

part, not only do we grudge the time and money spent in piling up statistical tables for fools to play with, but we believe that the time has long since come when such tables are positively harmful. Not only do we not need volumes of statistics to prove to us what a half-hour's walk through any working-class suburb will bring home to us far more vividly—that the majority of our neighbours live in hovels that ought to be burned down. The worst of it all is that, by some queer psychological process, we are apt to fancy that an evil recorded and scientifically tabulated is an evil remedied, whereas it is more often, in fact, an evil shelved. Some one said maliciously of the poet Wordsworth that he wrote his Ode to Duty and then had done with that matter. So, it is to be feared, we appoint our Royal Commissioners to publish their dreary reports on poverty or housing, or the cost of living and then we have done with those matters.

\* \* \*

To those who ask for something in the nature of a positive proposal we can only reiterate our solemn conviction, which every increase of experience goes to strengthen, that for such evils as we have mentioned there is, within the vicious circle of the wage-system, no remedy at all. "Delenda est Carthago": the wage-system must go. And for our own part, much as we dislike it, we can see nothing for it but the continuance of that struggle for economic power that is now going on between Capital and Labour. We believe that every shift and device that is tried, whether from good or bad motives, to make the present system work more smoothly, will only demonstrate more conclusively the futility of all such devices. It is beside the point, however true it may be, to say with our religious teachers that in a Commonwealth of saints no such struggle would exist: in such a Commonwealth the wage system itself, and the whole paraphernalia of profit-mongering would never arise. It is perhaps more to the point to say that in a Commonwealth of gentlemen the struggle might end at any moment by an act of chivalry on the part of the privileged few. But, in spite of the accumulation of facts, we see no sign of such voluntary self-abnegation. That sort of thing is not understood by our looters of the poor. Our modern plutocrats are neither saints nor gentlemen, and it is because considerations of right and humanity weigh so little with them that the struggle to provide children with fresh air and sunlight, not to mention food and clothing, is, as has been said by more than one witness before the latest of our commissions, so desperately difficult for some of the inhabitants of this land of sunshine and open spaces. A whole economic system, with appropriate ethical and aesthetic outworks, at present secures their grip on the throats of babes and sucklings. The thing cries to heaven to be swept away. It is not more facts and figures we need, but more imagination, more honesty, more courage.

#### NOTE.

"Fellowship" was founded, and is still mainly supported, by the Free Religious Fellowship. But, as that society has no dogmas, theological or political, the views expressed in "Fellowship" are in no sense official, and the individual writers are alone responsible for them.

"Fellowship" is supported entirely by voluntary subscriptions, which will be received by Miss M. Agnew, 268 Latrobe Street, Melbourne.

#### THE REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT.

Revolution rushes the people into changed conditions they do not understand, the advantages of which are taken on trust from the leaders. Evolution awaits an enormous movement of the mass mind in response to percolating propaganda; and it always will wait. Revolution can be controlled only by compromise and powerful dictatorship; and these are the very forces it intends to destroy; yet, when masses of people are to be governed and directed, there are no other methods. Evolutionary Socialism does not call upon the operatives to make up their minds between God and Mammon, between Caesar and Jesus. Those reforms that come along in the casual shape of Parliamentary concessions are accepted by the worker, but they have no effect upon his mind. He accepts accident insurances, reduced hours and the operations of wages boards only to remain a conservative wage-slave at heart. He does not know that the roads by which these slight concessions travelled are strewn with the bodies of martyrs, because the mass memory is a short memory. The man who is going to put shape and direction into the future Australian Communist Republic may be languishing in a Darlinghurst dungeon at the present moment, but that is a matter of small concern to the bricklayer's labourer, who has just had his wages jumped to a pound a day. Every comfort we enjoy, every factor in our social condition that helps to make us different from the chattel slave and serfs of feudalism is stained with the agony and blood of martyrs.

The leader is one; the mass is many. It is the Machiavellian principle of the Plutocrats to strangle the leader and placate his followers with gifts, it is also the Parliamentary method, and works excellently, because the led masses are deficient in revolutionary spirit. For one leader that has betrayed his followers there are tens of thousands of working men who have betrayed their leaders and left them stranded and solitary to face the savagery of roused capitalistic law.

Evolutionary methods must be discredited because they are too safe, too softening, and too slow. Fresh problems pile themselves upon the old, before the old have had time to solve themselves. Revolutionary action is suspect, because we are not sure that the cure is any better than the disease. But revolutionary action spreads responsibility more equally: "If there should be a counter-revolution to-morrow, what have you done to deserve hanging?"

Thus revolution, with its spice of danger, must prove the integrity of its following, and by such integrity great things can be accomplished and great combinations of mind and courage formed. Revolution forces people to make their minds up. Australia's social salvation depends on absorbing its spirit, and not being made drunk by it.

A small concession wrested from the master class against its will has an inspiring psychological effect upon those who make the demand. What might be called spontaneous concessions have no effect upon the masses, excepting to make them more conservative. They will never understand what the philosophers of the movement do; that all capitalist concessions are inspired by fear, and are managed with considerable cunning. They are

the result of profound conspiracy. The Entente will lift the blockade and allow food to enter Poland only on condition that the Socialist Peasant Cabinet is deposed, and a less revolutionary party returned to power. The Church is used as an instrument to put these alternatives of slavery or starvation before the people.

The plutocrat knows more about the power of the masses than the masses themselves know, and he easily becomes afraid; but the concessions he makes are really investments in humanitarian bonds. He puts food into Poland, receives the gratitude of the starving inhabitants, and saves Poland for exploitation by his class.

The revolutionary spirit is the courage to demand justice; revolution is the effort to achieve justice after it has been refused. There is no instance in revolutionary history where the masses have not asked the oppressor to give peaceably what their outraged patience has been forced ultimately to take by bloodshed.

Australia has no parallel in history nor in the world; our conditions are unique. We are a happy people without a soul to help us understand happiness. We have never been hungry enough to die for Justice, and we will be the last sea-thing dredged by Sailor Right from the ocean of plutocracy, because capitalist concessions have made us complacent. Talk revolution and Australia will retort that she is young and tolerably contented, and does not wish to die. She is wise.

We must not talk bloodshed, we do not ask for revolution, but we must aspire to the courage of the revolutionary spirit—the right to demand our right.

F.L.H.

## OPEN LETTER TO FELLOW-CITIZENS.

### III.—To the Clergy Who Supported the War.

Reverend Sirs,—There is little doubt that you are in favour of having the Kaiser tried by a Court of the Allies, but you have not a word to say against Capitalism. You contend in your vanity that this trial will show England up in all her glory and righteousness to the eternal damnation of the German. You are very hopeful also that the trial of the Kaiser will divert attention from your guilt in the war, and hope that people will not ask "What of the Churches?"

Let us for a moment enquire what you did during the war—i.e., during the five years' murder. Certainly, your churches were often nothing more than recruiting halls, where the consciences of men were ridiculed—that is, if they felt war to be an ungodly thing. Certainly you ministers thought more of the flag than you did of men's lives. The portions of the Bible relating to peace, love, forgiveness and goodwill made you, the Church of God, uneasy, while the parts that breathed hatred, revenge and cruelty pleased you, justified you, and were naturally often quoted by you as examples for men to follow. You twisted the Sermon on the Mount: you explained away the sixth Commandment. If Agnostics, Atheists and unbelievers generally had done this, we could have understood—but not God's ambassadors on earth. You, the Church of God, cheapened your book, which

you call God's word. You, the followers of Christ, cheapened Christ. You, that in times past had creditable records to your honour, that in the past uplifted and changed men; set yourselves the task of making men devils. You who were the light of the world have loved darkness rather than light. You, the Church of God, who should have rescued a distressed and stricken world, were a clog, a disgrace, and a menace. For when you saw men groping in the dark, you held up a torch pretending to lead them to better things. In your cruelty and treachery you led them to a precipice instead, and then, with shocking savagery, you mocked those trusting souls and hurled them into the chasm. You have cheapened things that are good. You have cheapened moral bravery, conscience, the love of man to wife, family and home. You have cheapened things that exalt, and glorified things that debase. You, the Church of God, have cheapened the hope of men that good would ultimately overcome evil. God and men looked to you for fruit; they searched for grapes, and, behold, wild grapes. You finicked with small things. You were shocked if men's graves were likely to be desecrated by the unspeakable Turk, yet regarded not the shell made by a "Christian" country that blew him to pieces. You are scandalised by widows being asked to contribute to the cost of chiselling on a soldier's tombstone, yet allow the blockade which is responsible for deaths by the million. What must Christ think of you for so cheapening His Church?

If you had pleaded expediency, or the suddenness of fright, or exceptional circumstances, men might have excused you. But you adopted the superior attitude that your words and deeds required no justification. You boldly quoted Scripture, boldly preached men out of the Church, boldly told them that nothing mattered but the "Empire." While even "worldly" men see the horror of war and want it banished, you seem willing and ready to repeat your actions when the next war comes. The Capitalist and the international financier know they can count on you then. The diplomatist knows he can depend on you for a slogan for the next war. For you have dragged religion into warfare, and mixed heaven with hell. You have called evil good, and good evil. You have caused "little ones to perish."

For all this you repent not, nor retract any of your vile statements. You are not changed. You, the Church of God, that preached repentance to men for lesser sins than murder, have not yourselves repented. You are not perturbed when meaner men take your place in withstanding the world's evil. We hear no declaration from you that you have shed innocent blood. We do, however, hear from outsiders the pronouncement continually that, if you had been true to your Leader's ideals, this war would have been very likely averted, or at any rate shortened. The position, however, is not quite hopeless. The world still requires leadership, help, counsel and kindness from you. You can still take your place of usefulness in the world if you will. But it will not do to be calm, unchanged, undisturbed. You must sweat, agonise, cry for help and mercy, must confess to the world and to God your guilt. You must learn that your only war-duty is to withstand war, and you must tell the world boldly of your new attitude. You must side with the oppressed, the poor and needy, and him that hath no helper. In a word, you must be born again.—Yours, etc., WARRIGAL.