

MANUAL
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CORPORATION

PART SIX



IMPRIMERIE COOPÉRATIVE DE REIMS

(E. Gény, Director).

24, rue Pluche, 24

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THIS EDITION

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The table of contents refers to the pages of this edition; each entry is a link.

The numbered notes are those of the original work; here they are numbered continuously from beginning to end.

Léon Harmel, le Bon Père du Val-des-Bois

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MANUAL OF THE CHRISTIAN CORPORATION



Part Six

On the Christian Workers' Corporation in a Town

§ 100. — PLAN OF THE WORK.

Up to this point we have remained in the realm of facts; we have not gone beyond the bounds of what is known and indisputable. We must go further. God has brought us to the moral resurrection of our little people; in these last years He has willed to give Val-des-Bois a painful celebrity. Now, He does nothing without a motive of mercy. We know that if the Worker of Nazareth bears in His adorable Heart a brotherly love for all workers, that love is more tender still for those poor families whom the modern factory devours, in their souls even more than in their bodies.

He has led us to the necessary means, and He wills that these means be applied everywhere, so as to produce everywhere the same Christian resurrection.

We therefore believe we are fulfilling the wish of our Divine Master in striving to show that the Christian workers' corporation can be founded in towns, such as it was formed as the logical and unconscious outcome of our efforts.

We divide this work into three parts.

In Chapter I, *Organisation of the corporation*, we shall inquire whether there is any means other than the Catholic association, as we described it in paragraphs 52 to 57, that can bring about social reform; and whether the corporation can be anything other than the harmonised whole of the associations.

In Chapter II, *Government of the corporation*, we shall show that the Association of Catholic Workers' Circles has the providential mission of establishing the workers' corporation under the government of the Catholic Church.

Finally, in Chapter III, *Practical information*, we shall answer some questions put to us by several Christians eager to begin the works of the factory.

This whole work has been written especially with a view to the workers of large-scale industry, in town and country. The same principles can be applied to other workers, with some differences of detail. Man is the same everywhere. If the moral diseases that are decimating our industrial populations have reached the farming countryside and the towns where there are no factories, why should the same remedies not produce the same results everywhere?

CHAPTER I ORGANISATION OF THE CORPORATION.

§ 101. — AIM OF THE CORPORATION.

In the Middle Ages the guild had as its object work and the trade. The family was then firmly constituted, traditions were respected, every home was a sanctuary where the faith was taught and engraved on the hearts of the children. The guilds therefore could not have as their object the conversion of the family; they tended to preserve rather than to build. To preserve the faith of the forefathers, to preserve work and wealth through scrupulously maintained honesty, to preserve the rights of each through the duties of all, to preserve the spirit of family and of mutual assistance among all the men of the same trade: such was the great and noble mission that the craft guilds admirably fulfilled.

The misfortune of the times gives us a more important aim, and one harder to reach. Everything lies in ruins: faith seems now to be

the privilege of only a few, tradition is despised, the spirit of novelty troubles every mind. The family is coming apart; each claims every right for himself and will submit to no duty; free competition has broken down all the barriers that upheld honesty, secured work, and made of all the men of the same trade a single family.

Jealousy, division, selfishness and an unbridled race for success have replaced union, Christian solidarity and the moderation of old. God is driven out of society, and they want to drive Him out of every heart.

Our corporation must therefore have as its first object to rebuild the family, through the Christian reform of the individuals who compose it, and as its final aim to restore social peace in our country, and through it the social kingship of Jesus Christ.

To reach this twofold aim, the corporation will extend its action to employers as well as to workers, and to each of the members of the family. It will have two principles: the Catholic Association, and the Union of the associations proper to each of the different members of the corporation.

§ 102. — FIRST PRINCIPLE OF THE CORPORATION: THE CATHOLIC ASSOCIATION.

“Here and there, at various periods, there have been flourishing populations and prosperous peoples; the mechanism of their inner organisation is invariably the same: it is association. The desire and the art of living grouped and bound together have their principle in the spirit of family. Such is the language of the past, the teaching of history.” (Letter from Mgr Isoard to Mr F. Leplay.)

The benefits we admire in the society of former times (the union of masters and workers, the permanence of engagements, respect for social authorities, and patronage) are the results of association. If we want the consequences, we must want the cause. The craft guild was a complete association; workers and masters belonged to it;

everything in it was common to all the members, the interests of eternity as well as those of time.

At one moment in its history, Val-des-Bois was a striking example of the meagre result reached by an employer who follows what is called custom, what we shall call the duties of Christian patronage, while neglecting to make use of association. We know several factories where generous employers have done everything for the salvation of their workers: chapels, schools, visits to the sick, everything except associations; others have organised the best-devised economic institutions. Clearly these efforts have not been entirely in vain, but neither the one nor the other has had the immense results that the Catholic association gives. A careful examination of the facts has convinced us that workshop customs and patronage are powerless to bring about the Christian reform of individuals. Wherever there is no association, the scrupulous observer will note that the religious level, and consequently the moral level, sinks from day to day. If association was necessary in former times, how much more so is it today! Freedom of labour, in removing hindrances, has stripped the worker of truly protective institutions; work done at home strengthened the family, work done outside weakens it; small workshops allowed the employer to carry out duties of Christian charity which he can no longer continue, in their details, in these vast factories which, by bringing together great numbers of workers, have made direct relations more difficult; finally, the large undertakings required by unlimited competition have created ceaseless preoccupations and overwhelming duties that leave employers almost no leisure. How will the workers escape isolation without association? How will the employer easily reach his workers without an association that breaks down the barriers of mistrust and provides common centres, where Christian charity opens hearts to reciprocal confidence and mutual love? The first principle of the corporation will therefore be *Association*. (§§ 8 to 11 and 52 to 57.)

In everything that concerns the interests of the soul, it is the Church that teaches us, and we are sure, in imitating her, to be on the right road. The Church began the conversion of the peoples through associations, and she has continued to use this means everywhere, as widely as the freedom she enjoyed allowed. The religious orders have realised its most complete type. By studying their organisation we shall deduce from it the characteristics essential to every perfect association. They proceed from religious feeling, they are born of the free consent of individuals, they govern themselves within the Christian hierarchy, and finally they work for the moral and material well-being of their members through mutual assistance made fruitful by the charity of hearts (§ 54). One can also see that they have the spirit we characterised in paragraph 56: Christian liberty in life; liberty within order, through fixed rules that prevent caprice from ever governing; participation of the members in the internal government, under the direction of a real fatherhood; union of superiors and inferiors in the respect of the one, the devotedness of the other, and the mutual love of all; personal initiative held within limits that give it more spring instead of lessening it; elevation of characters, which acquire an energy beyond the strength of man.

We showed in Part Four that our workers' associations have all these characteristics.

The Association of Catholic Workers' Circles is eminently guided along this path, which is why we found that it possesses the right doctrine (§ 71).

§ 103. — SECOND PRINCIPLE OF THE CORPORATION: UNION OF THE ASSOCIATIONS.

We have said that the first object of our corporation is to rebuild the family through the Christian reform of the individuals who compose it. Can we achieve this if we do not form associations proper to each of its members? Shall we be able, for example, to reform the family if we do not reform the mother, who has forgotten her duties since she forgot God? Is it not she who must sanctify her family and form it to the Christian life? If we have no association for her, she will then have to receive from her children what her duty obliges her to give them.

We thus reverse the roles, we act against nature, and consequently we are not in the truth. To be in the truth we must act according to the nature of man and the teaching of the Church. These two laws join in pointing to the mothers' association as the most important, because the action of its members is the most powerful for the rebuilding of the family.

It would be just as easy to demonstrate the need to reach the fathers, the sons and the daughters through special associations. We cannot reform society through an association that includes only one member of the family; the other members, who are not reached, cannot find a complete remedy for their ills in the existence of that association.

The corporation must therefore have associations for each of the members of the family, and these associations must possess the general characteristics that the Church herself has traced out for us, while not ceasing on that account to adapt themselves, in their organisation and in their life, to the special needs of their members.

We have said that the final aim of the corporation must be to restore social peace. Our associations must therefore include the upper class as well as the lower class. The committee, the employers' society and the meeting of the lady patronesses are necessary, not only to

help the works, but to bring about the practical fusion of the classes in Christian charity, through self-denial, devotedness and reciprocal love.

All these associations would form only scattered limbs if they were not united, and that is why we have said that the second principle of the Christian workers' corporation is *the Union of the associations*, comprising all the members of the family of the workers and of the employers. In our society the freedom to do evil, that is, the freedom to set fire, is unlimited, and those who do this sad work are easily united to destroy. The freedom to do good, that is, the power to rebuild, is oppressed by the laws and by morals, but above all by the division of honest people; they form a hedge around the fire, preventing it from being put out, because they do not agree on the means. No one has any idea of the benefits the corporation will produce through this union: it can be established only through charity, forbearance and a little self-denial; but it will soon be seen that the union has secured for each association its true moral and material interests, without placing any hindrance on its internal government.

§ 104. — OUTLINE OF THE CORPORATION.

The corporation was defined in paragraph 81, and its rules were given in document Y. By the force of circumstances, we have brought into being at Val-des-Bois a type long proposed by eminent men who sought in the experience of the past lessons for the future.

We read in the work of Mr Mounier, where he speaks of the universities of arts and trades restored by Pius IX under the *motu proprio* of 1852:

“Why should not pious unions, of the kind of the Roman universities of arts and trades, be established among children of the same age working in a factory, among the men, among the women of the same condition? Why should not the union of these associations form, with the master and the foremen, a corporation for each establish-

ment? If these establishments then acted in concert, what churches, what hospices would they not be capable of building and maintaining, to judge by the monuments built by the Roman guilds¹.”

There may be several corporations in a town, and there would be an advantage in forming them among workers of the same category (factory workers, craft workers, farm workers) who have the same habits, the same needs and the same interests.

At the head, a committee containing, as far as possible, employers of the same speciality, and directing an employers’ society resolved to support its action in their workshops; a Catholic workers’ circle, the centre of the corporation, where the fathers of families manage the interests of the corporation together with the committee; then, around the circle, the youth club and the school, receiving as far as possible a direction which, if not the same, is at least frankly united with that of the circle. Alongside, and in union with the committee, a meeting of lady patronesses, concerning themselves with the associations of working mothers and sponsoring girls’ associations united in their direction (§ 59). — The corporation leaves each association free in its internal government; its moral outward sign is the community of principles and method, Christian solidarity, and relations of charity and mutual help; its material outward sign lies above all in common economic institutions.

It is the army of God, varied in the different corps that compose it, united in the aim it pursues: the victory of Jesus Christ and His reign on earth.

§ 105. — NECESSITY OF THE CORPORATION.

If we do not make the corporation, it will be made without God, and that will be to the greater loss of souls.

1. *De l’action du Clergé*, vol. II, p. 320.

The ideas of associations and of corporation answer present needs so well that everyone is taken up with them, and if we will not undertake on God's behalf this great union of interests and hearts, the union will be made by the Revolution.

We shall not be able to reproach our poor workers, abandoned by us, for having listened to the seductive voice of falsehood, since the voice of truth does not make itself heard in their ears.

Have all the attempts made in recent years to establish workers' associations gone beyond the narrow limits of the exception? Have sufficiently powerful means been taken anywhere to regenerate our factory populations? And yet, as we said in paragraph 53, they are easy to reach. We have seen them crowd in wherever circles, youth works and girls' youth clubs were opened; then, little by little, they disappeared, because no strong enough force had been found in isolated efforts, lacking concert and often ill-devised. These poor people need to be energetically supported, to be strengthened, and to find again in our works the moral and material well-being that they utterly lack. At the first call they come; then their inconstancy wins the day: not enough has been done for their families, for their children, for their work; their life has not been made easier. They have been burdened with duties they no longer knew, and they have not been protected enough against those enemy legions and those temptations of which we have spoken (§ 7). Above all, nothing is done to bring the whole family into the Christian life through simultaneous associations for each of the members of the family.

That is why the good produced has not been in proportion to the efforts, and the work of recent years has truly been more fruitful in the upper class than in the working class.

The corporation is therefore necessary, and it can be nothing other than the harmonised whole of the associations, which multiplies a hundredfold the power of our efforts by making it possible to act simultaneously, by every moral and material means, on all the members

of the family. This work alone, with its combined action, will be strong enough to halt the movement that is carrying our working populations towards paganism.

§ 106. — EASE OF THE CORPORATION IN A TOWN.

Everything has been said about how easy the works are at Val-des-Bois. By a quite natural inclination, we find everything easy in other people's homes and difficult in our own. In practice, the facts have contradicted this opinion. Few associations exist in isolated factories; many have been created in towns. If the method of Val-des-Bois were applied, much less money would be spent, and far more considerable results would be achieved. The works that are at present isolated, the circles, the youth clubs, the girls' associations, would find in the corporation as we have explained it a new vitality and an unheard-of prosperity.

If we take all the elements of the corporation (committee, lady patronesses, employers' society, various workers' associations, schools, economic institutions), we shall see that they exist more or less in towns. Wherever there is a committee and a Catholic workers' circle, the centre exists, and with perseverance one will succeed in completing around the circle the necessary network of associations. Wherever the various works, youth clubs and girls' associations, have the characteristics we have described, they can enter the corporation. But just as it is recommended as a very important point to begin an association of piety with truly Christian members, so it is of capital importance to admit into the corporation only associations frankly rallied to our principles. In a parish of an industrial town there were already two associations of Children of Mary, but neither of them had been able to bring together girls from the factories; the parish priest did not hesitate to found a third, which is going perfectly, which reaches the women workers in the workshops, and which, far from harming the other two, has given them new life through emulation.

He did not stop at the warnings of the prudent, who kept telling him, each louder than the last, that the new association would harm the others, that one must take care not to wrong what exists, etc.: a thousand reasons by which the salvation of souls is prevented. What we must fear is not that a limping work should founder; it is that thousands of souls should go on damning themselves. Not enough thought is always given to this point of view, the only true one. Let us found associations wherever we find none based on our principles. Let us take good care not to harm, or even to touch, the works that exist and that are condemned to sterility because they have not taken sufficient account of the nature of man and of the examples of the Church, examples that we may call eloquent lessons, since they spring from a constant practice that has borne such admirable fruit. Let us leave the little trickles of water that will not flow into the river because they are afraid of seeing their little personalities absorbed; let us go out into the open sea, where thousands of souls are perishing because no one holds out a hand to them; putting our trust in God, let us found new associations, broad through the ardent zeal that will animate their founders, broad through the many points of support we shall take in the whole family, broad, finally, through the inventions of our charity, to work for the moral and material well-being of their members.

We shall thus restore social peace, which the Apostles gave to the world, through the Christian associations and economic institutions that we have rediscovered after them. These are the same means that all men who desire the moral resurrection of a people will invincibly rediscover, because these means are the only ones that conform to the nature of man and to the teaching of the Church.

CHAPTER II

GOVERNMENT OF THE CORPORATION.

§ 107. — IMPORTANCE OF DOCTRINE IN THE WORKS.

Is there a doctrine in the works? Is there a science that has its principles, a method sanctioned by experience, or must we say that everything is variable? To ask the question is to answer it. There is clearly, above the details, a sure method for the conversion of peoples, and this method, provided by the Church, is based on human nature and on the law of God. Eclecticism in such a matter is most harmful. Men of good will who ask for the true road must receive instruction in it, and their docility will lead them to a quick and certain result. The establishment of Christian workers' corporations requires on the part of the founders an experience and a knowledge that not all possess. The experience of others can spare us hard setbacks and failures that are painful to Catholic hearts when the salvation of souls is at stake. A teaching society that possessed the right doctrine, that was subject to the teaching of the Church, and that kept as a precious deposit the fruit of the experience of all men engaged in good works, would give a considerable impetus to rightly understood workers' associations, and its direction would be an immense benefit, keeping minds from any wavering between the true method and the imperfect means that experience has condemned.

We deplore the spreading abroad of every kind of method and manner, put forward as equally good, from which each person takes the easiest, and consequently the least fruitful. An example:

Sunday schools, in many places, do not have the principles we listed in paragraph 102, and because of this defect they do much less good than workers' associations in the proper sense of the word. A zealous Christian wishes to establish a work; he has this model before his eyes; every kind of work is proposed to him as equally good, and

he undertakes a limping, incomplete work that will have few results for the salvation of souls, whereas had he been taught, he would have made a true association, which would have produced a much greater good.

Have we not heard mutual aid societies praised, and do we not know good priests who believe they have a workers' association and are working the salvation of souls by busying themselves with this philanthropic work, which is thought to be Christian because it has an annual Mass and because the parish priest is received there with respect? Who does not see that these shadows of works are harmful, because they satisfy Christians of good will and thereby prevent them from undertaking works truly powerful for the salvation of souls? We knew a zealous parish priest who, without the least suspicion of it, disorganised a girls' association in thinking to improve it. This association had been established by Daughters of Charity, under the conditions we described in paragraphs 58 to 64. The parish priest wished to improve it and, on the pretext of making it a parish work, he did away with the action of the sisters and the action of the council, and everything is now reduced to a meeting each week at the parish. The sisters are grieved to see the loss of these souls whose salvation they had secured. The parish priest, for his part, has the best of intentions, and if he knew he had been mistaken, he would go back on his decision. He would know it if there were a doctrine in the works and if that doctrine were taught. No doubt this teaching would not prevent deviations, which are the result of individual liberty, but it would bring the best fruits for men of good will; and among the Catholics who undertake works, good will and docility are common qualities.

§ 108. — ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC WORKERS' CIRCLES.

The Association of Catholic Workers' Circles is not, as has been said, an *essentially lay* work. At its head is a Cardinal Protector; the Com-

mittee of the Association has a chaplain, invested with absolute authority in all questions that touch, closely or remotely, on matters of conscience; its publications are reviewed by an ecclesiastical commission, which has full power to cut out not only anything that would be contrary to the best doctrine, but even anything that would not be perfectly in conformity with it; in the local committees the priest has every influence, and he is sometimes the president; almost all the circles have priests or religious as their directors, and the Association has taken as its social doctrine the doctrine of the *Syllabus*. Is that a lay society? Is it not rather an *essentially Catholic* society, in which lay people, under the guidance of the bishops and priests, labour with all their might to bring back into the bosom of the Church those countless multitudes who have strayed from it?

Is not the apostolate the duty of all the faithful? Must we confuse submission, which is a duty, with inaction, which is a crime? We cannot remain indifferent spectators in this great struggle waged against our beloved Mother, the holy Church, and we are nothing other than Catholics when we join in the defence of our priests and help them in a mission that would seem difficult without our assistance.

Does the Association of Catholic Circles have the right doctrine? I open its fundamental document, *Bases et plan général de l'œuvre*, and I find in it the following points: devotedness of the ruling class to the working class; absolute submission to the Church; a religious bond that makes it a true confraternity; Catholic affirmation; Christian social life, without disguise and without restriction; participation of the worker members in the internal government; individual responsibility; Christian solidarity. We said in paragraph 102 what teachings the Church gives in the organisation of the religious orders. We find all these teachings again in the Association of Circles.

Is this Association addressed only to one class of persons, or does its action embrace the various classes of society? We know that it ad-

dresses itself quite especially to the upper class. It is the Association that has spread in practice the Catholic notions, lost through liberalism, of the responsibility of all those who can give an impetus to those around them; it has taught employers that they have charge of souls, and that, to fulfil their duties, it is not enough to give one's gold: one must also give one's time, one's action and, more than all that, one's heart, through personal relations with the worker, in order to work effectively for social peace.

The fourth characteristic of the Association of Circles is unity, and in this respect the Association is very poorly understood by some Christians who do not belong to it. We must not confuse direction with tyranny, help with protection, liberty with isolation. Direction, help and liberty: that is what the Committee of the Association gives to the different groups that have affiliated themselves to it. Tyranny, oppression and absorption are essentially revolutionary things, and in no way Catholic.

There is no other work in France that presents these characteristics: Catholic in its members; Catholic in its doctrine, in its tendencies and in its teaching; Catholic in its object, which embraces both the upper class and the lower class; Catholic in its unity, that fine unity of which the Church gives us the example, the only guarantee of true liberty and the fruitful promoter of personal initiative. We therefore firmly believe that we have found in the Association of Catholic Workers' Circles that teaching society of which we spoke just now, so necessary to give impetus to workers' associations, and we think it has received from God the mission of promoting Christian workers' corporations everywhere, and thus of restoring the social reign of Jesus Christ in our country.

§ 109. — THE CIRCLE IS THE NATURAL CENTRE OF THE CORPORATION.

We shall say only a few words on this point. All the old guilds were governed by fathers of families, masters and workers.

Our particular corporation is impossible without a perfectly organised Circle as its base and its driving force. If it has been said, with truth, that the Circle is an association around a chapel, we can say just as rightly that the corporation is a group of associations around a Circle. The committee of the Circle becomes the corporative committee and the driving agent of the whole corporation, just as the internal council of the Circle becomes the source of the corporative council, which extends its action to the whole workers' family, especially through the economic institutions.

§ 110. — DIRECTION OF THE CORPORATION BY THE CHURCH.

The government of the Christian workers' corporation must be absolutely subject to our mother the holy Catholic Church, the instrument of every moral resurrection of peoples, the only effective guarantee against the enemy of mankind, who prowls around our institutions to try to make them serve the loss of souls. On the day when this great work is seriously undertaken, with its many associations, its economic institutions and its beneficent unity, it will contain multitudes, and if the Church is not the queen of these numerous societies, our associations will turn to liberalism, and we shall have prepared the loss of those we wished to save. Here again we ask the Church how her kingship is to be reconciled with the government of the associations by their own members. In the old confraternities, and in the religious orders whose members are not priests, is there not at the head a committee called a council or chapter? Does not this committee have full power over the moral and economic direction of the institute? And yet does the association cease for a moment to be perfectly subject to the Church?

So we shall take care to secure the kingship of the Church in the corporative committee; we shall ask for a priest appointed by the bishop to represent the Church; this priest will have full authority on all the points he judges to touch on doctrine. It would be useful, we

believe, for this priest to hold no office, to be neither chaplain nor director of the Circle, so as to avoid those impulses of human passion that can sway the best minds. If, by some impossibility, there were a conflict, the bishop is the final judge to whom we all remain subject.

People rightly complain of the scarcity of priests, and ask how these new works could be provided for. Experience has proved to us that associations always give back to the Church more than they have cost her in priests and men and women religious. Recruitment to the priesthood is becoming more and more difficult; people exhaust themselves in vain efforts, while the factory is an unexplored field where the flowers are stifled for lack of air and sunlight. Were not the famous Kolping and Matthew workers? The true apostles of the factory will come from the factory itself. When the Catholic associations have let the life-giving air into these surroundings where souls are dying of asphyxia, when the Christian workers' corporation has made the divine sun shine forth, we shall see with admiration the flowers of priesthood bloom, and, far from costing the Church anything, the factory will give her a new generation of men and women religious and of priests of Jesus Christ.

§ 111. — CHAPELS IN THE WORKS.

We come now to a very delicate but very important point of the work that concerns us. Several people have said to us: "It is a burning question; do not touch it." — And why not? Is not the truly burning question the salvation of our poor workers, who are perishing before our eyes without any remedy being brought? — If we cannot save them without establishing chapels, must we give it up for fear of harming the parish? — Is the parish the end, or is it only the means?

We shall take good care not to enter on canonical ground; we mean to remain on the ground of facts and not to leave it. Now, all men engaged in good works have recognised, as we have, the absolute necessity of the chapel: 1. to free our converts from human respect;

2. to sustain the life of the associations by giving them a corporate and family spirit; 3. to form individuals to piety.

The chapel answers so well a secret need of the heart that, wherever it is established, it is preferred to the churches, especially by pious souls. We must take man as he is, and not try to change him to suit our ideas. For the particular question that concerns us, the Christian corporation, it is difficult to Christianise a factory in the country, or a group of factories in a town, without establishing chapels.

There is here an extremely grave question, and one that holds back several industrialists who wish to work for the conversion of their workers. Parish priests are not always favourable to the establishment of a chapel. We know several employers who let themselves be stopped by this difficulty, and give up fulfilling the most sacred of their duties.

The employer has charge of souls, and we do not think that God will find his excuse valid if he has not taken all the steps necessary to overcome the obstacle. He must always go as far as the bishop. We know of no approach of this kind that has not been favourably received. If it were not, we should have to bow and acknowledge that God does not want our action; our responsibility would cease, and He who searches hearts would know how to reward our powerless good will. — But if, on the contrary, as has always happened so far, the bishop is favourable to the chapel and supports us against the difficulties, we must go forward with energy and hold it for certain that we are in the truth.

The Christian employer puts in the first rank the salvation of the souls entrusted to him, and, if it is necessary, he sacrifices to this noble aim the esteem of men, even when that esteem seems to him most legitimate. When the employer, after struggling and suffering, has reached the religious resurrection of his little people, when he embraces in his heart all those souls in which he feels the Heart of

Jesus Christ beating, oh! then he forgets his troubles, and he thanks God for having put a little bitterness into the intoxicating cup of the salvation of souls.

The practice of the Church has always been favourable to workers' associations. We let Mr Mounier speak:

“In Rome, a university, college, school or craft guild is first of all a confraternity whose object is to honour God in His saints. It therefore possesses a church and a chapel, which it maintains at its own expense. It appoints a chaplain, has Masses said for the confreres and benefactors who have died and for those who are dying, masters, journeymen or apprentices; it celebrates with pomp all the great feasts, and principally those of the Blessed Virgin and of the saints under whose protection it has placed itself; it calls in preachers and follows special exercises of piety, as well as the explanation of the catechism, principally to prepare for Easter. It supports, with alms and by every possible means, those of its members who fall into want; it gives help to those who are sick, and visits them, exhorting them to approach the sacraments. It determines the rights of widows and defends them, it brings up orphans and finds them positions; finally, it distributes dowries to deserving girls².”

Does it not seem that Mr Mounier sums up the Christian corporation as we have just described it? Did not the venerable Cardinal Gousset, in his letter of 6 November 1865 (document D), imitate the acts of the popes, ever eager to favour workers' associations with chapels, a special religious service and privileges of every kind?

We shall go further, and we shall venture to add that in many places the establishment of chapels would be the best means, and often the only one, of bringing about the return of Christian life in the parish.

2. *De l'action du Clergé*, vol. II, p. 210.

Wherever the Church has been free, she has multiplied chapels. “It may be said that everything has been tried in Rome so that there should not be a single Christian whom the word of God could not reach³.”

Everyone knows what a multitude of chapels there are in each parish. The clear-sightedness of hatred long ago showed the Revolution the true means of driving God out of the hearts of the people. We have seen it in Italy surround with a hypocritical respect the parish for which it claims to be working, and close those chapels so loved by the people. The Revolution knows that it destroys the parish by destroying the chapels. Everywhere in our old cities people point out the ruins of those many chapels that sheltered the confraternities. The parish alone has remained standing, and every day it sees the number of its faithful diminish. As the parishes have become depopulated, certain parish priests, who did not realise the cause of the evil, have sought to concentrate the Christian people as much as possible and to do away with the chapels. This system, instead of lessening the evil, has aggravated it, and all Christians are alarmed at the growing desertion of our churches.

In many districts we still see Christians; we no longer see parishioners. Religious indifference, travel made more frequent by the railways, the movements of population caused by industry, the instability of populations: everything has contributed to breaking that union which made the parish a family. In all villages that are at once industrial and agricultural, professional antipathy makes fusion impossible. As for us, we have no mission to judge this change, noted by Mgr Isoard⁴ and by many excellent minds. We desire only one thing, the salvation of our dear workers; for the rest, we acknowledge ourselves incompetent.

3. Mgr Isoard.

4. *De la Prédication*. Albanel, 1871.

In a time like ours, when the tide of impiety rises every day and threatens to engulf everything, we should deeply pity those who might feel within themselves the sad courage to hinder the salvation of souls by preventing the only means of bringing back the lost populations.

§ 112. — CORPORATIVE COMMITTEE.

The corporative committee has two quite distinct missions: the government of the corporation, and social peace, through the personal relations of its members with the workers.

For the government of the corporation, we said in paragraph 83 that the committee must contain within it representatives of all the associations. It deals directly with the Catholic Circle, the workers' centre of the corporation, and it deals indirectly with the other associations through their representatives, and to the extent we have explained. As for the economic institutions, we have explained (§ 83) how they are managed. It will be understood that such a committee needs above all men of action, truly active members, fully ready to face the responsibilities that the needs of the work impose. Quarrelsome and punctilious minds hinder everything, do nothing and discourage those who work. The difficulties of life teach forbearance and make one despise those vain discussions in which self-love takes up more room than Christian devotedness. The help of men of business, and especially of industrialists, is truly precious, although one must often beware of their tendency towards philanthropy. Real profit will be found in the cooperation of men who have suffered much; suffering is a light; one learns many things that it alone makes known; it opens the heart to the love of God and the love of neighbour; and those who have profited from this great grace are eminently suited to good works.

To accomplish their second mission, the members of the committee must place themselves in direct contact with the workers and their

families. Our society is divided into classes that are hostile to and jealous of one another; Christian union will be restored only through the love and devotedness of the upper classes. By giving the workers proofs of real affection, by proving to them through deeds that we regard their interests as our own, we shall break down the barriers raised by mistrust and prejudice. The more frequent these relations are, the sooner we shall reach our goal, and the more we shall also feel growing in our hearts that flame of love which makes sacrifice light and draws others to us. But since social superiorities are in accordance with the nature of man and with the will of God, we must preserve them in a Christian equality that respects hierarchies. Religion assigns to each his duties: respect to inferiors, devotedness to superiors, and to all the love that makes the family an indivisible whole, without the father ever being confused with his sons. In the family, hierarchy is a strength, a support, and never a tyranny. So, in a truly Christian corporation, the superiors will be the strength and support of the inferiors, and the heart will give equality in devotedness and in mutual love.

§ 113. — EMPLOYERS' SOCIETIES.

We bring into the committees truly Christian employers who are disposed to give the time needed for the government of the works and for social union. There are many others who cannot or will not be part of the committee, and who are nevertheless frankly sympathetic to the workers' associations, whose benefits they recognise. Since we need every form of help for this great work, and since, moreover, no help will be more effective than that of the employers, we shall form alongside the committee an employers' society, of whose members we shall ask, as the sole condition, that they support the efforts of the committee for the moral improvement of the workers. This support would be shown in two ways: 1. by a voluntary contribution, and 2. by the adoption of certain measures of Christian discipline in the

workshop. These measures, moreover, would be prepared and tried out by competent people, themselves industrialists and members of the committee, and they would be suited to establishing good order as well as moral improvement. Even if we take the standpoint of industrial interest, Christian discipline will always be the most favourable to good work and to large output.

There would be a few meetings each year, and there efforts would be made to combat those false doctrines of modern political economy that have replaced charity by selfishness and Christian solidarity by self-interest; efforts would be made to show the masters that they have charge of souls, and to make them see that the Catholic Church alone provides the means of fulfilling the duties they have towards God and towards society. We have dealt with this point in paragraphs 3 to 13. The emptiness of all philanthropic efforts for the moral improvement of the workers would be brought into full light. The examples speak loudly enough, and the many experiments made in recent times would furnish striking enough demonstrations that the liberal school can bring about no real transformation, and that economic institutions without God become dead and ineffective works. They would be told of that society of generous employers which has an annual income of 40,000 to 50,000 fr. to encourage saving and which, despite all the advantages offered to the worker, sees savings fall every year. Another society imposed on itself, at each stocktaking, a serious sacrifice to help its workers insure their lives; it asked them for only a third of the premium and paid the other two thirds; the enthusiasm of the first day quickly cooled, and in the second year not a single worker was found to persevere; all had given up the small privation that would have secured them so great a result. Cooperative societies give only apparent results, and they soon breed in the minds of the workers a new mistrust which this method seemed intended to remove. It would be easy to show by the facts that education and all the means the liberal school has used have never made the worker

virtuous. There is no doubt that, after some time, the employers' way of seeing things would be changed; they would become more Christian, at least in spirit; their good will would show itself, in the workshops, through more decided measures to favour the Catholic associations, and outside the workshops through larger subsidies and a moral support that would make the works easier. Each year the committee would be enlarged by the employers who had made the most progress along the Christian way.

In centres where it was possible, Christian vocational schools would be established, of which we shall speak in paragraph 115; what immense results would not be obtained in the workshops with foremen who had come out of these schools?

Finally, what would prevent these employers' societies from dealing together with everything that concerns the interests of their industries, and thus forming Christian industrial societies? When one thinks of the power of the means available to certain industrial societies, and of the smallness of the results achieved, because the absence of God makes the greatest resources vain, one cannot help regretting that there are no Catholic industrial societies. They would soon show by the facts what considerable results can be obtained with the same means made fruitful by the power of God.

§ 114. — MISSION OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN THE CORPORATION.

As in all the works established by the Church, Christian women have a great part to play in our corporation. We may examine their mission: 1. in the family; 2. in the factories; 3. in the neighbourhood; 4. in the economic institutions; 5. in the creation and conduct of the associations; and 6. in the corporation.

1. *In the family.* — The love of Jesus begets love of the workers, His beloved brothers, and this love must show itself first of all through prayer. God alone can make the efforts of men of action fruitful. The conversion of the factory would be an impossible miracle

without divine intervention. We must therefore first of all pray and, if need be, suffer for the great cause of the reign of God. To generous souls one may recommend the *apostolate of the Heart of Jesus in the factory* (see document X^a), showing them the power of voluntary sacrifice through the shining examples the saints have left us.

The second action of the Christian woman consists in making all the members of her family love the works, so that later the child, grown up, may, in memory of his mother, perform the acts of devotedness he will have come to know through her.

The third action is to urge her husband, her son and her daughter into the works, according to their ages, whether in a committee, in an employers' society, or in a workers' association, or in looking after the workers.

Finally, the fourth action is to devote herself to providing the resources necessary for the life of the works.

2. *In the factories.* — Industrialists are often absorbed in their business and do not always concern themselves enough with what lies outside good production and a discipline that is, so to speak, pagan. Is it not a strict duty for the Christian woman to concern herself with everything that bears on morals and the service of God in her husband's workshops? Will not this action draw the blessing from on High upon the business? Is not *Our Father who art in heaven* angered to see the loss of His beloved children, brought about by the enrichment of a few? Is it not God who is the true source of all success? And if He wills to do nothing without human action, is that action enough when it is not made fruitful by the Almighty? To urge their husbands to establish in their factories the separation of the sexes and everything that bears on morals, to approach the women workers when one can, to show them interest, to urge them into the associations open to them, and finally to watch over the children, so as to keep for God, or to bring back to Him, these poor abandoned souls: such, it seems to us, is the duty of Christian women whose husbands

are at the head of an industry. In watching over the children of the poor, the mother will draw heavenly blessings upon her own children, and will thus spare herself the cruellest sorrows a human soul can bear.

3. *In the neighbourhood.* — Restoring patronage around her, the Christian woman can enter into contact with the families of her neighbourhood, not in a way that wounds the worker's egalitarian pride, but with the means her love will know how to invent to bring forth joy and confidence by her presence, without arousing the feelings of humiliation that charitable visits bring with them. Charity! Is it not very painful that this admirable word, which means love, has changed its meaning and become odious to certain minds, because it expresses the humiliation of the lowly and the glorification of the mighty? When the Christian woman has acquired a beneficent influence in her neighbourhood, she will use it to lead gently, with love, all the members of the family towards the Catholic associations. This action must be prudent; one must not be discouraged if the result is slow to come; the action will be all the surer for having been more prudent and more careful to respect liberty.

4. *In the economic institutions.* — Economic institutions have been attempted in several places and have not succeeded, because the ruling class disdained to make use of them and thus discredited them in the eyes of the workers.

The Christian woman would make these works popular, and consequently fruitful, if she made a point of using the means devised for the purchase of bread, meat, groceries and, in short, everything possible. In our corporation at Val-des-Bois, the employers use the corporative vouchers; they buy from the tradesmen of the corporation; every three months they receive the corporative bonus like all the workers, and at the same time as they do. In this way the economic institutions have been regarded as the fruit of association; it has

never entered anyone's mind to compare them to alms, and the most touchy egalitarian pride would have found nothing to be wounded by.

5. *In the creation and conduct of the associations.* — In the first rank we place the association of working mothers, known as the Association of St Anne. We spoke of it in paragraphs 67 to 70, and we gave its customary in document R. There will be seen the part of the lady patronesses, whose committee fulfils, with regard to the mothers' association, the same role as the Catholic committee with regard to the circles. We have spoken of the care to be given to young mothers and to children, care that is not at all in the spirit of the so-called *maternity* works, but which, on the contrary, must always appear as the fruit of a Christian solidarity that in no way resembles alms.

The action of the lady patronesses may often be exercised on well-off working-class families; to be accepted, therefore, this action must respect legitimate sensitivities and consist far more in the gift of the heart than in anything else. There are delicate matters here that are easier to make felt than to explain. We want social peace, that is to say, we want the families of employers, foremen and workers to form no more than one great family. Alms will not bring about this result, which is why we insist on this point: the economic institutions proper to the lady patronesses, while keeping in their outward appearance striking resemblances to certain existing works (*maternity* works, *crèche* works, etc.), are nonetheless essentially different in their spirit. A newly born corporation must therefore not believe that it can make use of these associations, and it must take great care not to frighten away the well-off workers. We do not want our associations to be associations of the poor; we want them to be associations of free men, in which all the degrees of the social ladder are found, from the labourer to the employer, by way of the foremen, managers, clerks, etc.; we want the benefits of the corporation to move hearts to love of the associations and to gratitude towards the Catholic Church, rather than to gratitude towards this or that employer. The love of God

leads naturally to the love of men, whereas gratitude towards men often becomes a burden that breeds hatred. The only gift that makes social peace is the gift of one's heart; it is the only one that should appear in our corporation, and the only one that should call forth love. It will be easy to deduce from these principles the practical details, which may vary in their application with the various centres where the work is established.

The girls' associations must also be the object of the committee's most tender solicitude; but there, sisters are needed as directresses of each association, and the mission of Christian women is confined rather to an effective patronage than to interference in details.

6. *In the corporation.* — We have said that the corporation is the harmonised whole of all the associations, and that it has a corporative committee at its head. This committee must remain the head of the corporation, for the ladies' committee as well as for the employers' society and the workers' associations. The action of the lady patronesses will be all the more fruitful for being carried out in closer union with the committee of the Association of Circles. This union is made easy by the presence of the priest-president in the committee of the Association; it is in no way a hindrance; it does not bear on details, but only on the great principles, and it aims at one single goal: mutual help. The concurrence of all forces is necessary to achieve the great action we wish to attempt. This union is therefore necessary, and it must be one of the principles of the committee of lady patronesses.

In commercial and industrial affairs, we find a great advantage in having several partners, because there is an affectionate supervision that is a hindrance to no one and a stimulus to all. These are also the benefits of community life. So, in united works, the more effective the supervision, the more fruitful it will make the efforts of each; and this supervision that we dread, at which our self-love takes fright, is precisely a great advantage. To return to the religious orders, which are

the most perfect type of our corporation, we can see that this supervision exists at every level, and that it is what gives these model associations their strength and prosperity.

We know an association of working mothers with a council and an organisation that seem to us excellent; the director is a parish priest; since he alone can convene the council, and since he is overwhelmed with occupations of every kind, it follows that the council never meets; the association does not function, and this work, which could do a great deal of good, is purely a work on paper. In this respect, as in many others, the committee of lady patronesses will find great profit in its union with the committee of the corporation, and a great advantage in reporting to it on the carrying out of its rules, at least on the main points.

§ 115. — ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS.

We refer the reader to Part Five, Chapter III, paragraphs 89 to 99.

Education. — All Catholic institutions have favoured the education of the people, and the Church has always been the enemy of ignorance. In our century, the adversaries of God have seized upon this word to carry the crowds along and turn them against God. Despite all the efforts made by freethought, the Church still remains at the head of education, and the schools of the religious congregations worthily uphold her eternal mission as Queen of the sciences. In our works for workers we must not neglect this element of success. We must apply ourselves especially to giving our workers, in well-organised adult classes, the vocational training needed for each trade. Catholics do not seem so far to have understood how easily they could reduce to their real worth those ostentatious friends of the working class who impress the common people with resounding words and a few lessons in chemistry, physics, weaving and mechanics. If Catholics were willing to act together, they would easily organise classes as well run as theirs, and better attended; they would thus

restore to the Church, in the eyes of the crowds, the prestige that these false friends wish to take from her, these friends who make so much noise and who work only for their own ambition while claiming to work for the people.

We cannot insist too strongly in asking Catholics to unite their efforts for the creation of *Christian vocational schools*, able to rival the government schools of arts and trades. We are witnessing today the results obtained over twenty years by the foundation of secondary schools of the religious congregations; we should have the same results, from the industrial point of view, with well-organised vocational schools. Most managers and factory owners come out of the schools of arts and trades, and everyone knows in what anti-religious spirit government education is organised everywhere. Our schools would bring about a true Christian revolution in the factories after a few years of operation. Will this institution, so useful and so necessary, meet with many difficulties? Not at all. We have the teaching staff, the Brothers of the Christian Schools; the Brothers' schools would supply us with more pupils than we could take in; our pupils would soon be sought after by industrialists, who would find in them every guarantee of work and morality. We do not have to struggle against the crushing omnipotence of the State, as in secondary education and in the faculties. At the same time as they were trained in their professional knowledge, our young men would be trained in the science of good works. Who does not see what results such schools would give?

Material comfort. — Our action here must have a twofold object: the first, to increase the resources of our workers by putting within their reach all articles of consumption at the lowest prices, and by bringing them to pay cash; the second, to teach them to save and to lead them to it by truly powerful means.

Economists have unanimously recognised that, without personal virtue, economic schemes are impossible or useless. Let us hear Mr Le Play:

“All the philanthropy of private individuals and of the government is powerless to create wealth when the moral feelings that are its sources have disappeared⁵.”

Here is the opinion of Mr Villermé: “Everywhere, moreover, man condemned to labour earns his bread by the sweat of his brow; but everywhere, too, idleness, improvidence, debauchery and corruption inevitably produce poverty. The workers of our manufactories very generally earn, I could say almost always, better wages than the others; but commonly too, among us and in the present state of things, the workers of the manufactories lack sobriety, thrift, foresight and morals, and very often they are poor only through their own fault⁶.”

In his admirable book *De la richesse dans les sociétés chrétiennes*, Mr Charles Périn demonstrates that Christian self-denial is the only source of foresight and thrift. The doctrine of self-interest and enjoyment has never been able to overcome the most common improvidence. We have heard men of merit repeat: “Make the workers provident, turn them into small property-owners living on their savings, and in that way you will succeed in improving their morals.” But experience proves that virtue and religious convictions alone can bring the worker to be thrifty, from which it follows that it is not thrift that makes them moral, but morality that makes them thrifty. We cited in paragraph 113 the efforts that have been made in several places to bring the worker to save, and the failure we found attested in the reports published by these societies. Let us therefore first lay down as an absolute principle that the most ingenious economic institutions will be absolutely sterile for the moral improvement of our workers as long as they are not quickened by the religious spirit. But let us also recognise the power of credit and consumer societies, and of all eco-

5. *Ouvriers des Deux-Mondes*, vol. II, p. 483.

6. Fol. 213, vol. II.

conomic institutions, when they are made fruitful by the Christian spirit, that is to say, when they have our Catholic associations as their basis. Just as, in education, we must not appear less concerned than our adversaries to give our workers the professional knowledge they need, so it is a duty for us to demonstrate, through our economic institutions, that the Catholic associations alone have true power for the material well-being of the workers, and that they alone really give what the sectarians promise in order to lure the crowds. If consumer societies have not succeeded so far in our works, it is because we have conceived them badly or carried them out badly. Our workers are as intelligent as English workers; everyone knows what unheard-of prosperity the association of the Equitable Pioneers of Rochdale has reached. Mr Casimir Périer gives us moving details on the beginnings and progress of this association, begun by a few weavers: “God knows what courage and perseverance were needed to overcome the first obstacles, and how much more was soon needed to triumph over resistance and hostility, when the first successes alarmed those whose interests seemed threatened. The retailers formed a league against a competition they called unfair, and they fought it by selling below the prices fixed at the store, as the premises where the society’s sales took place came to be called, at first in derision and soon as a mark of distinction. Nothing discouraged the brave pioneers, neither lawsuits, nor sarcasm, nor defections. They pursued their way with the faith that was to secure their reward⁷.”

This society, which had 700 francs in 1846, possessed more than a million francs in 1863. Would our Catholic circles be more powerless than those poor English workers? We maintain the contrary, and the demonstration of it will be made on the day when a committee brings to this work the perseverance that wears down obstacles and the faith that prevents discouragement.

7. *Des sociétés de coopération*, p. 8 ff.

Work: We spoke, in paragraph 99, of the employment office, or rather of the patronage committee whose object is to help workers who are out of work and to assist them in quickly finding advantageous employment for their hands. The journeymen's societies, more or less hostile to the religious idea and more or less affiliated to the anti-Christian societies, alone hold the monopoly of finding places for workers.

We know of committees where this question has been debated; the employers rejected it, fearing to harm the stability of their workers by making it easier for them to find places. This fear is entirely mistaken. If the placement committee gives the worker easier means of finding work, it also makes it easier for the employer to recruit for his workshop. The instability of workers in the towns has, moreover, reached its height, and the Christian spirit that our associations develop tends directly to counteract this plague of modern industry. Finally, our aim must be to group Christian workers in workshops where they find protection for their faith. How can we reach this result if we do not have in each circle a placement committee directed with intelligence and conducted with solicitude?

Recreation: We let Mr Ch. Périn speak. "The confraternities also attached the worker by the charm they spread over his life, and by the diversion and relief they brought him in the midst of an existence filled with monotonous and toilsome labour. The solemnity of the blessed bread, the feast of the patron saint, the general processions, the entry of kings and queens were the occasions of the confraternity's great feasts; it was in these feasts that it displayed all its magnificence. Other occasions, less solemn and recurring more often, such as the marriage or the burial of one of the members of the confraternity, or even of some close relative of a member, or the Masses said in honour of the patron saint, likewise gave the worker a few hours of

rest and joy, or stirred in him salutary returns to the serious side of life⁸.”

The corporation, as we understand it, is admirably organised to procure the same benefits. It has been rightly said that we live in the century of boredom; cheerfulness, joy and true amusements are disappearing day by day, together with the simplicity and peace of conscience that were their source. Our Christian corporation must also restore, in this respect, that old family life in which games, frank cheerfulness and pleasures, all the more attractive for being more innocent, made the poor worker forget the fatigues of the week, the worries of the home and the sorrows of life.

§ 116. — MISSION OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS IN THE CORPORATION.

“The revival of the religious orders is one of the signs of the social regeneration that is in preparation, and they are called to take a distinguished part in the capital work of the patronage of the working classes⁹.” The people have always had a particular veneration and love for religious, and when they have turned against them, it was because they obeyed passions that were not their own. Everything draws them towards religious: poverty and simplicity of life; the worker willingly places his trust in a man who has made himself his equal through humility and through the voluntary renunciation of all goods. The worker cannot help admiring these noble poor who bear in their outward appearance the dignity of sacrifice and the thought of God. The religious orders are the most complete expression of the spirit of association; their very life prepares them for the government of the Christian workers’ corporation. We must add that the religious will give our associations the power of duration and of traditions. Amid the upheavals and instability of our time, the people recognise them by features that do not change: the same habit, the same lan-

8. *De la richesse dans les sociétés chrétiennes*, vol. II, p. 273.

9. Ch. Périn, *de la richesse*, vol. II, p. 329.

guage, the same customs, the same spirit. “The man of the people,” says Mr Ch. Périn, “will find them today as they were when his father went to ask them for advice and protection; he will have learned from the cradle to respect them, to love them and to put all his trust in them; he will carry over to them the affection that binds him to his family; he will be bound to them by honour, affection and gratitude.¹⁰” May we not say that God has prepared the resurrection of the workers’ corporations through this flowering of the religious orders of which we are the happy witnesses?

§ 117. — CONGRESSES AND GENERAL ASSEMBLIES.

There is no need to demonstrate the social importance of Congresses and General Assemblies. In recent years they have given labour questions a popularity they could not have found without the rapid spreading that takes place in a large gathering.

We would wish the general Congresses to be divided into sections where men of the same speciality would meet. — It has been objected that it would be better to have a separate Congress for each speciality. — We think it is difficult to hold many general meetings with any success, because it is always the same men who are engaged in all the works, and the multiplicity of meetings would end by lessening their importance.

We shall add that it seems useful to us to bring together various specialities, such as the Catholic Workers’ Circles, the works of the factory, military chaplaincy, youth clubs and youth works, without thereby hindering the freedom each section needs. This bringing together produces a certain emulation and a diversity of ideas, which bring to each a kind of renewal; but we must keep away, as far as we can, those idle people who have been nicknamed the Athenians of the Congresses, people in search of novelties, who attend our assemblies

10. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 333.

as one attends a show, more concerned with a parliamentary triumph than with the salvation of souls.

Regional assemblies are extremely desirable, and far from harming the general assemblies, we think they would make them much better attended. Not only would they spread the movement more widely, but they would bring back a little of that provincial life so useful to a work like ours. The bonds that unite the committees with one another are strong only through their voluntary docility and their understanding of the work; now, regional assemblies would produce these two benefits by reaching a multitude of men of good will whom the General Assemblies will never reach.

We think that very powerful help would be given to the corporation committees and to the corporative associations by having the committees regularly visited by zone secretaries perfectly versed not only in the spirit of the work, but in its method. The movement will take serious shape only where it is possible to guide generous Christians who are often inexperienced, and who dare not go forward because they distrust themselves and do not understand the mechanism of the associations well enough.

CHAPTER III USEFUL INFORMATION.

§ 118. — HOW SHOULD ONE BEGIN?

We have often been asked this question: Where should we begin? — It will be understood that it is difficult to give an answer without knowing the elements that can be used, the resources available, the various surroundings in which one may find oneself, and the standing and position of the person who wishes to begin. The advice that can be given in every circumstance is that one must be modest at the start. The considerable expense required by a proper installation often prevents anything from being done, whereas if one had been content with a very simple temporary arrangement, souls would have been saved, and that is the only aim to be reached.

In the exile that followed our fire, amid a population little prepared, we were able in a few months to found all the associations; these poor workers were so touched to see that someone was concerned with their interests, their children, their recreation and their illnesses! Our stay was too short to secure perseverance; nevertheless, a girls' youth club, a boys' youth club and an association of working mothers are still functioning, thanks to the devotedness of the parish priest, the sisters and two parishioners.

There are some who will begin nothing because they fear they will not succeed. We even know some who plead the good of souls, which they believe would be compromised by their failures and humiliations. But what road did Our Lord follow? The royal road of the Cross, that is to say, supreme failure and supreme humiliation, which He made the very sources of His glorification. Human prudence in good works will always lead to death. The history of the Church is full of examples that condemn the prudent. We must therefore begin, and the worst of failures is to do nothing.

Let us seek to convert the employers around us, and let us show them that the works are not as difficult as they seem at first. At Lyon we set out several degrees in the works of the factory:

First degree, what we have called the internal means, that is to say: morality in the workshops; Sunday scrupulously observed; wise rules; Christian clerks, and in any case the immediate dismissal of any clerk who does not have a good spirit and good morals; pay sheltered from temptations that are too dangerous; personal management by the employer as far as possible; and always the absolute right reserved to the worker of direct recourse to the employer, without going through the clerk; etc. Should not all employers, even those who do not have the faith, consider themselves bound to these duties?

Second degree, Christian schools regularly attended, with the children effectively led to and supervised at the Sunday services. This second point is easy, since we do not presuppose special schools, but only the real and fatherly supervision of the employer over the children of his factory.

Third degree, special schools of the religious congregations for the factory; education always presents to the workers a utilitarian side that attracts them, and it is often the best means of getting religious lessons accepted and of drawing the workers towards God, by making use of the thousand occasions that arise even in secular teaching.

Fourth degree, visits to the sick at home by the sisters.

Fifth degree, a workers' mission, an annual Easter retreat and, if possible, a special retreat for the men, and a special one for the girls and the women.

Sixth degree, a chapel, however small and modest it may be, even if it were no bigger than a room, close to the factory, for hearing confessions during working hours, for gathering some of the workers as they leave the workshops, and for speaking to them, sometimes the men, sometimes the girls, sometimes the women.

We need not repeat that the associations are above all necessary; they are far easier than those who have not tried can believe. They must be founded as soon as possible, beginning with those that seem easiest, while taking care not to stop halfway.

As soon as we meet an employer who has the least good will, we must encourage him with all our strength to begin with the first degree, then with the second. When he reaches the third degree, he will already have done something, and God will grant him the grace to go further.

§ 119. — RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION OF ST PHILOMENA.

A few years before the question of the Christian organisation of the factory was raised for the first time at Nantes, a holy religious established a special congregation under the name of St Philomena, to devote itself to the moral improvement of the factories. Here is how the founder states the aim of the new society in the Book of Rules, approved by episcopal authority:

“The end of this little society is not only to apply itself seriously to its own perfection, with the help of divine grace, but also to devote itself, with the help of the same grace, to the direction and sanctification of young women in workshops, factories, sewing rooms and orphanages. To this principal end secondary ones could be added, such as the care of the sick at home and in small hospices, or any work of this kind.”

People are very pleased with the sisters wherever they already are; their simplicity and their devotedness make them loved, and their action is visibly blessed by God. Providence has sent them, for their novitiate, a magnificent property at St-Marcellin (Isère).

We can only wish this new congregation the prosperity and development that the great works to which it is devoted require. We know that several employers have great difficulty in obtaining sisters; that

is why we point out to them this new house, whose spirit corresponds perfectly to the various needs of industry.

CONCLUSION

The Christian workers' corporation is the sole remedy for the ills of our time, and here it is not only our own opinion that we are expressing, but that of the most eminent men, of those whose authority is accepted among Catholics.

Our Manual has given an example; we repeat that we do not claim to present anything else, and far be it from us to put forward the results of our experience as an absolute rule. Since this question was first raised, we have had only one aim: to induce Christians to begin with the firm resolution of going all the way. We can assure them that their good will shall be crowned with success, because they will be working at the work dearest to the Heart of Our Lord. The Divine Master will enlighten them, sustain them and bring them to the goal to which we all aspire, *the Christian reform of our society*.

THE END.

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