

week in which to be religious.

The final chapter, *Art as things unsaleable*, so enlarges the vision of the book that one more than half wishes it had been put first, and wonders where Eric Gill would have got to if it had. "Let us forget for the moment the benefits we receive in exchange—the countless conveniences of applied science—let us simply note that by no possibility, by no stretch of the imagination, can we say that the factory product is the product of man the lover. Factory articles are not the love songs of anybody." Yes, but that is a dirge. It would not have been if the book had begun with it. And so with the concluding sentences, "Art and holiness have no longer any connection and the most honoured of the arts is the art of salesmanship. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" A dirge. In a sense the whole book is a dirge. A lucid and penetrating dirge. Even a gay dirge. An excellent dirge. A dirge for the spiritual reading of those who think humanitarianism is another name for charity and cheerful English compromise a synonym for spiritual gaiety.

Work as art suggests skill, responsibility. Work as work suggests patience, humility. Patience. This is not a dope to the poor. It is the most revolutionary virtue that can be named. It is the worker's immediate access to the Christ Who upset the tables of the money changers. It means nothing without the Cross but a hideous imbecility. With the Cross it is quite simply victory. It was a pity we were not allowed to consider work just as work for, say, one chapter.

BERNARD KELLY.

LES DROITS DU TRAVAILLEUR ET LE CORPORATISME. By P. Chanson. (Desclée de Brouwer; 8 frs.)

It cannot be said that social problems receive that attention which their importance and urgency demands. There prevails an indifference and lack of sympathetic understanding difficult to be reconciled with the unceasing warnings of Leo XIII and Pius XI.

*Les Droits du Travailleur et le Corporatisme* should arouse our interest and bring home to us the profound wisdom of the two Encyclicals dealing with the social order. The writer is "intensely interested" in social problems and his work displays a balanced mind whose keenness is mellowed by a wide experience of the issues involved. For it is comparatively easy to theorize about social problems, but unless theories are inspired and supported by experience they tend to lose touch with reality and become useless.

In the first part Paul Chanson treats of the rights of workmen and shows how the whole social problem pivots on the securing and safeguarding of these rights. He quotes numerous passages from the *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, all to the effect that wages should be determined by the vital needs of the

workmen; needs which comprise not only their personal requirements but also those of their families. Wages should supply these needs and should enable workmen to obtain private property to relieve them from anxiety and to retain that dominion over their family affairs which belongs to them by nature.

This might seem impossible in view of the present economic war raged between the various trades, the prevalence of free competition, economic dictatorship, devaluation of money and dumping of markets. Yet when Pius XI expounded the principles of just distribution he asserted that even if the carrying out of these principles is considered impracticable, the obligation does not cease: "It calls for more emphatic assertion and more insistent repetition, because these salutary injunctions of the Pontiff have not infrequently been forgotten, deliberately ignored or deemed impracticable, though they were both feasible and imperative."

The three institutions whose function is the safeguarding of the rights of the workmen are the State, trade-unions and vocational groups or guilds. Paul Chanson is anxious to show that trade-unions, although necessary, are by no means effective. The reason is that they are not obligatory, so that in France after fifty years of experience only 12 per cent. of the workmen have joined trade-unions, thus considerably weakening their influence. The need of vocational groups or guilds is therefore all the more imperative, "claiming the allegiance of men not according to the position they occupy in the labour market, but according to the diverse positions which they exercise in society" (Q.A.).

Thus vocational groups will include all those who exercise the same trade either as employer or as employee. Membership should be obligatory to secure efficiency and avoid all competition. Then it is the duty of the State to safeguard the rights and to enforce the obligations of the various groups, co-ordinating them and promoting as much as possible the contribution of each trade and profession to the common good.

In the last and more important part the writer discusses the economic and social functions of the vocational groups and indicates what he considers to be the more effective manner of organizing them. In our study of the doctrines contained in the *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno* as expounded in this book we are again reminded of the warning of Pius XI that "unless serious attempts be made, with all energy and without delay, to put them into practice, let nobody persuade himself that public order and peace and tranquillity of human society can be effectively defended against the forces of revolution." It is the sense of this great responsibility placed on all Christians which induced Paul Chanson to write this stimulating book, and should induce us to study it with care.

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