christ?

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