

men conscientious and satisfied, the authorities, the officials, respecting the rights of God, of Church, of conscience, and the subject ever listening to the voice of authority. These were the means employed by Francis which were to bring peace among individuals, families, social classes, nations, Church and State, and which were to make the world the ideal Christian society, everything cooperating in the eternal and temporal welfare of men."

THE THIRD ORDER AND THE CATHOLIC LAY APOSTOLATE

Much has been said and written of late on the subject of the Catholic lay apostolate. By this term is meant the cooperation of the Catholic laity with the clergy in their efforts to establish the reign of Christ in the hearts of men. That this cooperation of the laity is not merely desirable but even necessary, has long been an admitted truth, and it is one of the most hopeful signs of the times that Catholic men and women are everywhere taking a lively interest in the movement.

We are sorry to say, however, that the Third Order in this country is apparently standing aloof, though, strange as it may seem, the lay apostolate forms an essential part of its program. For, what else do the words of the Rule signify: "Let them study to lead others by their example, to promote pious practices and all that is good"? If they have any meaning at all, it is this, that by their example, Tertiaries should lead and encourage others in performing works of piety, charity, and religion.

That this was the conception of Tertiaries in former days, is indubitably attested by the history of the Order. If it is true—and history says it is—that in the Middle Ages the Third Order exerted a renovating influence on society, and contributed materially to the revival of practical Christianity; if it is true that the Sovereign Pontiffs lauded the Third Order as a bulwark of the Church, and hailed its members as the "new Maccabees" who were ever ready to defend the rights of the Church and the privileges of the Papacy; if it is true that they went about doing good wherever they could, healing discords, consoling the sick, relieving the poor, succoring the oppressed, protecting widows and orphans, in fine, resisting "man's inhumanity to man" and rendering the strife for existence less acute: then, surely, those Tertiaries must have been convinced that they had a mission to fulfill as lay apostles—and they set about their work courageously.

The needs of the Church and of mankind in general were hardly more pressing in those days than they are at the present time. These needs point out to us the will of God; they reveal the line of action along which all faithful children of the Church should assist her in her manifold mission. What hopes she places on the Third Order in particular, she has publicly proclaimed to the world through the mouth of Leo XIII and Pius X. Shall these hopes be confounded? This will depend on the stand the Third Order takes on the question of the lay apostolate. That the Third Order is the best school for lay apostles, that it contains forces which, if set in motion, will contribute more than any other organization in the Church to the successful carrying out of the Church's program of social reform, there is, in our mind, not the least doubt.

If in a parish there exists an association of hundred resolute men or hundred self-sacrificing women who voluntarily oblige themselves to receive the sacraments regularly, yes frequently, to settle disputes, to com-

bat the evil press, to avoid luxury and display, to eschew dangerous amusements, to contribute according to their means to the relief of those in need, etc., is it possible that such thoroughly Catholic men and women should have no influence on their surroundings? Moreover, the catholicity of the Third Order, its world-encompassing organization lends to the single fraternities a power and a prestige such as mere local societies can never enjoy. Thus the Third Order may be made a breakwater against the rising tide of the irreligious tendencies of the day, if only the constituted leaders of the fraternities are mindful of the true scope of the Third Order, and regard it as something more than a mere pious association whose members daily recite twelve "Our Fathers", and meet monthly to hear a sermon and to say a few prayers in common. Surely, St. Francis had an altogether different aim in founding his Third Order. He wished to gather in it self-conscious Christians, men and women who have the courage of their convictions, who are in earnest about leading a life according to the maxims of the Gospel, and who are willing to bring sacrifices therefor. Herein lies the secret of the power of the Third Order, and it is everywhere revealed where Tertiaries walk in the footsteps of their holy founder whose motto was: "Not to live for one's self alone, but to profit others."

HAS CHRISTIANITY COLLAPSED?

We are confronted to-day by events that most of us, a few weeks ago, should have thought utterly impossible—the rulers of the European states have cried havoc, and let slip the dogs of war. It is but natural for us, who are fortunately far removed from the scene of the dreadful conflict, to indulge in speculation on the causes that led up to these events. German ambition, English greed, French hatred, Austrian vindictiveness, Russian and Servian intrigue have been in turn assigned as causes by men of various sympathies.

Now comes the Rev. G. Monroe Royce, Rector of St. Thomas P. E. Church, New Windsor-on-Hudson, with a brand-new reason for the European war. In a letter to the New York *Evening Post*, he boldly fixes the blame for the great world war on the Christian Church.

"One has a right to expect", he says, "that after nineteen hundred years of civilization calling itself Christian, the church and her ministers should have influence enough, power—downright moral and spiritual power—enough to prevent the savage, the brute instincts of mankind dominating not only kings and other rulers, but the whole body of people composing the nations of Europe. This much we have a right to insist upon, and if the combined influence of all organized Christianity cannot bring about such a result, then it is, I think, perfectly fair to conclude that the church machinery has broken down; that it does not do what it professes to do, and is not worthy the support it is receiving."

By the terms "organized Christianity" and "church machinery" he would have us understand "popes, patriarchs, bishops, ministers and churches all combined." And he concludes his lengthy epistle with the exhortation: "Let us tell these popes, patriarchs, bishops, churches, and missionary societies that if they cannot prevent such direful carnage, such a universal outrage upon humanity, we refuse to contribute one penny to their support. The stock exchanges throughout the world have frankly confessed their inability to deal with the situation, and have