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EDITORIAL

## THE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

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**W**ITH such statements as “Jesus proclaimed Socialism,” or “We should be Socialists because Socialism is in accord with the Golden Rule,” no Socialist can sympathize. These and many similar statements, heard long ago and quite frequent just now, proceed either from Utopian visions, or they denote a fly-paper inclination to “catch friends,” or “catch votes,” as the case may be. In either case the statements are harmful.

To say that Jesus proclaimed Socialism is to convey false notions regarding what may be called the architecture of Socialism. The failure of all attempts at Socialist colonies, from the first Christian communistic endeavors down to the latest ones recorded, has sufficiently brought out the fact that there is in man a certain “scattering” quality. This quality causes him, despite the parallel quality of a “social” being, to love to “fly off” at the slightest provocation. Founders of communistic colonies, clear-headed enough to be aware of this human defect, ever sought to counteract it by establishing the artificial hoop of religious bigotry around their communities. Whether Shakers or Rappites, or what-nots, it was religious bigotry that counteracted the “scattering” tendency of the members, and forcibly held them together. Such an artificial bond could not last, and did not. The hoop to forcibly hold men together so as to compel them to co-operate, and thereby strip themselves of the fetters of their individualism, had to be a natural, physical growth. That hoop is furnished by modern machinery, which compels co-operation in the operation of the machine itself, and which, by introducing an extensive subdivision of labor, establishes co-operation as a racial and compulsory institution. Such a hoop did not and could not exist in the days of Jesus.

Again, to seek to justify Socialism by the Golden Rule is to place the cart before the horse in social development. Man’s ideals are dependent upon his material

possibilities. There is deep philosophy in the homely adage that warns man to “cut his coat according to his cloth.” The Golden Rule is an ideal, but the ideal depends upon the possibility to carry it out. Not before the mechanical arts, coupled with social development, brought forth the modern methods of co-operative production, was the ideal of the Golden Rule realizable. It is not Socialism that must justify its establishment with the Golden Rule, but the Golden Rule that must justify its application with the material possibilities implied in Socialism.

Accordingly, to set up Jesus as a Socialist, or the Golden Rule as the reason for Socialism, tends to disqualify the militant in his labors against capitalist iniquity. On the other hand, to be clear upon the reason why Jesus could not be a Socialist is a material aid in understanding the reason why Socialism is possible to-day and the continued rejection of the Golden Rule no longer an “unfortunate necessity” but an “unpardonable crime.”

The opposite is, on the whole, the doctrine preached by the “Christian Socialist,” so called. Is, therefore, the rise in these recent days of the “Christian Fellowship” organization of “Christian Socialists” an unqualified evil? Not at all.

As every rose has its thorn, so has every thistle its flower. The thistle of the Christian Fellowship is no exception to the rule.

As a symptom of the ripening of the Socialist fruit, the Christian Fellowship is to be hailed. As an evidence of the breakdown of one of the most powerful buttresses of the ruling class, the Christian Fellowship is to be cheered. As a breath of fresh air that is disinfecting the hitherto inaccessible minds that clerical slander of Socialism had hitherto polluted, the Christian Fellowship is to be applauded. Finally, being in the nature of a petard of class rule with which capitalist chicanery is now itself being hoisted, the Christian Fellowship deserves to be encouraged in the performance of its special hoisting work.

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